

# Analyzing the Story of a Filipino COVID-19 Survivor through Positioning Analysis

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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### Abstract

COVID-19 has brought so many changes in the world. It is a test of faith and hope to everyone. Many scholars have used different lenses in fields of research in this topic. In language studies, many have zoomed in on this topic in corpus-based linguistics. In discourse analysis, few studies have dealt with this, especially narrative analysis. Using the frameworks of Bamberg (1997) and Barkhuizen (2009), three levels of positioning analysis were unpacked by a COVID-19 survivor's life story. The first level of positioning answers how the characters positioned themselves concerning the events that happened. On the other hand, the second level of positioning seeks to answer how the characters positioned themselves to the audience. Lastly, the third level of positioning aims to position narrators to themselves. The participant was a student of the researcher who agreed to share his story in this paper. The main character almost lost his life due to COVID-19 and was hospitalized for nearly two weeks. The researcher discovered linguistic elements present during the interview, such as linguistic politeness, transitional devices, metaphors, and discourse particles, that helped the researcher analyze and unpack the three levels of positioning analysis. The actual occurrences that happened to the participant served as a turning point in his experience—from non-believer to believer of COVID-19. The paper further explored how COVID-19 became a test of faith, love, and hope to the participant.

**Keywords:** COVID19 Stories, Discourse Analysis, Narrative Analysis, Positioning Analysis

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

With the outbreak of COVID-19, a virus that caused so many destructions in the world, many lives were compromised. This pandemic has caused so much impact on the global workforce. Aside from the millions of people that this virus has infected, people's mental health is greatly affected (Ng et al., 2021). Strict quarantine measures are being implemented across the globe to stop the transmission of the virus. From 2020-2022, different businesses have been heavily affected because of the government measures people should follow. Each country has its distinct protocols that are strictly implemented (Torales, O'Higgins, Castaldelli-Maia, & Ventriglio, 2020). More than the news stories aired on media and the newsfeed that came across to our social media accounts, there are tons of untold stories worth reading and emulating regarding COVID-19 stories. These are stories of championing the pandemic, surviving in this crisis, or even tragic stories that lead to the death of not just one but many lives. After getting positive for the virus, Dean Ortiz, a government employee in Region XI- Philippines, enabled him to renew his faith much stronger than before. Because of his experience, he said his hope allowed him to combat the darkest hours of his life (Palicte, 2020). On the other hand, not all people are lucky enough to get through this

virus. A Philippine COVID-19 doctor, Dr. Gio Pineda, witnesses daily the worst situations in their hospital – inadequate beds, patients in the waiting area, and patients losing their lives. Dr. Pineda is pleading with government officials to respond to the worst situations experienced by health workers and Filipino people (Gotinga, n.d.). In the present time, the World Health Organization's (WHO) announcement on May 5, 2023, that COVID-19 is no longer an international public health emergency has raised hopes that the pandemic is on its way to becoming endemic (Klobucista & Ferragamo, n.d.).

Stories are emerging trends in qualitative research. Narratives have been used to know the order and sequence of the events and to understand in-depth the emotions and essential details of the participants (Sandelowski, 1991). Since narrative inquiry is widely used in other fields like Social Sciences, this method is also used in Applied Linguistics (Benson, 2014). Narrative inquiry is commonly used in language learning papers and teachers' identity (Bell, 2002; Isbell, Rawal, Oh, & Loewen, 2017; Umino & Benson, 2016. Pavlenko (2007)) even criticized linguistic autobiographies, journals, and others in applied linguistics data collection form. Because of her critical review, she recommended using a narrative approach to determine the paper's content and context. Systematic analysis will be achieved once the researcher has used this lens. Riessman (2002) highlighted important points in the narrative approach in analyzing personal narratives. Interview questions are deemed necessary to focus on essential angles to be highlighted. She was reminded of this lesson when she conducted a study regarding divorce in the early 1980s. The participant goes on and on with the story going beyond the scope of the context. Smaller stories become longer if the interviewer does not lead the participant properly. The narrative turn is also important in the whole course of conducting this kind of study. This burgeoning literature has also been used in different disciplines like social sciences. This approach does not assume objectivity; hence, subjectivity and positionality will be achieved through the art of storytelling.

Bamberg (1997) clearly states the different levels of positionality. This approach is divided into three levels, which I will further explore in my paper. The first level is the speaker's relationship with the reported events. The linguistic evidence shown in the interview transcript aims to unpack the agent who is the controller while the action is inflicted upon the other. On the other hand, the second level aims to determine the speaker's position to the audience. This level seeks to analyze the linguistic evidence describing the particular discourse mode employed. Lastly, on the third level, this determines the speaker's position to themselves. This sought to answer, "*Who am I in the story?*" This also attempts to see how the audience understands the speaker. There have been so many stories that were analyzed using the narrative approach. Whether small or big stories, researchers have successfully unpacked the different levels of positionality using Bamberg's framework (Bamberg, 1997). Currently, where researchers are restricted to fieldwork outside their houses, social media can be a vehicle in analyzing small stories using visual small stories. Through hashtags and shared stories of netizens, it is possible to unpack these stories and be analyzed in different forms (Giaxoglou & Spilioti, 2020). Since COVID-19 is the talk of the town in the present times, it is interesting to look for a small story that shows emergence in fighting the virus. My main objective in this paper is to analyze a fellow COVID-19 survivor's small story who almost lost his life because of his challenging experience this year. His battle to fight the virus has never been easy, but he survived and is given a second chance to live with his hope and faith.

Since the pandemic started, COVID-19 has been an emerging topic in healthcare, business, education, and even applied linguistics. In applied linguistics, there have been numerous published articles in various journals studying the language of the pandemic. Many scholars have attempted to discover how these terms are used in the present times using corpus linguistics. COVID-19 is not just a worldwide health problem; it has become a communication barrier to multilingual people across the globe, especially in the education sector (Piller, Zhang, & Li, 2020; Zheng, 2020). Through participants' interviews, Li, Xie, Ai, and Li (2020) explored the experiences of international students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Proficiency in the Chinese language has been viewed as one of the communication gaps in coping with the communication crisis needs in the school. Hence, students have to rely on their translation applications to understand the context of the language. In South Korea (Jang & Choi, 2020), Chinese students can share

their experiences regarding their current situation through a platform. With this, the university addresses the multilingualism issue in times of pandemic crisis. Unfortunately, Indigenous peoples have been disregarded for good public health information access in the marginalized community sector in Taiwan. The top-down scheme of the government has not been effective for the said community (Chen, 2020). Aside from the issues of multilingualism, COVID-19 has been pragmatically analyzed by linguists. Katila, Gan, and Goodwin (2020) posited that since *social distancing* has been commonly used during the pandemic, gestures, haptics, and manner of talking of politicians have also changed because of the spatial consideration between speakers. Even in business establishments, the pandemic breakthrough has heavily affected and changed the business scheme, especially in the modes of payment of customers. Since customers are restricted from paying in physical stores, they have resorted to different online payments. Mondada et al. (2020) discovered that customer social interactions have drastically changed. This is shown in the social actions in the corpus data they analyzed in their study. Also, regarding the frequency of tweets on social media, Schweinberger, Haugh, and Hames (2021) figured out that COVID-19 is frequently used in the medical field compared to others. The term has also been used negatively by netizens around the world. This is the result of the dissatisfaction that they have felt due to the ongoing high number of cases up to this date.

Since the coronavirus is the talk of the town today, linguists and other scholars have continuously embarked on how the terms are being used in various places and situations. With regard to the growing study of corpus linguistics, as of March 2021, the Coronavirus corpus has more than 900 million in size (Davies, 2021). The said corpus can be found in the New on the Web (NOW) corpus. Through this, users can view the collocates of the phrases and words and observe how these change from time to time. Tan et al. (2020) analyzed how misinformation is spread in today's pandemic using different Corpus software. It was found that netizens have manifested resistance along with their personal decisions. Thus, the authors recommended the public to be extra careful with their language use on social media to avoid fear of other people. Also, terms such as *curfew*, *quarantine*, and *lockdown* have been recurring words in the pandemic (Tan et al., 2020). These words that originate in the military are now used in the situation we are in today. Government officials have been using these terms to impose strict protocols on the public. In addition, they have been using persuasive strategies to reiterate the quarantine guidelines. Alkhawaldeh (2021) analyzed the said strategies in Jordan using a Corpus-based approach. Religious quotations and the use of metaphors and repetitions are the common strategies of their government in response to fighting the pandemic.

Many studies regarding COVID-19 have been published in different reputable journals in Applied Linguistics. Until now, scholars have continuously explored how linguistics can take part in the ongoing global phenomenon. Based on existing studies, scholars have examined how COVID-19 has affected people's multilingual communication, especially in the education sector. Also, the terms commonly used are pragmatically analyzed in different contexts. What has been prevalent is the continuous pursuit of linguists to explore language use in corpus-based studies. The previous studies also explore approaches such as corpus-based software and interviews with the participants' insights. However, no studies are yet exploring the discourse of COVID-19 survivors, exploring their stories and positionality of how they survived the virus. It is imperative to analyze the linguistic details behind the stories of these survivors to instill awareness to the public on how to be preventive during these times. Moreover, this will give a clear picture to the audience of the coping mechanisms they can also adopt if the same situation happens to them. In a narrative analysis, the goal is not just simply analyzing the content of the stories, specifically the language used. The researcher should be keen on how the participant shares the stories (Riessman, 2002). It was also asked by Mishler (1995) which among the two should focus on the analysis: whether the succession of events of the stories or the textual representation. With this, I patterned my approach to the study of Barkhuizen (2009), who studied a narrative analysis of a pre-service language teacher. The significance of a narrative analysis of one person's COVID experience lies in its potential to foster empathy, understanding, and collective resilience among readers, particularly within the Filipino context. By sharing personal stories, we can shed light on the diverse and complex realities individuals face during a global pandemic like COVID-19. The

author utilized the framework of Bamberg (1997). In this paper, I will also utilize the framework since the positioning analysis is clearly defined.

The first level of positioning answers how the characters positioned themselves concerning the events that happened. Characters are constructed whether they are protagonists or antagonists of the story. The linguistic evidence shown in the story will help the characters reveal this level of positioning. On the other hand, the second level of positioning seeks to answer how the characters positioned themselves to the audience. Same with the first level, the linguistic evidence helps in finding out the second level of positionality. Here, the narrator figures out whether the speaker makes excuses and blames others for their situation. Lastly, the third level of positioning aims to position narrators to themselves. Here, they will evaluate who they are in the story.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

Given the framework of the study, I used Narrative Analysis as my approach in this qualitative research. Participants' stories are legitimate data sources in different empirical approaches, especially in Applied Linguistics (Pavlenko, 2002). Due to time constraints, I have only interviewed one participant who shared his story regarding his battle with the COVID-19 virus. Since we were instructed not to conduct the interview face-to-face, I recorded my interview using my phone since the participant has an intermittent connection at home. I secured an ethical clearance and used a pseudonym to hide his identity. In selecting my participant, I have made sure that he/she meets the following criteria I have set: First, the participant should have been fully recovered for the past two months from COVID-19 virus; Second, the participant should have experienced moderate to severe case brought by the virus; Third, the participant should have been hospitalized either in private or public hospital in the Philippines for at least two weeks; Fourth, the participant should have experienced other symptoms brought by the virus such as difficulty of breathing, headache, flu, loss of taste and smell, diarrhea, and others; and lastly, he/she is willing to share the details of his/her story. After setting the criteria that I have set, I found a participant who could qualify for my study. *Mairo*, not his real name, was my former student two years ago in College. He posted his experience on Facebook regarding his journey in facing one of the most challenging battles in his life. I sent a direct message to his account and briefly discussed his case. Without second thoughts, Mairo agreed to be my participant in the study. The conversation we had was recorded and transcribed (See Appendix). The data transcript was written to provide an objective analysis based on the framework of the study. The three levels of positionality were analyzed.

## 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

To present the data analysis, I have thematically arranged the data starting from the participant's background up to the three levels of positioning analysis.

### 3.1 Mairo, as the Main Character

Mairo, a third-year college student in a state College in the Philippines, is the eldest among three siblings in their family. From a private university during elementary to senior high school levels, his father lost his job a month after his senior high school graduation. This has been the reason why he was forced to enroll in the state college to defray their family expenses. Had it not happened, he would have enrolled in a private university in Manila with his two other cousins. It was a good thing he passed a national scholarship, which granted him a monthly school and book allowance and other expenses. From a medical course, he enrolled in a Civil Engineering program at the state college since it is part of his scholarship contract to pursue a program related to Science, Technology, and Engineering Mathematics (STEM). Since his residence is a two-hour trip to his school, he decided to rent a small room. Since high school, Mairo has engaged in part-time tutoring jobs for students in different subject areas. Because of his scholarship and a part-time job, he is helping his family with their everyday expenses since his father has already lost his job.

I met Mairo in the first year of his program. He was my student in one of his General Education courses. Mairo was one of my best students who excelled in all the activities I gave to their class. He has good writing skills. This is why I invited him to apply to be an editorial staff in the College's official school publication. He submitted himself to the screening process without second thoughts and qualified as a publication student writer. During that time, I was the publication moderator of the College, which is why I have been reading the content of their articles. Mairo is known for his straightforward opinion articles against the government. I should say he was never afraid to criticize the corruption and wrongdoings of government officials. Three years ago, before the lockdown, Mairo posted an opinion article regarding his thoughts about the pandemic. He expressed his opinion that he never believed in the COVID-19 virus. The said virus is just simple flu and cough. He urged the scientists to explore further the authenticity of the facts about the coronavirus. Also, he called for a revisit of the policy to put the country in a total lockdown. If that happens, according to him, many people will lose their jobs placing the country's economy at high risk. He also urged government officials to think of a sustainable way where the welfare of the Filipino people would not be compromised. In his other argument, had COVID-19 been true, government officials should have thought of early mechanisms that would not put Filipinos at risk. Long-term plans should be thought of instead of putting the country at a halt.

Since Mairo is an active officer in other community organizations, I have seen his initiatives in their barangay during the pandemic crisis. He has organized a community pantry and spearheaded other activities for youth. He is active on his social media accounts. Without rants regarding the government, he would post his published articles and outdoor activities, including trekking, mountain climbing, and the like. When I had my first vaccination, he privately messaged me and asked about my experience. I also asked him if he enlisted for vaccination, but he said he is not yet ready to be vaccinated because he is not entirely convinced that the COVID-19 virus exists. More than a month later, Mairo became inactive on his social media accounts. He did not post nor share anything. After a month, he posted his selfie with the following hashtags: *COVID19Survivor AnotherLifeBestowedUponMe RenewedFaith*. It was confirmed that he survived the COVID-19 virus and was confined in a private hospital for more than two weeks. To further explore the story behind the survival story of Mairo, I decided to reach out through Facebook Messenger. One series of interview was conducted via phone since the small story of the participant was analyzed (Atkinson, 2008). The extract of the interview is appended to the paper. Conflicts were mentioned in the story that is central to the positioning analysis. The imagined part in hurdling the conflicts was also mentioned in the story.

### 3.2 Mairo's Toughest Battle of his Life (First Level Positioning Analysis)

For the first level position, as Bamberg (1997) said, researchers should be answering the question, how are the characters in position to one another within the reported events. With this, I have tried to analyze all the lines to answer the said question. Line-by-line reading is essential to make sure that it captures the analysis on this part. Also, I have pictured the people behind the story, as narrated by Mairo, and their relationship in the small story. I have also captured his imagined future after the battle he has gone through. Mairo is the main character in the story. Therefore, he is deeply involved in the story's actual events and what he imagines happening in the future.

Since Mairo is the focalizing narrator, I immediately started asking him how he finally realized that what caused the main challenge he had was the COVID-19 virus. Instead of answering this question directly, he first positioned himself as a non-believer (Line 4). He further explained his stance in Lines (5-7). He used words such as *scams* and *rob* to describe his anger towards the kind of government we have. In the narrator's background, I have mentioned that he is a school publication writer in the College. Most of his articles are about his frustration with the system he observes. He is straightforward about criticizing the current administration, and he is using the school paper as his platform to divulge his opinions. His position as a non-believer with the virus can also be seen when I reiterated his stance (Line 34) and asked him to expound more on that situation. His expanded statements become his conflict when he narrates how he becomes complacent and careless with the protocol situation (Line 39). This contradicts his statement in

Lines (37-38) when he said he is following the protocols but narrates that he becomes complacent in the situation, especially with his circle of friends (Lines 39-40). Another situation supporting his positionality is when he experiences fever (Lines 41-42). He used the word **disregarded** (Line 43) to show that despite experiencing earlier symptoms, he did not take it seriously at first. Also, despite other symptoms that manifest (Lines 48-51), he is still in denial of his situation. In lines (43 and 52), he mentioned, **It was just nothing** twice to show his positionality.

Because of Mairo's stance of not believing in the COVID-19 virus, his experience and manifestations shifted his belief. When I asked him if he now believed in the virus (Line 7), the following discourse particles were captured: **Oh, sure**, and **definitely** (Line 9). These markers express agreement with the question I asked. The following expressions such as **And it's horrifying** (Line 10) and **It creeps me out** (Line 12), further supported his testimonial regarding his experience. The interview can also be gleaned regarding his thought that he might not make it (Lines 11, 15, and 29). These lines appeared thrice. This expression manifests that what he had gone through was beyond what he foresees. With these, Mairo positions himself as a direct person affected by COVID-19. In his story, aside from the symptoms he experienced, he detail-by-detail narrates his challenging experience in the hospital after his situation worsened brought by the virus. He suffered moderate pneumonia (Line 99), and his oxygen level is fluctuating (Line 102). Aside from that, he also lost his senses of taste and smell (Line 106). Mairo becomes physically frail in the situation. Aside from this challenging situation, he is emotionally affected. He imagines the situation of his family members in close contact with him. His questions on the top of his mind after confirming that he had tested positive for the virus (Lines 88-90) made him worry about its possible effect on his parents and siblings. The emotional stress that he feels at that time leads to another conflict in the story.

This time, this is a conflict within himself. He is blaming himself for the current situation they are in. The use of a past conditional sentence **Had I listened to my parents...** (Lines 93-94) indicates repentance for the situation they are experiencing at that moment. The narrator also used another conditional sentence **If I could turn back the time** (Line 97). This also supports the conflict with himself. His imagined situation in the story connects to the other characters – his parents, siblings, and God. His parents are the persons who should have been listened to by the narrator so they would not experience the challenging situation that they had (Lines 93-94). On the other hand, his sibling stood beside him in his journey despite being infected by the virus and played a crucial role in the story. Mairo describes his sibling as the caretaker (Line 79) and extends his gratitude for being with him in his darkest times (Line 112). Aside from his family members, God served as the main strength of the narrator in the story. **Thank God** was mentioned (Lines 17, 22, and 30) every time a good thing happened in the story. When her sibling was asymptomatic (Line 17), when her sibling stood beside her (Line 22), and when he still saw hope in everything (Line 30). God has been the reason for these happenings. These characters in the story are the sources of strength for the narrator to keep going. After what happened to him, another imagined self of the narrator is that he will serve as the voice and helping hand to other people in the same situation (Lines 148-149). It has been pointed out by him the need for moral support for people battling the virus. Through conversational units and detailed analysis of Mairo's story (Korobov, 2001), his position with the reported events, the other characters in the story, and conflicts were unpacked in the first level of positioning analysis. To sum up, this is a story of 'shifting perspective' from a non-believer to a believer of the effects caused by the COVID-19 virus. The actual occurrences that happened to the narrator serve as his turning point.

### 3.3 Mairo, in Relation to the Audience (Second Level Positioning Analysis)

From analyzing the position of the characters based on the reported events, the second level answers the question as to how the speaker positions him/herself to the audience (Bamberg, 1997). The small story is a narrative phone interview to analyze the story of a COVID-19 survivor. This is constructed by myself as the interviewer and Mairo as the interviewee. As a COVID-19 survivor, too, and has been through the challenging experience brought by this virus, my role is to let Mairo elaborate further regarding his experience. The experiences that Mairo shared have

similarities with what we also experienced this year.

I began with a flashback question asking when it sank into Mairo's mind that he experienced COVID-19 (Lines 1-2). However, he did not answer the question directly. Instead, he shared that he did not believe at first with the virus (Lines 3-6). Line 7 shows that there is a shift from his previous statement. The use of coordinating conjunction at the start of the statement (Line 7) shifted his earlier claim. Since the first question is indirectly answered, I reiterated the question (Line 8). As can be gleaned from the interview extracts, the first question requires an answer of expounding statements (Lines 1-2). But since it was indirectly answered, the second question (Line 8) requires a yes or no answer to ground the conversation better. Yes or no question has pragmatic implications and is not simply an alternative question (Bolinger, 1978a; Yadugiri, 1986). Mairo answered with several discourse particles to express his agreement with the question (Line 9). He tries to expound his experience with several adjectives and verbs to verbalize the scenario he had gone through (Lines 10-17). I clarified if all their family members tested positive since he mentioned that one of his siblings is asymptomatic (Lines 16-17). Terms such as symptomatic and asymptomatic are some of the terms used associated with COVID-19. These neologisms exist in COVID-19 corpus (Asif, Zhiyong, Iram, & Nisar, 2021). Mairo continued to describe the temporal and spatial situation in the hospital (Lines 25-27). Having the same situation that I experienced when our family tested positive, I have tried to connect to the situation by using linguistic empathy *I understand. I have been in your situation* (Line 31). Linguistic empathy shows concern, connection, and empathy to the speaker (Kuno & Kaburaki, 1977).

Mairo verbalized his detailed story when I asked him to narrate the day the virus infected him (Lines 35-36). He first shared his story that led to his situation (Lines 36-40). He recalled his first symptoms until he got tested for a rapid antigen test (Lines 41-59). The story's transition is clear enough to depict the development of the story (McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2001). Mairo used transitional devices *However* (Line 48), *Still* (Line 49), *For four days* (Line 51), and *But* (Line 54) to show the proper sequence of the events. The most difficult situations were highlighted in Lines (66-92). Mairo narrated his worst situation scenarios, such as difficulty in breathing (Lines 74-75), coughing (Line 77), absence of his parents during his difficult times (Line 80), and emotional stress after finding out that his whole family was also infected (Lines 86-91). When he started blaming himself for what happened (Lines 93-95), I empathized with him and lightened up his feelings through a piece of advice (Line 96). He agreed to what I said (Line 97) and continued narrating his medical findings and other situations caused by the virus (Lines 99-111). His determination to get well and optimism is shown between his narration lines (Lines 98, 105, and 107). Throughout our conversation, Mairo always used 'sir' as a linguistic politeness that shows social indexing between our teacher-student relationship (Kasper, 1990). Lines (3, 11, 19, 30, 91, 109, 115, and 138). He commonly uses these markers when he agrees to my point Exactly, sir (Line 19) or to emphasize a point *But sir, you know, God is really good*.

The use of linguistic politeness markers, transitional devices, and linguistic empathy shows the positioning of Mairo and me, who both experienced similar stories of how we overcame the darkest hours of our lives brought about by COVID-19. Mairo, in his story, needs someone who can understand and validate his feelings since it was so far his most challenging life battle. The order and pattern of the narrative show the conflict that arises in the story, and the conflict shows the character's struggles in coping with the situation. What Mairo has been through has never been an easy way to handle. But with his optimism and coping mechanisms highlighted in his story, he surpassed the hurdles that led him as one of COVID-19 warriors.

### 3.4 Mairo's Delving Deeper (Third Level Positioning Analysis)

After analyzing Mairo's story in relation to his reported events and his position in relation to the audience, this third level of positioning analysis will answer the questions "Who is he really?" and "After what he had been through in his life, how does he see himself in the future?" I intentionally asked him his reflections, realizations, and future directions to answer this question. The 'shifting perspective story', which is the central theme of his story, positioned him as a person who does not believe in COVID-19 and someone who has changed his belief due to the experience he had

gone through. His first statements could attest that he does not believe in COVID-19 due to the personal motives of the government officials (Lines 3-6). However, because he had his firsthand experience, his perspective was diverted. When I asked him about his experience, he positioned himself into three things: First, as a person who should listen to the parents' advice (Line 116). Admitting that he has been a stubborn child brought him in the wrong direction. Second, as a person who keeps the faith through thick and thin of his life (Line 119). In the darkest hours of our time, it is God who will be there to help you and has the power to heal you. Nothing is impossible if you will believe in Him. Third, as a person who takes care of and values his life more than before (Line 123). Since we only live once, we must be extra careful with our lives. Mairo becomes more cautious in everything he does – from someone who goes out often to someone who goes out of errands are urgent. The recalibration of the mindset and actions of Mairo has become evident after the situation happened to his life. When he remembers everything that happened, he cannot afford to return from that situation again (Lines 131-133). He compares that experience to a nightmare (Line 136) because of the struggles he faced.

After his realizations, which led him to different positionalities, he also positioned himself as a learning experience for everyone (Line 137). He wants to be a reflection of everyone who does not believe in COVID-19. He is living proof that the effect of the virus could happen to anyone regardless of someone's age, sex, and status. He mentioned that four aspects of someone's life could be affected: physical, mental, emotional, and financial (Line 146). Now that he survived this battle, he planned to organize a support group for people battling this virus (Lines 150-151). Mairo knows the need to talk to someone else to gain moral support from others since it heavily affects the patient's mental health. Overall, his realization in this journey is that this virus is a test of faith, love, and hope (Lines 156-157). There is a big picture of COVID-19, and there are various metaphors we can associate with this world's biggest breakthrough that killed many lives and changed the world. Scholars are continuously searching for metaphors for COVID-19 (Kozlova, 2021; Semino, 2001). *COVID is a war* is one metaphor commonly used on social media sites.

#### 4 CONCLUSIONS

Narrative Analysis is one of the approaches in discourse analysis, and the stories of the participants are analyzed, not just their contents. Whether it is a small or big story, the researcher should analyze the imagined portrayed by the characters. These narratives give us a snapshot of the human mind and are indeed affective in nature. The researcher should have an in-depth analysis of the story's content, including the time, space, location, and even how the story is being narrated. In today's time, COVID-19 is one of the trending issues that has become the talk of the town of media men, sociologists, educators, and even linguists. Linguists are continuously working on big projects to provide the language corpus. However, there are no scholarly contributions yet regarding the analysis of the human stories of COVID-19 survivors, analyzing the bits and pieces of the details of the stories. In attempting to fill this gap, I have explored in this paper the story of a COVID-19 survivor who had gone through challenging experiences in battling with the virus. Bamberg (1997) Positioning Analysis framework is used to explore the three levels of positioning analysis.

In this study, Mairo (not his real name), a former student, was interviewed via phone. He is a COVID-19 survivor who was hospitalized for more than two weeks and battled for his life. He experienced physical, mental, and emotional challenges while in the said situation. Mairo positioned himself as a non-believer of the virus at the first level. Because of his criticisms toward the current government administration, he tagged the virus as a scam and only created by these officials for their personal interests. His actions and mindset become the conflict revealed in his story. His complacency in following the minimum standard protocols led him to acquire the virus. The actual manifestations of symptoms he experienced become the primary reason for shifting his mindset towards the virus. His use of discourse particles and conditional sentences in the interview was the linguistic evidence that substantiated the perspective shift. When Mairo finally convinces him that his situation is the effect of the virus, the conflict portrayed in the story is towards himself. His regrets about not doing his part were evident during the interview. He imagines the possible effect of the virus on his family members, who might experience terrible

situations brought about by the said virus. The story's detailed course of events and conversational units helped me unpack the first positioning analysis. In the second level, where the relation of Mairo to the audience was analyzed, several pieces of linguistic evidence were seen in the interview. My prompt in the yes or no question helped him expound on the details of the story better. The story's development was clearly shown because of the use of transitional devices in narrating the story. Also, linguistic empathy has effectively established my connection and rapport with his story in the interview. Another interesting linguistic evidence is Mairo's linguistic politeness in establishing the teacher-student relationship. Mairo positions himself as someone who needs to understand, empathize, and listen to his story since what he has experienced is indeed challenging for his age. Lastly, in the third level, where it attempts to answer the question "Who am I?", the leading questions helped Mairo divulge his reflections and future directions in his life. Various positionings were highlighted in the story: First, as a person who should listen to the parents' advice. Second, as a person who keeps the faith through thick and thin of his life. Third, as a person who cares for and values his life more than before. Overall, he wants to be a learning experience for others and be the voice for others in the same situation. Mairo also used a metaphor in describing his journey in the battle of this pandemic virus. He said COVID-19 is a test of faith, love, and hope.

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix: Interview Transcript

1 A Can you take me back to the moment that it finally  
2 sunk into you that this is already COVID?  
3 M Funny, sir. Because you know that I am a  
4 non-believer.  
5 I don't believe in COVID. All I have thought that these are scams.  
6 That the government is using this as an excuse to rob from our pockets.  
7 But you know, to see is to believe. I mean, to experience is to believe (laughs)  
8 A So you can now attest that COVID is real?  
9 M Oh, sure. Definitely! It's real.  
10 And it's horrifying  
11 I thought I wouldn't make it, sir.  
12 It creeps me out.  
13 There were still nights when it haunts me  
14 and feel like that I'm still in a hospital. Nurses and doctors are wearing their PPEs.  
15 I thought I wouldn't make it.  
16 I only have my sibling who's with me.  
17 Thank God she's asymptomatic.  
18 A Oh, you mean, all of your family tested positive?  
19 M Exactly, Sir. Still thankful that all of them except me  
20 are asymptomatic.  
21 My parents and youngest sibling were put in a quarantine facility.  
22 Thank God, my other sibling accompanied  
23 me to the hospital.  
24 If not, I don't know what will happen to me.  
25 The four corners of the hospital room  
26 and the silence inside the room is deafening.  
27 The time ran so slow  
28 There were times that I kept asking myself,  
29 Am I still going to make it?  
30 But, sir, you know, God is really good.  
31 A I understand. I have been in your situation. As I shared with you last time,  
32 our family was also put in our darkest hours.  
33 But with all God's grace, we survived.  
34 Since you've mentioned that you don't believe in this virus,  
35 could you narrate how did you confirm that you were infected?  
36 M I was almost outside the house every day.  
37 Though I am following the protocols like wearing  
38 facemasks and face shields,  
39 I admit that I was so complacent and careless,  
40 especially when I am with my group of friends and orgmates.  
41 It was Thursday afternoon last month  
42 when I experienced a slight fever.  
43 I disregarded it since I thought it was just nothing.  
44 When I am about to go to sleep that night, I have started to feel  
45 muscle pains and I have checked my body temperature.  
46 As far as I remember, my body temp. that time was 39°C  
47 I have just taken paracetamol every four hours  
48 However, the next day, I still had fever and muscle pains.  
49 Still, the same routine.  
50 I have taken meds every four hours.  
51 For four days, my fever is on and off.

52 I didn't bother because I thought this was just nothing.  
53 On the fifth day, I have no fever anymore,  
54 but I still experienced muscle pains  
55 Worst, because, on that day, I have colds and cough.  
56 I started not to breathe normally.  
57 I am already gasping.  
58 My family started to worry and suspected I have already the virus.  
59 I was rushed to the hospital to have a rapid test.  
60 After few minutes, the doctor revealed that I tested positive.  
61 However, it was explained to us that I still need to undergo  
62 a swab test to confirm my case.  
63 We decided to get back to our house and wait for my swab test schedule.  
64 The next day, an ambulance picked me up in the morning  
65 for my swab test.  
66 During those times, I already felt so weak and had breathing difficulty.  
67 The next day, my parents decided to rush me to the hospital.  
68 It was so far the darkest day of my life.  
69 I already experienced diarrhea, my cough and colds are getting worse,  
70 and I cannot breathe properly.  
71 Since the swab test wasn't available yet,  
72 I was rushed to the private hospital where I had my rapid test.  
73 It was my first time to be hospitalized in my entire life.  
74 I thought I wouldn't make it,  
75 especially when I already had my oxygen.  
76 Somehow, it helped my breathing.  
77 But I kept on coughing and the entire situation was terrible.  
78 Since only one was allowed to be in the hospital room,  
79 my other sibling was my caretaker.  
80 My parents and my other sibling have started to isolate at home.  
81 A When did the result came?  
82 M The day after I was rushed to hospital.  
83 It was my sibling who said the bad news.  
84 The contact tracing team started to get their information since  
85 my whole family was a close contact.  
86 That day I had so many things that I was thinking.  
87 I was thinking of my parents, my siblings  
88 What if they also tested positive?  
89 What if they also became symptomatic like me?  
90 Who will take care of them?  
91 You know what sir, I kept on crying and crying  
92 I always blame myself for what happened  
93 On the top of my mind, had I listened to my parents,  
94 these things wouldn't happen.  
95 Only if I could turn back the time.  
96 A Don't blame yourself. Remember, everything happens for a reason.  
97 M Yes, sir. Though I was feeling weak that time,  
98 I helped myself to regain the lost strength.  
99 The doctor diagnosed that I had moderate pneumonia.  
100 What bothers me was my oxygen level.  
101 For seven straight days, I was oxygen-dependent.  
102 My oxygen level ranges from 88-93 only.  
103 My attending physician warned me that if it gets lower than 85,  
104 I will be transferred to a public hospital.  
105 That's why I really helped myself.  
106 I have lost my senses of taste and smell.

107           Despite that, I worked hard to eat and get well.  
108   A    What other things traumatic things have you experienced?  
109   M    Sir, I was bed ridden for almost a week.  
110           I couldn't stand because my oxygen level was fluctuating.  
111           I was gasping with just little movements.  
112           That's why I was so thankful that my sibling stood by my side.  
113           They also got positive, but I am thankful that all of them were asymptomatic.  
114   A    After all your challenging experiences, what have you learned from this journey?  
115           I have learned so much, sir.  
116           First, listen to your parents. I admit that I was a stubborn child.  
117           I disregarded their advice.  
118           I listened to my intuition more those who care for you.  
119           Second, nothing is impossible with Him.  
120           In your darkest hours, you have Him by your side.  
121           I admit that I am not a religious person, but in my darkest days,  
122           I have regained my faith in Him.  
123           Third, I have valued my life more than before.  
124           If before, I always have the bahala na concept on my mind,  
125           but it changed everything.  
126           Right now, I am extra careful with everything I do.  
127           I only go out if it is badly needed.  
128           If I had urgent errands to attend to.  
129           This is my second life, and I couldn't  
130           afford to waste it in another mistake.  
131           Remembering all the physical and mental health challenges  
132           I have had,  
133           I don't want that to happen again.  
134           At the top of my mind,  
135           what if the next time, we aren't lucky enough to survive?  
136           It would be a nightmare! I just cannot!  
137   A    Now, what do you want other people to learn from you?  
138   M    Sir, I want myself to be a learning experience for everyone  
139           Had I got the chance to talk to other people  
140           who don't believe in COVID,  
141           I will tell them straight to their face that COVID is real!  
142           I have been there, and I have experienced its nightmare!  
143           If given a chance, get yourself vaccinated and protect  
144           your loved ones.  
145           Don't let this horrible experience happen to you.  
146           Physically, mentally, emotionally, and financially draining.  
147   A    Well, said. Now what are your plans right now?  
148   M    I plan to be a voice to other people. As a COVID-19 survivor,  
149           I think, I must be a helping hand to others.  
150           Right now, I am planning to organize a support group  
151           for COVID-19 patients.  
152           In their darkest hours, they need moral support from those  
153           who have been into their situation.  
154           Someone who could give them strength to go on with their  
155           life despite its adversity.  
156           COVID-19 is more than a virus.  
157           It is a test of faith, love, and hope to every one