

Pedagogic Greetings as a Discursive Instrument for Character Building: Critical Discourse Analysis of Junior High School Class Interactions

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the form, pragmatic function, discursive mechanism, and implications of character formation in teachers' pedagogic greetings in junior high school classroom interactions. With qualitative critical discourse analysis, data were obtained from nine Indonesian language teachers in three countries through classroom observation, twenty-three hours of verbatim transcription of learning recordings, and semi-structured interviews. The analysis examined the relationship between teachers' language choices, the context of class interactions, and character values built through the practice of greetings. The findings showed five categories of pedagogic greetings, namely affective, motivational, regulative, inclusive, and personal-affirmative. These categories work through discursive mechanisms that build characters such as empathy, confidence, discipline, cooperation, and personal dignity and form classroom culture. This study emphasizes the role of teacher language as an implicit curriculum in character education based on classroom interaction

INTRODUCTION

Character education has become one of the global pedagogical priorities in the face of rapidly evolving social and moral challenges along with globalization and technological advancements. In the context of such rapid social change, character education has become crucial to form individuals who are not only academically intelligent, but also have strong morals and ethics. Various global studies show that the current young generation is faced with major challenges such as shifting values, individualism tendencies, as well as the negative impact of technology abuse (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004; Lickona, 2012). In Indonesia, this phenomenon is also evident, where character education has been included as a cross-curricular mandate in the national education system, including in the Independent Curriculum launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2022. The Independent Curriculum emphasizes the importance of building students' character as an explicit goal in addition to academic competence. Although this policy has strong political support, the practical mechanism for realizing character education in everyday classroom interactions is still very limited in terms of theory and empirical research. This creates a major challenge in ensuring that character building efforts carried out in the field are truly effective in shaping individuals who have good character (Lickona, 2012).

A number of previous studies have made important contributions to understanding how interactions in the classroom can shape students' character. Most research has focused on the language used by teachers as a means of conveying social and pedagogical values in classroom interactions. Cazden (2001) and Walsh (2011) state that teacher language serves as the primary medium for communicating pedagogical demands, social norms, as well as cognitive demands to students. However, although these studies have provided an understanding of the macro functions of teacher language in the context of classroom management and motivational communication, there has not been much research that has examined in depth how character values are transmitted through micro-linguistic practices in everyday interactions. Some recent studies have shown that pedagogic greetings – such as the use of affective epithets, role markers, and inclusive solidarity – play an important role in influencing students' social relationships and identities in the classroom (Nguyen, 2017; Manosuthikit, 2013). In addition, research by Villarroel-Henríquez and Sebastián (2024) highlights the relationship between teacher naming practices and the formation of student identity in educational contexts. Although these contributions provide important insights into social relationships and identity in classroom interactions, none of the studies systematically attribute the use of pedagogic greetings as a discursive practice that supports the formation of student character, especially in the context of Indonesian education which has distinctive social and cultural characteristics.

This research fills a gap in the literature by providing a more integrated and comprehensive analysis of the role of pedagogic greetings in the formation of student character. Although pedagogic greetings have been the object of study in politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992), empirical understanding of how this form of greeting

functions in classroom interaction in Indonesia is still very limited. This study proposes a more detailed taxonomy of five categories of pedagogic greetings (affective, motivational, regulative, inclusive, personal-affirmative), based on an integrated pragmatic-discursive theory, which goes beyond the three-category typology previously applied in descriptive studies. In addition, this study introduces the concept of pedagogic greeting as part of the implicit curriculum – a concept that has been discussed in curriculum studies (Jackson, 1968; Bernstein, 2000), but has never been applied to micro-linguistic analysis. Another original contribution is the revelation that the potential for character formation lies not only in the surface form of pedagogic greetings, but also in their discursive mechanisms, which involve identity projection, role indexing, and solidarity construction in classroom interactions. This research shows how such discursive mechanisms are key in supporting student character formation, which is not only driven by explicit instruction but also by social norms reflected in everyday classroom interactions. Thus, this research provides new insights into how pedagogic greetings can be utilized as a strategic tool in character formation, both in the context of Indonesian education and globally.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pedagogical Salutation: Theoretical Foundations

The form of greeting is a core dimension of the cross-linguistic social deictic system, which encodes relational parameters such as power, solidarity, affective attitudes, and social identity (Brown & Gilman, 1960; Levinson, 1983). In a pedagogical context, greeting serves as a pragmatic resource through which teachers construct and negotiate their relationships with learners in real-time. Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness provides a foundational framework: the form of greeting can be analyzed as a strategy of positive politeness (improving the face, oriented towards solidarity) or a strategy of negative politeness (threatening the face, marking authority), with appropriate implications for the relational climate of the classroom.

Scientific attention to teachers' greetings has developed in various traditions. Nguyen (2017) investigated the variation of greeting forms in the context of EFL Vietnam, showing that teachers' strategic selection between formal and informal greeting registers modulates learners' participation and affective engagement. Manosuthikit (2013) shows that in multilingual classrooms in Thailand, the choice of greeting forms marks an ideological position towards learners' language variety and identity. Villarroel-Henríquez and Sebastián (2024) show that teachers' greetings in secondary education in Chile shape learners' self-perceptions. Throughout these studies, pedagogic greetings emerged as a consequential practice in constructing identity but none of the studies integrated pragmatic, critical-discursive, and character-building perspectives into an integrated analytical framework.

In the Indonesian sociolinguistic context, greetings carry additional complexity: Bahasa Indonesia has a rich system of greetings that encode respect based on age, institutional authority, and affective proximity, which interacts with local Austronesian greeting systems in multilingual communities such as

Kupang (Adelaar & Himmelmann, 2005; Sudaryanto, 1993). This sociolinguistic specificity means that pedagogic greetings in Indonesian classrooms are simultaneously pragmatic, social-relational, and culturally embedded practices a complexity that cannot be adequately captured by universalist theories of politeness alone (Goddard & Wierzbicka, 2004).

Critical Discourse Analysis of Class Interactions

Critical discourse analysis (AWK) offers an analytical tool for examining how language in the classroom reproduces, challenges, or transforms social structures and identities (Fairclough, 1992; van Dijk, 2001). Fairclough's three-dimensional model which analyzes texts (linguistic forms), discursive practices (production, distribution, and consumption of discourse), and social practices (social conditions and effects of discourse) provides a tool capable of linking the micro-level textures of greeting forms to macro-level processes of character formation and identity construction.

Applied to classroom discourse, AWK has illuminated how teachers' language practices position learners as specific social and cognitive subjects (Bourne, 2003; Hasan, 2009). Bourne's (2003) foundational study shows that vertical schooling discourse characterized by decontextualized and hierarchically structured knowledge is transmitted through specific discursive practices that simultaneously construct learners' identities as learners. More recently, Creese and Blackledge (2015) have shown that the practice of greeting in multilingual classrooms serves as sites for identity negotiation, where teachers' linguistic choices legitimize or marginalize the subject's position of a particular learner.

Halliday's (1994) Systemic Functional Grammar (TFS) complements the AWK by providing a grammatically precise explanation of how classroom language simultaneously constructs experiential meaning (what is being discussed), interpersonal meaning (relational positions and values), and textual meaning (how discourse is organized). For this study, interpersonal metafunctions are particularly prominent: vocal structures, mode systems, and modality choices in the form of greetings encode relational positioning that have formative consequences for learners' characters (Martin & White, 2005; Thompson, 2014).

Language, Sociocultural Mediation, and Character Building

Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory establishes language as the primary medium of cognitive and social development, operating within the Proximal Development Zone (ZPP) through scaffolding mechanisms. Within this framework, teacher language does not simply transmit knowledge, but mediates the internalization of learners over cognitive, social, and moral norms. The extension of Vygotsky's theory to the realm of character education which was theorized by Wertsch (1991) and elaborated by Mercer and Howe (2012) in the tradition of dialogical learning establishes that character values are internalized through social interaction, not through explicit instruction alone.

The ethics of care Noddings (2013) provides a complementary perspective, positioning the quality of relational interaction in educational settings as the foundation of moral development. In Noddings' framework, the pedagogical relationship of care characterized by attention, responsiveness, and recognition

is not a supplement to academic education, but rather a constituent of moral education itself. Pedagogic greetings, understood as regular forms of attentive recognition, are the main locus in which caring pedagogical relationships are realized and maintained. Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory further contributes through the construct of self-efficacy: verbal persuasion which includes affirmative forms of greeting is one of the four main sources of self-efficacy belief, which directly links motivational greetings to students' sense of academic and personal capabilities.

Lickona's (2012) model of comprehensive character education identifies three components of character: moral knowledge (cognitive dimension), moral feeling (affective dimension), and moral action (behavioral dimension). Pedagogic greetings operate primarily on the affective and behavioral dimensions: affective greetings build moral feelings through relational warmth; regulative greetings shape moral actions through behavioral guidance. Together, these theoretical traditions boil down to the conclusion that teacher language in general, and pedagogic greetings in particular, are not incidental features of classroom life, but rather constitutive mechanisms of character formation.

Character Education in Indonesian Junior High School

Indonesia's national character education policy formalized in Presidential Regulation No. 87/2017 and reaffirmed in the framework of the Independent Curriculum (Kemendikbudristek, 2022) identifies eighteen core character values that need to be cultivated through all aspects of school life, including classroom interaction. Junior High School (SMP) represents a very critical stage of development: students aged 12–15 years are in an identity formation phase that Erikson (1968) refers to as ego identity versus role confusion a period in which social recognition and relational feedback from authority figures exert a disproportionate influence on the formation of self-concept and values (Harter, 2012; Wigfield et al., 2015).

Empirical research on character education in the context of Indonesian junior high schools has documented the effectiveness of integrated approaches involving curriculum, school culture, and teacher-student relationships (Ratna et al., 2022; Sari & Wulandari, 2021). However, this research pool has largely focused on programmatic and curricular interventions, rather than on micro-linguistic mechanisms through which character values are transmitted in everyday classroom interactions. The linguistic dimension of character education particularly the role of teachers' greetings in constructing relational conditions for character formation has never been systematically analyzed through AWK.

Research Gaps and Novelty Statements

A systematic review of the literature from three research streams (1) pedagogic greetings and teacher language, (2) AWK classroom interactions, and (3) character education in Indonesian secondary education reveals a consistent and significant gap: no previous study has integrated these three domains by analyzing pedagogic greetings as a pragmatic, pragmatically charged, discursive practice of character formation in the context of Indonesian junior high schools. Table 1 maps the existing literature on the five determinants of this study, documenting these gaps systematically.

Table 1. Literature Gap Matrix: Previous Studies on the Determinants of This Study

Studies	Spawn Pedagogic	AWK Framework	Character Building	The Context of Indonesia n Junior High School	Pragmatic- Discursive Integration
Bourne (2003)	✓	✗	±	✗	✗
Fairclough (1992)	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Walsh (2011)	±	✗	✗	✗	✗
Mercer & Howe (2012)	±	✗	✓	✗	✗
Lickona (2012)	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗
Villarroel-Henríquez & Sebastián (2024)	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
Mardiana et al. (2021)	✓	✗	±	✓	✗
Fikri et al. (2023)	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗

Note. ✓ = variables are explicitly addressed; ✗ = variables are not within the scope of the study; ± = variables are partially addressed. No previous studies have addressed all five variables simultaneously.

The novelty claim is specifically presented as follows:

Novelty 1 – A taxonomy of five categories of pedagogic greetings. Previous works have used binary typologies (formal/informal; solidarity/power) or described the form of greeting descriptively without taxonomic systematicity. This study proposes a taxonomy of the first five categories that are empirically based and theoretically integrated: affective, motivational, regulative, inclusive, and personal-affirmative each with pragmatic functions, discursive mechanisms, and specified character formation outcomes.

Novelty 2 – Pedagogic greetings as an implicit pedagogic curriculum. Based on Bernstein's (2000) distinction between instructional and regulative

discourse, as well as Jackson's (1968) early theorization of the hidden curriculum, this study is the first to classify pedagogic greetings as a systematically analyzed dimension of an implicit pedagogic curriculum—an argument with significant implications for the way character education policies are understood and supervised.

Novelty 3 – Discursive mechanisms as a mediating variable. The finding that the discursive mechanism of greeting (not its surface form) that mediates character formation goes beyond previous research that has correlated the form of greeting with attitudinal results without specifying the linguistic-discursive process through which the correlation is generated. This contribution has direct implications for teacher training, where the focus must shift from prescribing a particular form of greeting to the development of teacher discursive intentionality.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative critical discourse analysis (AWK) design. The qualitative paradigm is appropriately used because the purpose of the research is to produce a rich interpretively and theoretically based explanation of meaning-making in class interactions, not to measure frequency or test hypotheses in populations (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). AWK is particularly relevant to the research question because it provides an analytical tool to link micro-level linguistic choices with macro-level social processes in the form of identity construction and value formation (Fairclough, 1992; Rogers, 2011). The epistemological orientation of this research is critical-constructivist: language is understood as simultaneously reflecting and constituting social reality, and the role of the researcher is to make visible the ideological dimension of routine classroom practices that operate under the threshold of explicit consciousness of the participants (van Dijk, 2001).

Location, Participants, and Ethical Considerations

The research was conducted in three public junior high schools in Kupang City, East Nusa Tenggara Province: SMPN 5, SMPN 10, and SMPN 20. Kupang presents a sociolinguistically complex multilingual context, where Indonesian as the language of instruction interacts with local Austronesian languages (Helong, Uab Meto, Tetum) in the students' communicative repertoire making pragmatism a highly prominent and consequential form of greeting. Nine Indonesian language teachers participated in the study (five females, four males; teaching experience range: 3–19 years), along with 27 students who were purposively selected from grades VII, VIII, and IX. All participants provided written consent. Institutional approval was obtained from the relevant school authorities. Data were anonymized; teacher codes T1–T9 and student codes S1–S27 were used throughout the manuscript.

Data Collection

Data collection took place through three techniques that ran simultaneously and reinforced each other. First, classroom observation and video

recording were carried out on each teacher in five class sessions with durations ranging from 40–80 minutes per session, resulting in a total of 45 observation sessions and 23 hours of video-recorded classroom interaction. Observation was carried out using a structured observation protocol that identified the greeting event, interactional context, and student response.

Second, all recorded sessions were fully transcribed using a simplified transcription convention from Jefferson (2004) to capture prosodic features, speech overlap, and pause durations relevant to pragmatic interpretation. A total of 312 pedagogic greeting events were identified and extracted from the corpus.

Third, semi-structured interviews were conducted with each teacher individually with a duration of 45–60 minutes, and each group of participating students was interviewed in small groups of three people with a duration of 20–30 minutes each. The interviews focused on the teacher's awareness and intentionality in the selection of the form of greeting as well as the students' interpretive responses to different greeting categories. The interviews were conducted in Indonesian, audio recorded, and transcribed verbatim.

Analytical Framework and Procedures

The data analysis integrates four theoretical frameworks in a sequential, layered procedure. Table 2 summarizes the role of each framework in the analysis.

Table 2. Integrated Theoretical Framework: The Role and Application of Each Theory in Analysis

Theoretical Framework	Role in the Study	Key Concepts Applied	Outputs in Analysis
AWK Fairclough (1992)	Key analytical architecture	Three-dimensional model: discursive texts → practices → social practices	Mapping the form of greeting to social practices of character formation
Theory: Kesantunan Brown & Levinson (1987)	Pragmatic classification of greeting strategies	Positive vs. negative faces; solidarity vs. power	Classifying a greeting as threatening or improving the face
Theory Sociocultural Vygotsky (1978)	Theoretical foundations for language–character relations	Proximal Development Zone (ZPP); mediated learning	Greetings as a mediating tool in character scaffolding
TFS Halliday (1994) – Metafunksi Interpersonal	Systemic Analysis of the Meaning of the Term	Modes, modalities, vocal structures	Identify how greetings encode relational meaning and character

Analyst Wacana Gee (2014)	Discursive identity construction	big-D Discourse; identity device	Showing how greetings position students as social actors who carry character
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Note. AWK = Critical Discourse Analysis; TFS = Systemic Functional Grammar; ZPP = Proximal Development Zone.

The analytical procedure follows five stages derived from the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which is extended with AWK-specific procedures. The first stage is segmentation, in which all 312 pedagogic greeting events are extracted from transcripts and incorporated into a structured analytical corpus in NVivo 14.

The second stage is formal classification (Level 1 encoding). Each greeting event is encoded based on linguistic forms (lexical, grammatical, and prosodic features) using Halliday's (1994) TFS categories, which include vocal structures, modes, and modalities.

The third stage is pragmatic function analysis (Level 2 encoding). Each event is encoded based on pragmatic functions using the framework of Brown and Levinson (1987), namely positive/negative politeness strategies and threatening/improving faces, and Gee (2014) discourse analysis which includes Big Discourse and identity positioning.

The fourth stage is the analysis of discursive mechanisms (Level 3 encoding). Each event is analyzed using Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional model to identify the discursive mechanisms that connect the form of greeting to social practices.

The fifth stage is character formation mapping. The discursive mechanism is mapped to the results of character formation through triangulation with student interview data and class observation field notes.

Reliability between coders was established by having the second researcher independently encode 20% of a random subsample of greeting events across all three levels. Cohen's kappa values were: Level 1 ($\kappa = 0.91$), Level 2 ($\kappa = 0.85$), Level 3 ($\kappa = 0.82$), all of which showed strong agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977). Credibility was further ascertained through member checking with three teacher participants and negative case analysis.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Taxonomy of Pedagogical Greetings: A Framework of Five Categories

The analysis of 312 pedagogic greeting events identified five categories of pedagogic greetings that can be empirically distinguished. Table 3 presents the taxonomy along with linguistic indicators, pragmatic functions, and character formation results.

Table 3. Taxonomy of the Five Categories of Pedagogic Greetings: Forms, Functions, and Character Outcomes

Category	Pragmatic Function	Indicator Linguistics	Character Values Formed
Affective Greeting	Build emotional closeness and a sense of belonging	Evaluative noun phrases, affirmative epithet (e.g., great children)	Empathy, respect, belonging
Motivational Greetings	Projecting a positive future; maintaining engagement and self-efficacy	Prospective references, achievement-oriented epithet (e.g., would-be leader)	Confidence, motivation to learn, optimism
Regulative Greeting	Organizing behavior; establishing social roles and responsibilities	Role-referential forms, positional markers (e.g., group leader)	Discipline, responsibility, accountability
Sapaan Inklusif	Constructing a collective identity and shared learning goals	plural first person, a marker of solidarity (e.g., all of us)	Cooperation, social cohesion, teamwork
Personal-Affirmative Greetings	Acknowledging individual contributions; validating identity	Self-name + evaluative particle (e.g., Rina, that's great!)	Individual dignity, intrinsic motivation

Note. Categories were inductively derived from 312 greeting events in 45 classroom sessions (9 teachers, 3 schools). Theoretical foundations: Brown & Levinson (1987); Halliday (1994); Fairclough (1992); Gee (2014).

This five-category taxonomy goes beyond the three-category typology that existed in previous descriptive works (Mardiana et al., 2021; Fikri et al., 2023) by distinguishing inclusive greetings—which construct collective identities through plural first-person solidarity markers—from personal-affirmative greetings, which target the identity and dignity of individual learners. These distinctions have both theoretical and practical significance: inclusive greetings mobilize the dynamics of Vygotsky's (1978) collaborative ZPP, while personal-affirmative greetings activate Bandura's (1997) verbal persuasion pathway to self-efficacy. Treating the two as one category would obscure these different character-formation mechanisms.

Affective Greeting: Facial Enhancement and Empathy Formation

Data 1 – Teacher T3, SMPN 10, Grade VIII: "Children of mother's pride, let's start learning today."

Affective greetings, the category that appears most frequently in the corpus (n=98, 31.4% of all events), are characterized by the use of evaluative noun phrases that explicitly entrust high social value to students as a group. In the above example, the nominative construction of children of maternal pride combines the possessive influence of maternal kinship (mother/ teacher) with the evaluative noun of pride (pride/ source of pride), promulgating what Brown and Levinson (1987) classify as an act of positive face-enhancement: the teacher affirms the student's desire to be valued and appreciated. Textual analysis of Fairclough (1992) reveals that this form of greeting operates through a specific discursive mechanism the ritual of affirmation that routineizes the experience of being recognized as a valuable person in the classroom institution.

Student interview data (S3, SMPN 10) corroborated the effect of character formation: students reported feeling valued and motivated to participate more actively when addressed in such forms. This is in line with Noddings' (2013) theoretical claim that attentive care manifested through interactional recognition not just programmatic instruction is the affective foundation of moral education. Halliday's (Halliday, 1994) interpersonal analysis shows that affective greetings encode high positive modalities (certainty of students' values) through evaluative lexicon, constructing relational positions in the form of unconditional positive rewards that provide the framework for the development of empathy and respect as reciprocal social dispositions.

Motivational Greeting: Identity Projection and Activation of Self-Efficacy

Data 2 – Teacher T7, SMPN 5, Class IX: "Future leaders, show your best abilities!"

Motivational greetings (n=74, 23.7%) were characterized by prospective nominations: teachers greet learners not with their current identities, but with projected future identities that encode achievement, leadership, and social contributions. In Data 2, future leaders position students as proto-citizens on a developmental trajectory toward social responsibility a discursive movement that Gee (2014) theorizes as a Big-Discourse identity projection, in which classroom interactions assign learners to a larger social narrative of who they are and who they can become.

Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy sheds light on an underlying psychological mechanism: motivational greetings are a form of verbal persuasion one of the four identified sources of self-efficacy beliefs that activate a learner's sense of personal capability and agency. Teacher interview data (T7) confirm that this form of greeting is used intentionally to counter students' demeaning beliefs in the context of high-risk exams. The social practice dimension Fairclough (1992) reveals that motivational greetings are not ideologically neutral: they implicitly reproduce a meritocratic narrative of individual achievement and leadership an ideological dimension that deserves critical awareness in teachers' professional development.

Regulatory Greeting: Role Indexing and Responsibility Formation

Data 3 – Teacher T1, SMPN 20, Class VII: "Class leader, please make sure your members are ready to learn."

Regulative greetings (n=67, 21.5%) function through role indexing: teachers greet students through institutionally defined roles, not through their personal names or group membership. In Data 3, the form of the class leader activates students' awareness of their positional responsibilities in the social structure of the classroom. This is in line with Bernstein's (2000) distinction between instructional discourse (about knowledge) and regulative discourse (about social order and identity): regulative greeting is the main instrument through which school regulatory discourse is transmitted through routine interactional practice.

From the perspective of politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987), regulative greetings employ nuanced strategies: by addressing learners through their roles rather than imposing directive behavior through direct commands, teachers maintain a negative face of the learner (autonomy) while communicating authority that Walsh (2011) identifies as a productive balance between control and agency of learners in classroom discourse. Student interview data show that learners who receive a regulatory greeting report a stronger sense of responsibility and commitment to their institutional roles, supporting Lickona's (2012) claim that moral action is formed through the consistent exercise of responsibility in a structured social context.

Inclusive Greeting: The Construction of Solidarity and Collective Character

Data 4 — Teacher T5, SMPN 5, Class VIII: "We can all definitely solve this together."

Inclusive greetings (n=48, 15.4%) operate through the use of plural first-person solidarity markers that dissolve the teacher-learner boundary and position the classroom as a collective cognitive and social agent. The form of all of us in Data 4 is grammatically noteworthy: the Indonesian language maintains the distinction between us (inclusive us: speaker + listener) and us (exclusive: speaker, not listener), and the teacher's choice over all of us explicitly places teachers and learners in a joint effort promulgating what Mercer and Howe (2012) call interthinking, i.e. the dialogical construction of shared knowledge and value.

The theoretical significance of Vygotskian (1978) is clear: inclusive greetings construct an intersubjective ZPP in which the difficulty of the task is mediated collectively through the linguistic positioning of teachers and learners as co-agents. Student data show that inclusive greetings are related to higher levels of voluntary participation and mutually supportive behavior between friends a character result that is consistent with the values of cooperation and social cohesion mandated in the Independent Curriculum (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). However, an analysis of social practices by Fairclough (1992) reveals that inclusive greetings can also function ideologically to mask asymmetrical power relations behind the veil of collective solidarity a dimension of discursive complexity that needs to be recognized by teachers and researchers.

Personal-Affirmative Greeting: Individual Recognition and Dignity

Data 5 — Teacher T9, SMPN 20, Class IX: "Rina, your answer is very precise—thank you for having the courage to answer!"

Personal-affirmative greetings (n=25, 8.0%) are the rarest but potentially most consequential category for identity: by combining a learner's self-name with

a specific and contingent positive evaluation, teachers enact what Rogers (2011) calls recognition the intersubjective recognition of the individual as a valued agent in the classroom community. Ryan and Deci (2000) self-determination theory illuminate motivational mechanisms: personal-affirmative greetings simultaneously meet basic psychological needs for competence and connectedness, activate intrinsic motivation and support the internalization of the value of academic participation.

AWK's analysis reveals that personal-affirmative greetings are linguistically complex: it requires teachers to integrate three gestures personal nomination, specific content evaluation, and social-relational recognition (courage, participation) in a single greeting event. Teacher interview data (T9) show that this complexity means that personal-affirmative greetings are used intentionally and selectively, making them highly visible interactive events for both the students being addressed and the class watching. This social visibility reinforces the character-building function: the class observes and implicitly learns that academic participation is a morally valuable act, reinforcing the value of character in the form of intellectual courage.

Integrated Analysis: Discursive Mechanisms as Mediation Variables

The central theoretical contribution of this study is the identification of discursive mechanisms as mediating variables between the form of greeting and the outcome of character formation. Previous research has established a correlation between positive teacher greetings and attitudinal outcomes of students (Fikri et al., 2023; Villarroel-Henríquez & Sebastián, 2024) without specifying the linguistic-discursive process through which the form of greeting produces its formative effect. The analysis carried out in this study, by systematically applying Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional model to each category of greetings, identified five different mechanisms: facial enhancement (affective), identity projection (motivational), role indexing (regulative), solidarity construction (inclusive), and individual recognition (personal-affirmative). Table 3 presents an integrated analysis.

Table 3. Integrated Analysis: Discursive Mechanisms Linking Greetings to Character Formation

Category: Sapaan	Pragmatic Function	Discursive Mechanism	Character Values Formed	Landasan Theoretis
Affective	Emotional validation and interpersonal closeness	Positive politeness; facial enhancement (Brown & Levinson, 1987)	Empathy, respect, belonging	Noddings (2013): care as the foundation of moral education
Motivational	Activation of self-efficacy	Identity projection;	Confidence, motivation to	Bandura (1997): verbal persuasion as

	and future orientation	prospective nomination	learn, resilience	a source of self-efficacy
Regulatif	Regulation of behavior and role assignment	Indexer-role greetings; Authority markings	Discipline, responsibility, accountability	Bernstein (2000): regulative discourse in pedagogical space
Inclusive	Collective identity construction	Solidarity markers; plural first-person agency	Cooperation, social cohesion, teamwork	Vygotsky (1978): Collaborative ZPP; dialogical learning
Personal-Afirmatif	Individual recognition and affirmation of dignity	Personal naming + positive evaluation	Intrinsic motivation, individual dignity, self-esteem	Ryan & Deci (2000): support autonomy in self-determination

Note. Character values are in line with the eighteen core values of Indonesia's national character education framework (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). The discursive mechanism is derived from Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional AWK model.

The significance of the framework of discursive mechanisms lies in its ability to show why the same surface shape of a greeting can produce different character-forming effects depending on the mechanism through which it operates. For example, the use of a learner's name can be a personal-affirmative greeting (a mechanism of individual recognition, generating intrinsic dignity and motivation) or it can be a regulative action (a mechanism of indexing roles, generating discipline) depending on the pragmatic context and discursive frame that surrounds it. These findings imply that the professional development of teachers focused on the form of greeting alone prescreening certain forms without attention to the discursive mechanisms through which they operate will be inadequate. What teachers need is discursive intentionality: the ability to consciously select and use categories of greetings by understanding the character-forming mechanisms mediated by each category.

Pedagogic Greetings as Implicit Pedagogic Curriculum

The second major theoretical contribution is the theorization of pedagogic greetings as a dimension that can be systematically analyzed from the implicit pedagogic curriculum. Jackson (1968) introduced the concept of a hidden curriculum to describe the values, norms, and identities that schools transmit through routine organizational and interactional practices, rather than through explicit instruction. Bernstein (2000) developed this concept in the sociological theory of pedagogical discourse, distinguishing between instructional discourse (what is taught) and regulative discourse (how learners are positioned as social

subjects). This research shows that pedagogic greetings are the main vehicle for regulatory discourse: through the daily use that has become a routine of affective, motivational, regulative, inclusive, and personal-affirmative forms of greeting, teachers implicitly but systematically transmit the values of empathy, confidence, discipline, cooperation, and dignity values that are exactly mandated by Indonesia's character education policy (Kemendikbudristek, 2022) without these values being explicitly mentioned or taught.

This theorization has immediate policy implications: if pedagogic greetings are an implicit pedagogic curriculum dimension, then the supervisory frameworks for character education which are currently focused on programmatic and curricular interventions need to be expanded to include systematic observation and reflective analysis of teacher greeting practices. The AWK framework and greeting taxonomy developed in this study provide analytical tools for such expansion.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study shows that pedagogic greetings are a dimension of classroom interaction that is systematically structured and contributes to the character formation of students in Indonesian junior high schools. Analysis of 312 greeting events in 23 hours of classroom interaction recordings through the integrated AWK framework of Fairclough (1992), Brown and Levinson (1987), Halliday (1994), and Vygotsky (1978) resulted in a taxonomy of five categories of pedagogic greetings, namely affective, motivational, regulative, inclusive, and personal-affirmative, which are differentiated based on linguistic forms, pragmatic functions, discursive mechanisms, and character formation results.

This research provides three main theoretical contributions, namely the preparation of a taxonomy of five categories of pedagogic greetings, the theorization of pedagogic greetings as part of an implicit pedagogic curriculum, and the identification of discursive mechanisms as mediating variables between the form of greeting and character formation. These findings show that teachers' greetings function not only as communication practices, but also as linguistic-discursive mechanisms that build the values of empathy, self-confidence, discipline, cooperation, and personal dignity.

Practically, this study emphasizes the importance of professional development of teachers who pay attention to discursive intentionality in the use of pedagogic greetings and the need to expand the supervision of character education through observation of AWK-based greeting practices. This study has limitations in the context of three schools in one city, a focus on learning Indonesian, and cross-sectional design. Therefore, further research is needed through multi-site and longitudinal design to examine the relationship between the practice of teacher greetings and the development of students' character more broadly.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Further research can develop the study of pedagogic greetings through multi-site and longitudinal designs by integrating critical discourse analysis,

language analysis technology, and measurement of student character development. Future studies can explore the influence of contextual factors such as school culture, students' social background, teacher characteristics, and subject area on the effectiveness of discursive mechanisms of greetings in shaping character.

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