

The Language of Peacebuilding: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Philippine's Department of Education Peace Framework

Jamil M. Rivera¹

jamil.rivera@g.msuiit.edu.ph

Albert M. Llido²

albert.llido1987@deped.gov.ph

¹ Macasandig National High School, Department of Education – Division of Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines/ PhD Student, Department of English, MSU-Iligan Institute of Technology, Philippines

² Malibud National High School, Department of Education – Division of Gingoog City, Philippines/ PhD Student, Department of English, MSU-Iligan Institute of Technology, Philippines

Abstract

Peacebuilding initiatives have been an important agenda of education particularly in post-conflict areas, where schools serve as agents for the promotion of peace, and the prevention of future conflict, operationalized through a peace framework. While focusing on the delivery of educational services, peace frameworks are undeniably designed by the values and priorities of the dominant groups or institutions, discursively presenting peacebuilding as a mean of social transformation, appearing neutral and ideal, while in fact its definition, direction, role, and outcomes are carried out and controlled by power, interests, and ideologies. This creates gap in the understanding of institutionalized peacebuilding, questioning what these initiatives truly serves in education sector. Using the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis and the Three-Dimensional Model of Fairclough, the study examined the Department of Education (DepEd) Peace Framework, known as the *Balangkas ng Nagkakaisang Sambayanan* (BANSAN). Findings revealed that the framework's textual features are ideologically motivated to construct a concept of peacebuilding as depoliticized, institutionalized, and bureaucratized initiative. Through its lexical and grammatical choices, the DepEd Peace Framework is presented as technical, administrative, and ruled-based agenda, removing a sense of political connection, while institutional power is exercised. By doing so, peace framework is directed to reinforce a governed-rule peacebuilding initiative, regarded as a transformative mechanism, operationalized through DepEd policies and education programs.

Keywords: *Peacebuilding, Peace Framework, BANSAN, Department of Education*

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Introduction

Following the aftermath of numerous armed conflicts across the globe, the concept of peacebuilding has become an important repertoire of peace framework of both international and local institutions. In education setting, peacebuilding plays an important role in providing cognitive and psychological support, safeguarding protection, and ensuring that the school is a safe space for learning, while serving as a platform for advancing political agendas.

Peacebuilding has been regarded as complex and highly contested concept, discussed by various critical examinations. For instance, Maschietto (2016) explores how the once-radical concept “empowerment” has been depoliticized into a liberalized technical term, equated with (Jirasinghe, 2018) capacity building shaped by donor agendas. In addition, critics argue that dominant peacebuilding frameworks reinforce power asymmetries. Such frameworks include Oslo Accords, which Turner (2012) views as a colonial practice in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Likewise, Jirasinghe (2018) highlights how a liberal peacebuilding model prioritizes “global market integration” and “state-centered governance,” ignoring complexities and inequalities, as seen in Sri Lanka. Müller & Zahda (2018) underscore “legitimacy,” “effectiveness,” and “credibility” as key measures of European Union (EU) peacebuilding initiatives in Palestine’s security reform sector (SRS), yet face issues on exclusion, weak democratic governance, and lack of rule of law.

In education, schools serve as the center for peacebuilding effort where “social cohesion,” “rebuilding trust,” and “understanding” among diverse group of people are promoted through peace education (Novelli et al., 2017; Okwudiba & Johnmary, 2023; Rizky, 2021). Individuals are taught how to address social issues and conflicts by engaging in a critical thinking and social awareness activities (Istiani & Anam, 2021). Peace education reinforces policies and programs that promote inclusive learning environment, reduce violence, and create social harmony (Shahab & Ullah, 2021), treating this approach as a preventive mechanism that addresses the root causes of conflict and mitigate its impact (Ikeda & Fukuda, 2021), especially when introduced in early childhood education and Islamic instruction (Ntini & Omona, 2022; Velez, 2021).

In the Philippines, the meaning of peacebuilding in educational context is often tied with its developmental roles (Midtanggal, 2020; Nario-Galace, 2020; Salazar, 2018). For example, after the Marawi siege in 2017, educational institutions at all levels have strengthened their commitment to peacebuilding through peace education initiatives (Salazar, 2018), which went hand in hand with foreign-aided programs as part of the city’s restoration program. While these studies demonstrate the important role of education in peacebuilding process, many of its perspectives are often criticized for being overly “educationist” (Dale, 2005), focusing only on service delivery and ignoring the broader socio-political environment of education, where most impactful interventions operate within governance and social reform, and where power dynamics can perpetuate inequalities and conflict by promoting dominant values of powerful groups (Burde et al., 2004; Novelli et al., 2017). Key factors such as political will, power relation, motivation of actors, and the discursive construction of peacebuilding in education setting remain underexplored for the reason that these are beyond the parameter of educational and pedagogical perspectives. This context of exploration requires lenses from other fields of discipline in order to provide a more comprehensive and clearer discussion on peacebuilding. Furthermore, development and reform-related terms in peacebuilding education are not merely technical concepts, but also

a politically driven (Novelli et al., 2017). It is in this condition that the *Balangkang ng Nagkakaisang Sambayanan* (BANSAN), the Peace Framework of the Department of Education (DepEd), is considered relevant and suitable site for exploration and critical analysis.

The DepEd is a prime institution of the Philippines responsible for the administration of the basic education system of the country. Its power is operationalized under existing laws, which includes its authority over the creation of an institutional peace framework aligned with state's priorities and agenda, as well as the implementation of its related policies and programs, where participation and the utilization of resources are subject to its control. Taking all these features into account will help the paper to provide a comprehensive discussion on the key issues surrounding DepEd Peace Framework, particularly in the area of peacebuilding.

Grounded in linguistic perspective, language serves as a resource for legitimizing the principles, values, and systems upheld by the powerful institutions (Statham, 2022). In this regard, the idea of power, control, and social structure is reinforced in peacebuilding discourse. Hence, this study aims to examine how the concept of peacebuilding is discursively constructed in the Philippine's Department of Education (DepEd)'s Peace Framework or the BANSAN. By applying Fairclough's method of Critical Discourse Analysis, this study unveiled the notion of peacebuilding promoted by DepEd within the education system and how this concept is shaped and aligned with institutional interest – nation building.

Specifically, this study seeks to analyze the (1) linguistic choices of the text which contribute to shaping the representation of peacebuilding in terms of lexical choices and grammatical structure; (2) the potential power dynamics might be inferred from the positioning of actors in the DepEd peace framework and (3) how do the linguistic choices in the DepEd peace framework reflect the underlying ideologies and interests in peacebuilding

Peacebuilding and Education: Global and Local Perspectives

Peacebuilding is a complex and a highly contested concept, shaped by political, social, and academic discourses (Novelli et al., 2017). Originally, the term evolved from a peace studies idea of Galtung, which views peacebuilding as process of removing the root causes of violence, mostly stemming from structure and cultural form of violence, to foster sustainable peace. Over time, this concept was adopted and institutionalized by many organizations such as the United Nation as guiding principle for peace efforts aimed at strengthening national capacities, reducing the risk of conflict, and preventing its reoccurrence, paving way to the creation of peace bodies such as the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF).

In peacebuilding, education plays an important role in achieving sustainable peace. Studies have identified three thematic representations of education: Education as a Humanitarian Response; Conflict-Sensitive Education; and Education for Peacebuilding (Novelli & Smith, 2011). While these three representations share a common denominator – mitigating the effect of conflict – they hold different perspectives on the role of education in peacebuilding. Education as humanitarian response underscores education as a basic human

right that must be upheld by individuals or institution even in times of crisis. In such situation, a safe space learning environment as well as psychological and cognitive support is given to learners, ensuring that their education continues with protection. Education as a peacebuilding initiatives center at the promotion of social transformation. The teaching of values of peace, equity, and social coherence in a post-conflict affected area is given importance for positive change, transforming individuals from violence to peace-loving members of society. However, while it holds the potential to transform conflict into sustainable peace, studies have shown that education can also inadvertently fuel conflict. This occurs when education promotes the values of dominant and powerful groups while silencing minor groups (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Datzberger & Donovan, 2020), reflecting a slight pessimistic view on education.

In the Philippines, policies and programs related to education have received both approval and criticism. For instance, the schools are promoted as zones of peace (Department of Education (Philippines), 2019), and peace education programs are integrated basic and higher education curriculum (Department of Education (Philippines), 2019; Midtangg, 2020; Salazar, 2018). In the other hand, the education system also faces significant challenges including the issue on language policy, unequal access to resources, and marginalization of indigenous people (Balgoa, 2025; Bernardo, 2004; Eduardo & Gabriel, 2021). These issues have contributed to social fragmentation, projecting education as a double-edged sword.

Peacebuilding Efforts in Mindanao

Peacebuilding efforts in Mindanao is deeply grounded in historical and cultural context, where religious and educational initiatives have shared goals in addressing longstanding conflict. As Montiel et al. (2012) explained, the tension between Muslim and Christian groups started during the Spanish colonial era and heightened under American rule, which heavily contributed social disparities and internal conflict in the said region. Addressing the deep-rooted conflict, inter-religious approach emerged as a vital strategy since the 1970's, bringing together individuals, groups, and institutions of different faiths and cultural traditions for a meaningful dialogue. It primarily seeks to foster mutual understanding, respect to religion and cultural tradition, and equal distribution of resources, opportunities and treatment, which sustained peaceful co-existence of Muslim, Christian, and Indigenous People communities in Mindanao (Appleby, 2012; Horner, 2017; Leguro, 2020; Montiel et al., 2012). Inter-religious initiatives such as Bishop-Ulama Conference, which is revitalized with its new name Mindanao Religious Leaders Conference. Moreover, Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Peacebuilding Network show how religious leaders can mediate during emergency (Appleby, 2012) In particular, religious leaders collaborated with government and non-government institutions in exploring ways to prevent the reigniting of Christian-Muslim hostility and the recruitment of youth by extremist groups during the Marawi Siege in 2017 (Trajano, 2020). Furthermore, they also played important role in Covid 19 pandemic by supporting vulnerable communities. These studies emphasized that religious peacebuilding and faith-based leadership are vital in mitigating conflicts in Mindanao (Bangsamoro Information Office, 2025; Garcia et al., 2024). Alongside religious activities, the integration of peace education into the basic and higher education curriculum serves as a non-violent strategy adopted by various institutions including Department of Education (DepEd), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), colleges and universities for the purpose of producing peace-loving individuals (Midtangg, 2020; Rodil, 2022). Non-government organizations and international agencies also play an important role through funding or

facilitating these educational efforts to promote the culture of peace, greater openness and tolerance of diversity in conflict-affected areas of Mindanao (Bacani, 2004; Nasser & Berowa, 2023; Rodil, 2022). Both Inter-religious and peace education initiatives provide a holistic and culturally grounded for peace process in Mindanao. While inter-religious efforts address immediate crisis and dialogue to prevent the escalation of conflict and build mutual trust, peace education functions as a long-term strategy by integrating its principles in formal education. Together, these strategies tackle the causes of conflict and promote the sustainability of a culture of peace in Mindanao.

Peacebuilding and Education Frameworks

Several peacebuilding frameworks including the United Nations Children's Fund Peacebuilding Programming, Reardon Peace Education Framework, and the Tocaire Peacebuilding Framework provide a unique yet complementary mechanisms to attain peace. While they share on the paramount objective of peacebuilding, each framework works differently, steered by its guiding principles, target community, and contextual priorities.

UNICEF's framework is guided by the principles of children's right for building and sustaining peace (UNICEF, 2023). Reardon centers its perspectives on peace education and the vital role it plays in transforming social structure human behavior, and other psychological factors (Wintersteiner, 2019), and Trocaire adopts a transformative, community-based, and people-centered peacebuilding approach, highlighting the voice of women and youth as key player in peacebuilding process (Trócaire, 2023). Together, these frameworks show how peacebuilding efforts can be multidimensional, combining education, children's right, and inclusive participation to address both the source of conflict and to sustain peace.

The non-neutrality of peacebuilding

Studies have shown that peacebuilding is neither neutral nor solely a humanitarian endeavor that offers technical process for resolving conflict; rather, it is a politically charged activity shaped by historical narratives, power dynamics, and the interests of global and local actors. This perspective gained attention after the end of Cold War in 1989, when international missions, often led by western powers, started to influence the conflict-affected areas by their liberal ideology while providing recovery assistance that promotes local ownership and capacity building for peace process (Paris, 2004). This move was often criticized for concealing the interests of external actors that controls peacebuilding agenda (Paffenholz, 2014). Many peacebuilding efforts are influenced by both international agendas and the interest of donors over the program (Goodhand, 2006), which can inadvertently reinforce existing political or power structures and marginalization of local voices (Kanol & Kanol, 2013). Local stakeholders are often portrayed as the key actors of peacebuilding initiatives despite their entanglement in political dynamics of dominant groups or institutions. From these empirical views, peacebuilding is revealed to have two folds – addressing conflict and serving the political interest of the institutions

Summing up, both global and local studies demonstrate that peacebuilding is a multifaceted and non-static initiative. Its dynamic nature is largely shaped by the principles of peace and the political agendas of institutions, making it a contested concept. This complexity is also reflected in peace education, which operates as mechanism within the

peacebuilding framework. As such, it inherently carries the two-fold character of peacebuilding – to cultivate peace and to reinforce dominant ideology and power structure that potentially promote inequality and marginalization.

Notably, many of these studies are viewed within political and educational perspectives, with less emphasis on how peacebuilding is constructed through the use of language, a factor that greatly influences public opinion and participation. Therefore, applying linguistic lens offers a valuable insight that deepens the understanding of how peacebuilding narratives are shaped, contested, and communicated, which affects its effectiveness in implementing efforts.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the theoretical perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a linguistically grounded framework that offers a critical lens for analyzing the concept of peacebuilding. It is considered a progressive, politically motivated, and interdisciplinary approach that exposes how power is enacted, reproduced, and challenged through language (Van Dijk, 2006), making it a suitable approach for analyzing institutional texts, such as peace frameworks. CDA asserts that language is not neutral and positions discourse as a form of social practice that both reflects and shapes ideologies and social realities (Fairclough, 1995; Wodak, 2009). Dominant groups or institutions legitimize their authority and silence the voices of marginalized individuals through language (McGregor, 2010). In addition, language contributes to the production of discourse, which functions both as a product of social conditions and as a mechanism that actively constructs knowledge systems, identities, and power structures within institutional settings (Wodak, 2009). For scholars of discourse, language serves not only as a tool for communication but also as a material form of ideology that is deeply loaded with meanings and political motives (Fairclough, 1995; Locke, 1996).

Anchored particularly in the three-dimensional framework of Norman Fairclough, this study examines the BANSAs policy through the interconnected levels of (1) text, (2) discursive practice, and (3) social practice. Examining BANSAs through Fairclough's lens allows for a systematic analysis of how language in the policy text constructs meanings of peacebuilding, shapes social relations within the education system, and reflects broader socio-political structures and governance interests. At the textual level, the study analyzes the vocabulary, grammar, and rhetorical strategies used to define and frame peacebuilding. At the level of discursive practice, it investigates how the policy is produced, distributed, and interpreted by various stakeholders within the education sector. Finally, at the level of social practice, it situates the policy within wider political, historical, and institutional contexts, revealing how it aligns with state priorities, power relations, and governance agendas.

In the context of peacebuilding, CDA facilitates the examination of how peace and its related efforts are constructed—whether framed as the absence of conflict, the promotion of social cohesion, or as a mechanism for reinforcing state authority. It explores how peace efforts, through the use of language, may be depoliticized, universalized, operationalized, and stripped of their socio-political essence, making them more adaptable to institutional agendas. Through CDA, institutional texts can be critically assessed to determine whether the concept of peacebuilding promotes meaningful social transformation or simply serves to preserve institutional dominance. As Van Dijk (2001) asserted, CDA is highly relevant to the field of peace and conflict studies because it offers a social change orientation that aligns

with the goals of peacebuilding and critical scholarship.

Methodology

The study utilized a descriptive qualitative research design through a Critical Discourse Analysis. This approach provided an in-depth examination into how language operates through which power, ideology, and social structure are constructed and maintained within societies dominated by institutions or powerful individuals. Specifically, the study employed Fairclough's three-dimensional model (Statham, 2022), which covered three stages of procedure - text, discursive, and social.

Corpus of the study

The study examined the 17-page Peace Framework titled *Balangkas ng Nagkakaisang Sambayanan (BANSANSA)*, issued by the Department of Education, signed by former Secretary Leoner Magtolis Briones, and disseminated through DepEd Order No. 16, series of 2022, to all DepEd offices and schools. This framework outlined the mechanisms of DepEd for the promotion of peace education and peacebuilding, which is anchored to the existing laws and policies. It is primarily written English language, with an exemption to institutional terms that are expressed in Filipino language, exposing its richness in linguistic properties as discursive resource through which institutional priorities related to peacebuilding are framed and legitimated.

Sampling technique and criteria for selection

The researchers deliberately selected BANSANSA DepEd Peace Framework as the data corpus for investigation, based on its relevance to the objectives and following set of criteria:

1. The initiative is institutionally designed.
2. It is supported by legal mandates.
3. The initiative covered a wide range of location, spanning from Luzon to Mindanao.
4. It is disseminated through administrative orders, ensuring its implementation and compliance.
5. The document can be accessed online.
6. It is a standardized peace framework.

Data collection and analysis

In this procedure, data collection was started by reading the whole text thoroughly to understand its content. Linguistic expressions, particularly key words, were identified and grouped based on their semantic relationship to form a unified discoursed. Each type of discourse reflects a perspective that shapes the understanding of DepEd's peacebuilding, serving as an important ground for the analysis of meaning.

For grammatical structure, the basic sentence pattern Subject – Verb – Object was used as the syntactical base line for the identification of dominant structures in the text. In this structure, the subject is usually found at the initial part and proceeded by a verb and an object, serving as a guiding point of comparison, through which the text was investigated for its

recurring grammatical patterns and variations in sentence construction, which may indicate underlying ideologies within the peace framework.

The Three-Dimensional Framework of Fairclough was used to guide the analysis. At the textual level, lexical and grammatical features were analyzed to know how these linguistic elements construct a concept of peacebuilding. The production, as well how the text was interpreted, were examined at the discursive level, and the identification of its underlying ideologies was done at the social practice level. Potential biases in analysis and interpretation were mitigated by integrating relevant theories, data corpus, and researchers' insights.

Ethical considerations

Since the study used a public document created by the DepEd, the researchers sent a letter to its central office through email, informing the institution about the conduct of the study. In the letter, the purpose was clearly stated, emphasizing that it was solely intended for academic requirements. In adherence to research ethics, the analysis was only limited in the use of language in DepEd Peace Framework and no human participation was required during the course of data gathering. Information of DepEd authorities and external contributors involved in the crafting of the framework were excluded, as they were not within the research scope.

The Language of Peacebuilding

Two aspects of language were considered in the initial analysis of the text. These are the lexical and grammatical choices reflected in the peace framework. These aspects enable us to decode how language constructs social reality, and in this case peacebuilding, and unravel the nuances and connotative meanings of the word choices. Table 1 lists down the prevalent lexical choices found in the text. It also lists down the discursive practices implied by the lexicons and the social practices that they possibly evoke. Extracting these two categories lead to institutional constructs of peacebuilding that BANSAs is trying to convey.

Lexical Choices

Table 1. Words and their Semantic Fields

Textual Features	Discursive Practice	Social Practice
<i>radicalization, terrorism, violent extremism, unjust force, violence, war, impunity, armed conflict</i>	Conflict Discourse: Frames social issues as treat to individuals and national security and safety.	Peacebuilding primary deals with conflict
<i>rehabilitation, institutionalization, intervention, promotion, transformation, implementation, participation, formation, prevention, protection, integration</i>	Security and Prevention Discourse: Frames peacebuilding as an important measure or goal	Peacebuilding fosters social and national security
<i>education, learner, school, pupil, junior and senior high school</i>	Educational Discourse (micro-component):	Peacebuilding is a learning-experienced and facilitated initiative

	Constructs micro-component of education as players and affected entities of peacebuilding.	
<i>Basic Education, Quality Education, Peace Education, Alternative Learning System, Indigenous Peoples Education, Madrasah Education</i>	Education Discourse (Macro-component): Positions peacebuilding to various education programs.	Peacebuilding is an inclusive initiative yet controlled
<i>DepEd Order, Executive Order, Constitution, Republic Act, Children's Right</i>	Legal Discourse: Frames peacebuilding as an initiative anchored to laws and directives	Peacebuilding is supported and legitimated by law
<i>Dialogue, respect, healing, reconciliation, understanding peace, justice, peace-loving, nation-building</i>	Social recovery Discourse: Construct ideas of resolution that peacebuilding can offer	Peacebuilding as a mean for social change
<i>governance, transparency, institutionalized, policy, development, authority, accountability, responsibility, office, implementation, core values</i>	Governance discourse: Frames peacebuilding as an institutionally managed initiative.	Peacebuilding is institutional
<i>inter-agency bodies, committee, offices, governance level, team, coordination, national, regional, local, council, stakeholders, shared responsibility</i>	Bureaucratic Discourse: Frames the workflow of peacebuilding as hierarchical, structured, and procedural.	Peacebuilding applies a bureaucratic mechanism

The DepEd Peace Framework text is composed of multidimensional semantic field, incorporating discourses of conflict, security and prevention, social recovery and transformation, governance, bureaucracy, legal, and education. These lexical resources amplify various perspectives and formed a structured and collective representation of peacebuilding within the context of education. Conflict-related terms such as radicalization, terrorism, violent extremism, unjust force, violence, war, impunity, armed conflict denote a threat to national security of the country. These lexicon choices denote that the Philippines face these threats, whether remotely or immediately, and are therefore need to be addressed institutionally.

Additionally, terms under social recovery rehabilitation, institutionalization, intervention, promotion, transformation, implementation, participation, formation, prevention, protection, integration are laid to promote social change. These choices imply that DepEd as a government institution is mandated to promote social recovery through basic education of the country's citizenry. Terms from legal and institutional discourses (education, governance, bureaucracy) conveys an idea of legitimacy and the exercise of institutional power and control over peace-related policies and programs. Altogether, these lexical choices frame a concept of peacebuilding as an institutionalized and state-led initiative.

Grammatical resources

Table 2 lists the grammatical resources utilized by the text; grammatical resources, in general, convey relationships, specify the receiver and doer of the actions and organize ideas. In this study, grammatical resources convey power and ideological relations.

Table 2. Nominalized Forms and their Discursive Function

Textual Features	Discursive Practice	Social Practice
<i>“Radicalization, terrorism, and violent extremism pose a great threat...”</i>	Inanimate agent: Nominalized forms <i>radicalization, terrorism,</i> and <i>violent extremism</i> function as agent of action, hiding human agency and responsibility.	Peacebuilding is a depoliticized concept, people in authority are protected from blame and criticism.
<i>“...the Department advances the transformation of basic education...”</i>	Detached entity: Presents goal <i>transformation</i> as a thing rather than a result of action, Redirecting the attention from responsibility to outcome.	Peacebuilding is a goal-oriented and outcome-based initiative.
<i>“...the promotion and building of a culture of peace in schools...”</i>	Agentless: The nominalized forms <i>promotion</i> and <i>building</i> conceal human action, appearing the abstract concepts as an event process	Peacebuilding is an event rather than an action.
<i>“Good governance provides the springboard...”</i>	Qualified entity Frames the nominalized form <i>governance</i> as a qualified entity, redirecting the attention from responsibility to value.	Peacebuilding emphasizes institutional ideals.
<i>“Education must engage younger generations...”</i>	Stable entity: Reifies nominalized form <i>education</i> as a stable entity, functioning as an agent, obscuring human agency and responsibility.	Peacebuilding is an institutional effort.

The DepEd Peace Framework is loaded with nominalized terms throughout the text. Nominalization turns verb process into noun construction, transforming statement from an agent performing an action to the action itself. This tactic is ideological because it provides various effects that shape the understanding of peacebuilding. Nominalized form can act as agent, which hide the sense of agency and responsibility. It also transforms a process into an entity detached from agency – a reified form that can be modified and assumes the status of an object – framing peacebuilding a concrete phenomenon rather than a process performed by agent. When constructed within passive form, nominalization helps in the removal of participation, particularly actor, making a statement agentless, constructing peacebuilding as an event. Over time, normalized forms can become a new lexical item, departing from their

original verb processes. As a result, they are treated as fixed, natural, and unquestionable. To sum up, all of these effects contribute for the promotion of a depoliticized peacebuilding.

Table 3. Verb Processes in the DepEd Peace Framework

Textual Features	Discursive Practice	Social Practice
Material Process: advances, strengthens, provides, establishes, offers, commits ... <i>DepEd also offers citizenship Training Program...</i>	Frames the institution as the agent of the action	Peacebuilding is performed and controlled by an institution.
Verbal process: emphasize, articulate “ <i>It articulates how the mandate...</i> ”	Conveys communication, where institutional values, policies, and directive are discursively reinforced	Peacebuilding discourse is regulated and authoritative.
Mental process: <i>commit, recognize</i> “ <i>The Department of Education recognizes education...</i> ”	Reflects institutional awareness and validation	Peacebuilding is a planned and deliberated initiative
Behavioral process: <i>engage</i> “ <i>...DepEd engages its constituents – learners, personnel...</i> ”	Expresses an idea of connection and participation	Peacebuilding is a collective and collaborative initiative

The positioning of *DepEd* as an agent in peacebuilding is highlighted by the use of verb processes. Material processes foreground DepEd’s capacity in implementing and controlling peacebuilding initiatives, while verbal processes demonstrate its discursive influence. Mental processes show its rationality attributed to institutional capacity to do evaluation and validation, whereas behavioral processes inform DepEd’s intent to involve its constituents and other stakeholders.

Table 4. Passive Sentence Structure in the DepEd Peace Framework

Textual Feature	Discursive Practice	Social Practice
“... <i>the <u>promotion</u> and <u>building</u> of a culture of peace in schools and communities have long been institutionalized...</i> ”	Deletes agency and can occur with nominalization	Peacebuilding is a depoliticized initiative

The deletion of agency is realized in the text through passivization. This kind of syntactic reduction allows the exclusion of actor by promoting the object into subject position. This construction is also characterized by the use of “be” verb. It is also used alongside nominalization, in which the two share a common function – deleting agency, thereby framing peacebuilding a depoliticized initiative.

Table 5. Active Sentence Structure in the DepEd Peace Framework

Textual Feature	Discursive Practice	Social Practice
<i>"...Department advances the transformation..."</i>	The institution serves as the doer of the action	Peacebuilding reinforces institutional power and authority.

The active construction of sentence emphasizes the vital role of DepEd as an institution and as the agent of its policies and programs. In this structure, the institution is positioned as the subject that does the action, demonstrating its capacity to implement and exercise control. Furthermore, this structure usually takes a nominalized form as its object, which is detached from the process, resulting in the obfuscation of responsibility while the action is retained.

Table 6. Modality in the DepEd Peace Framework

Textual Feature	Discursive Practice	Social Practice
Modulation: shall, must		
<i>"...that shall guide the DepEd Central..."</i>	frames a binding legal obligation	Peacebuilding is legally obliged
<i>"Equity must be applied..."</i>	constructs a sense of necessity	Peacebuilding is a need

The prevalence of *must* and *shall*, classified as modulation type of modality, signifies a high level of obligation expressed in the discourse. This frames peacebuilding a legally binding institutional requirement, taken as a mandate that demands strict implementation and compliance.

The Peace Framework is crafted by the authorities of the DepEd, circulated to all its offices and schools across the country through DepEd Order No. 16, series of 2022. The text, while it sounds educational, is found out to embody institutional features – power, authority, legality, which are demonstrated by its textual features. It is in this framing that the peace framework is understood by the members of DepEd community as a collective responsibility, requiring urgency, thereby compliance is non-negotiable. In addition, the textual features also construct a concept of a state-led and intuitionally controlled peacebuilding, emerging as an approach in countries, like the Philippines, where history is narrated with rebellion and political tension, to reinforce peace and social order through education.

The dominance of DepEd as the primary agent of peacebuilding

The textual features of DepEd Peace Framework are found to be consistently privileging institutional authority, top-down power relation, and hierarchical mechanism to peacebuilding process. First, by framing social issues as threat to social and national security through lexical choices, the condition of urgency is created that justifies the intervention of the State. This is further reinforced grammatically through nominalization, in which of verb process is transformed into noun. By doing so, human agency and responsibility is discursively concealed while power is legitimated in a society portrayed as space that requires regulation, control, and protection. Second, DepEd is positioned as the primary agent within its territory, capable of providing intervention to social issues. Governance-related terms and active verb constructions explicitly foreground institutional power and control, which is

centralized and exercised through a structured system, an indication of a top-down power relation. As the agent of the action, DepEd has full control over its educational programs, while learners, through lexical labeling and passive construction, are treated as recipient of these efforts. Third, the framework echoes legal references that support DepEd's actions, which legitimize the exercise of its power and authority. Moreover, grammatical features such as passive construction, highlighting the sense of formality and objectivity of the discourse. As a result, institutional power is not only legalized, it is also normalized, making institutional intervention seems necessary and uncontested. Fourth, while lexical choices discursively constructed peacebuilding as a shared responsibility, grammatical structure clearly illustrates that the power over it is exercised within a structured system of relationships. Nominalization and passive structures construct an abstract and controlled engagement, while active constructions reinforce institutional authority. This is an indication that the participation of individuals and other peace-related bodies is regulated in accordance to institutional boundaries, a reflection of unequal and hierarchical power relation in which DepEd retains its authority.

Taken together, the textual properties of DepEd Peace Framework construct a power relation characterized by institutional dominance, hierarchy, and centralization. Both lexical choices and grammatical structures demonstrate a strong institutional power and authority that control and regulate programs and participation, while simultaneously obscuring institutional responsibility and accountability, thereby contributing to the depoliticization of peacebuilding.

The ideological framing of DepEd's Peacebuilding as depoliticized, institutionalized, and bureaucratized initiative

Throughout the DepEd Peace Framework text, the obscuring of agency and responsibility is demonstrated by means of its linguistic features, indicating that peacebuilding is a depoliticized initiative, framed in terms of outcomes rather than a process shaped by human action. Outside of its linguistic elements, depoliticization has been conceptualized as a multifaceted concept that has gained interest, particularly in relation to its connection with context, agency, and structure, as well as its impact to the broader framework of a democratic governance (Flinders & Buller, 2006)

A common conception of depoliticization resides on the removal of political involvement from institutional actions and decisions, presenting it as non-political, neutral and objective. Burnham (2017) proposes a synthetic definition of depoliticization by stating as "the process of placing at one remove the political character of decision-making". Other definitions cover a wider range of practices, such as tools, mechanism, and institution through which officials may reroute governance into an indirect form or to present themselves to the public as free from accountability (Flinder and Buller, 2006). Altogether, depoliticization is seen as a buffer zone, where authorities are sheltered from possible adverse consequences of policies that they created and enacted. Despite this concept of safety net, politics remain central to institutions, particularly those run by government, including DepEd.

de Naris (2017) argues that depoliticization operates through communicative, discursive, rhetorical, and ideological strategies as mechanisms to frame political positions as justifiable and acceptable to the public. It constructs a version of reality in which authorities are presented less visible, less directly involved, while policies are reinforced as ruled-based system rather than an action drawn from political interest, thereby authorities

cannot be held liable (Flinders & Buller, 2006) In the text, this mechanism is evident through nominalization and passivization. These two distinct syntactic transformation processes allow the deletion or backgrounding of agency in different but complementary ways (Fairclough, 1992). Nominalization converts a whole clause that states a process into a noun. On the other hand, passivization is characterized by the promotion of the object to subject position and the use of verb “be” which restructures the clause into a less dynamic and more objective form. In the given sentence, “The promotion and building of a culture of peace in schools and communities have long been institutionalized through a number of policies and programs”, it can be argued that the two nominalized forms “promotion” and “building” are derived from their respective process forms “promote” and “build”. Through this syntactic reduction, the process is converted into an entity, while the participant is deleted along with its information (Fowler et al., 1979) In addition, the sentence is in passive form, which supports the exclusion of actor by replacing it with the prepositional phrase “through a number of policies and programs”. This phrase provides contextual framing to the action, “have long been institutionalized”, making the agent behind it less prominent and allowing the question of who performed the action to be taken for granted (Fairclough, 2003). The two transformation procedures work together to obscure the sense of agency and responsibility, distancing those people in authority from blame and criticism, a manifestation of mystification effect in the peacebuilding discourse.

Furthermore, nominalized form also acts as agent. This is a reified language in which things and abstract entities perform the action rather than a person. The sentence, “Education must therefore provide an enabling environment for learners to foster their holistic development, including a sense of identity and belonging, empowerment, and democratic participation”, the word “education” which has been used over time and became established lexical item, acts as the agent. This is because nominalization not only allow the deletion of agent, it also enables the process itself to be reified and ascribed with agency. Thus, nominalized form can replace human agency, and in this case, depoliticization is reinforced.

DepEd presents its own version of peacebuilding as an institutionalized practice shapes through language and social rules. As Hodgson (2006) defines it, institutions are systems of established and embedded social rules that structure social interactions”. Their functions are governed by normative rules that are embedded in shared habits of thoughts and behavior. In this sense, Searle (2005) is particularly relevant, as he argues that institution requires linguistic representation to these normative rules and behaviors for the institution to exist. This representation of rule is evident in the framework through the frequent invocation of legal terms such as the “Constitution”, “Republic Acts”, and “DepEd Orders”, signifying that peacebuilding is legally grounded. In addition, the articulation of educational concepts like “Basic Education”, “Quality Education”, and “Peace Education”, illustrates DepEd’s rationalization on its system, expectation, and action by imposing educational programs that are consistent to its policies. This reflects the transformative power of DepEd, which aims to mold the capacities and behaviors of Filipino learners by means of structuring, and constraining, thereby creating stable expectations of social dispositions. The use of various verbal processes – material, verbal, mental, and behavioral, realized through active structure, through which DepEd’s power is enacted, positions the institution as the primary agent of peacebuilding in the education sector, implying that the institution has the power to implement as well as to exercise control.

Bureaucracy is generally viewed as an administrative mechanism in public sector, where control over the resources is highly regarded as an exercised of power. Its concept of control is guided by rules, regulations, and hierarchical structures. Following Karl Marx (Tam Mai, 2016), bureaucracy is an instrument of power and class control. Its ideology dictates the administrative functions and instructs the manner of interaction within organization or with outsiders, in which roles and responsibilities are delineated, and the superior-subordinate relationship is clearly established. The emphasis of hierarchical structure positioned DepEd at the top of power relation, with capacity to manage its people and to control the allocated resources in an impersonalized and standardized manner. Given this, language plays an important role in a bureaucratic system, serving as resource for social control. Its utilization is characterized by terms such as “inter-agency bodies”, “national”, “regional”, “division” and which illustrate a hierarchical structure, as well as the prevalence of modal verbs “shall” and “will” denoting requirement and obligation in accordance to the existing rules and policies. The text is also charged with complex grammatical structure, such as nominalization and passivization, commonly rooted from legal working structure and a depersonalized working culture (Sarangi & Slembrouck, 2014) This illustration depicts a bureaucratic culture of DepEd through which depoliticization and institutionalization of peacebuilding is established.

Conclusion

This paper investigated how the concept of peacebuilding is framed within the Philippine education system. Through a lens of Critical Discourse Analysis, the findings reveal that DepEd’s peacebuilding is foregrounded by the interests of the State, suggesting a profound resemblance to the existing studies claiming that peacebuilding is largely shaped by the principles of the dominant institutions and the interests of the monetary aid donors, where it is framed like an investment for political and economic gain. Building on this, it can be argued that peacebuilding is not a grassroots process that allows ordinary individuals to participate in decision-making, thereby making it exclusive for those with power and influence to carry out the initiative. In the education context, the findings imply that peacebuilding is not simply an initiative embedded in education programs, but a controlled mechanism that is presented as a means for social transformation while serving institutional interests. Furthermore, the language use in DepEd’s Peace Framework, though appears objective, is ideologically motivated, serving as an important resource to reinforce authority and control. In this case, language is not neutral as pointed out by many scholars of Critical Discourse Analysis. Given all of these insights, the study provides an implication to the enrichment of peace-related studies through an interdisciplinary approach.

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Declaration on the Use of Artificial Intelligence

AI was used in this study to refine and simplify the complex ideas and thoughts originally generated by the researchers. AI tools were primarily used to guide and assist the researchers in improving the articulation of ideas, making the paper more comprehensible to readers. Language choices and their used in the construction of arguments were based on the choice, direction, and understanding of the researchers, thereby full responsibility and control over the presentation of insights, interpretations, and analysis of the study were retained.