

Research Article

Complex Predicate Structures in Institutional Digital Discourse: A Morphosyntactic Analysis

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Abstract

This study investigates the use of complex predicate structures in institutional digital discourse, with particular attention to official Facebook pages. Communication on Facebook creates a hybrid space where formal administrative language is often adjusted to fit the more flexible, semi-formal nature of a digitally mediated platform. The study aimed to identify the types of complex predicates in the corpus, describe the morphosyntactic features that govern their formation, and examine how these structures influence sentence meaning and overall syntax. It used a qualitative descriptive, corpus-based design, with some quantitative analysis to support the findings. Official Facebook posts were collected and compiled into a corpus, then manually examined using established linguistic criteria. Each complex predicate was morphologically tagged and classified, and frequencies and percentages were computed to show how often each type occurred. A total of 60 complex predicate constructions were identified in the data. Passive constructions appeared most frequently, followed by modal auxiliary and copular predicates. In contrast, perfect aspect and light verb constructions were used only to a limited extent. These findings suggest that institutional Facebook discourse relies mainly on auxiliary-based morphosyntax, where auxiliaries encode grammatical meanings such as tense, aspect, mood, and voice, while lexical verbs provide the main semantic content of the clause. The findings also show that complex predicate structures influence sentence meaning in important ways. Passive constructions tend to highlight institutional actions rather than individual actors, while modal predicates are commonly used to express future plans and institutional commitments. Copular predicates, on the other hand, allow institutions to convey evaluation and stance in a relatively straightforward way. At the same time, these structures help keep sentences clear and concise by compressing several grammatical meanings into a single predicate. Overall, the findings suggest that complex predicates serve as effective grammatical resources in institutional Facebook communication, showing that patterns of formal language use remain largely stable even in digital and online settings.

Keywords

Complex Predicates, Institutional Discourse, Facebook Communication, Morphosyntax, Digital Linguistics

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1. Introduction

Language is a complex system for creating and sharing meaning, and one of its most detailed aspects is the morpho-syntactic organization of predicates. Predicates sit at the center of sentence structure, since they express actions, events, and states of being. Across languages, however, meaning is not always carried by a single verb. Many languages instead rely on complex predicate structures, where two or more verbal elements work together as one grammatical unit. These may take the form of serial verbs, auxiliary-based constructions, or other multi-word predicates. Rather than loading all meaning onto a single verb, complex predicates distribute grammatical and semantic roles across multiple elements, allowing speakers to encode tense, aspect, and modality in a more flexible way and sometimes with finer nuance. This sharing of roles makes complex predicates an efficient way to organize meaning at the clause level, which is why they remain relevant in both theoretical and applied linguistics [11, 19].

In international linguistics, complex predicates have been examined extensively in languages such as Hindi, Japanese, Persian, and several Southeast Asian languages. These studies have advanced our understanding of how predicates are formed and how meaning is distributed across lexical and grammatical elements [12]. In the Philippine context, researchers have examined verb complexes and predicate structures in languages such as Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, and other regional varieties [20]. However, as communication increasingly shifts to online spaces, research has not always kept pace with these changes. Contemporary texts, such as institutional Facebook posts, remain relatively underexplored as sources of naturally occurring data, even though they are now widely used by schools and government offices to share information and public updates [33]. These posts create a semi-formal yet highly public linguistic environment where English and local languages interact in interesting ways [4], yet only a few studies have examined how predicate structures function in this kind of digital institutional communication.

This study aims to fill that gap by examining complex predicate structures in official Facebook posts from two high schools in Lanao del Sur, Philippines—schools that rely heavily on Facebook to communicate with students, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders. This heavy use of social media for school communication is not unique to these schools; it reflects a broader trend in the Philippines, where Facebook has become a main way for educational institutions to share updates and keep their communities connected [30].

This study is grounded in morphosyntactic approaches to predicate structure, especially drawing on ideas from verb serialization and functional grammar. From this angle, complex predicates are seen as constructions where two or more verbal—or almost verbal—elements work together to express a single event or situation [11, 17]. Building on these assump-

tions, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What types of complex predicate structures are used in the institutional Facebook posts?
- 2) What morphosyntactic features govern the formation and combination of verbs within the complex predicate constructions?
- 3) How do the complex predicate structures affect sentence meaning and overall syntactic organization?

The theoretical implications of this study include advancing the understanding of complex predicates in Philippine English, particularly by surfacing evidence from an underexplored data source. By examining how complex predicates are used in digital institutional communication, which reflects present-day language practices, this study contributes new perspectives to research on morphosyntax [33]. Practically, the study may inform educators, school administrators, and content creators in understanding linguistic patterns that support precision, clarity, and coherence in official communication. Understanding how predicate structures function in real institutional texts can also benefit curriculum developers and teachers in crafting lessons related to syntax, discourse analysis, and academic writing.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Foundations of Complex Predicate Structures

This study is grounded in established linguistic theories that account for the structure, formation, and function of complex predicate constructions. Specifically, the study is anchored in the frameworks of lexico-grammar and multi-word expressions (MWEs), which serve as the primary lenses for interpreting the findings of the three research questions: identifying the types of complex predicates in the corpus, examining the morphosyntactic features that shape them, and examining how they affect sentence meaning and overall sentence organization.

In line with the lexicon-grammar framework, complex predicates are constructions in which meaning is distributed across an entire syntactic structure rather than localized in a single lexical head. Gross [23] claims that the basic unit of linguistic description is the elementary sentence, not the word, and that many predicates must therefore be represented as fixed or semi-fixed constructions stored in the lexicon. This claim is parallel with the definition of complex predicates proposed by Amberber, Baker, & Harvey [3], who describe them as multi-predicational but monoclausal structures in which two or more predicating elements function as a single grammatical unit. Likewise, Alsina, Bresnan, & Sells [2] define complex predicates as multi-headed constructions in which each component contributes to the overall predicate meaning

and jointly determines argument structure. From a lexicon-grammar perspective, such constructions include light verb constructions, serial verb constructions, and verb-particle combinations, all of which behave syntactically as single predicates despite their internal complexity [10]. These findings support the claim that complex predicates challenge traditional distinctions between morphology and syntax, as they exhibit both word-like and phrase-like properties while being stored and processed as unified lexical entities.

In addition, Multiword expressions (MWEs) are widely recognized as a central challenge in both linguistic theory and natural language processing because they function as single lexical units despite being composed of multiple words. Constant et al. [14] define MWEs as combinations of two or more words whose meanings are often non-compositional and cannot be directly inferred from their individual components, such as idioms, phrasal verbs, light verb constructions, compounds, and fixed expressions. From a lexicon-grammar perspective, MWEs correspond closely to what Gross [23] address as frozen expressions, which are stored as fixed or semi-fixed constructions in the mental lexicon due to their semantic unity and limited syntactic variability. Finkbeiner & Schlücker [18] also asserts that MWEs and compounds form a continuum between syntax and morphology, challenging strict separations between the lexicon and grammar and supporting a construction-based view of linguistic knowledge. Moreover, Constant et al. [14] reiterate that MWEs play a crucial role in computational applications such as parsing and machine translation, where failure to identify MWEs leads to incorrect syntactic analysis and semantic interpretation. Overall, MWEs demonstrate that lexical meaning is frequently encoded at the level of multiword constructions rather than isolated words.

To address the first research question—concerning the types of complex predicate structures used in the corpus, the study adopts the view of complex predicates as unified semantic and grammatical units. According to Alsina [1], complex predicates consist of multi-word expressions that function together as a single predicate, jointly determining argument structure and predicate meaning. This theoretical perspective supports treating auxiliary-based constructions, copular predicates, and light verb constructions as legitimate types of complex predicates in English. Descriptive studies of English grammar also back up this view. For example, Biber, et al. [8]; Huddleston & Pullum [22], and Quirk, et al. [28] offer detailed accounts of English verb phrases, showing that constructions such as passives (be + V-en), modal auxiliaries (will + V-base), perfect aspect constructions (have + V-en), and copular predicates (be + NP/AdjP) function as unified predicate units rather than as loosely connected elements. These frameworks serve as the basis for categorizing the complex predicate types identified in the institutional Facebook posts.

The second research question, which focuses on the morphosyntactic features governing the formation and combination of verbs in complex predicate constructions, is informed

by theories emphasizing the interaction between lexical semantics and morphosyntactic constraints. Butt and Lahiri [13] point out that the formation of complex predicates depends not only on how compatible the meanings of the elements are, but also on grammatical rules that govern argument structure, aspect, and agreement. This view helps make sense of the patterns seen in English complex predicates—for example, why past participles appear in passive and perfect constructions, and why base-form verbs follow modal auxiliaries. English-specific grammatical studies [28, 22] further clarify how auxiliaries mark tense, aspect, mood, and voice, providing the basis for the morphosyntactic tagging and classification carried out in this study.

The third research question, which looks at how complex predicates influence sentence meaning and overall syntactic organization, draws on theories of lexical semantics and event structure. As Butt [11] points out, complex predicates play a key role in encoding event structure, agency, and causation by spreading semantic and grammatical information across multiple elements.

2.2. Morphosyntactic Features Governing Predicate Formation

Morphosyntax plays a central role in sentence construction and meaning-making. It plays a central role in the combination and interaction of verbs in the formation of the complex predicate. Current literature has shown that predicate combination is strongly influenced by features such as tense, aspect, and modality (TAM), valency, and other morphological markers [17]. The relationships between the verbs are determined by these morphosyntactic characteristics, especially with respect to agreement patterns, transitivity, and argument sharing.

Baker [5] and Payne [27] built on this idea by highlighting how verbs in complex predicates often form through what's called argument fusion, where multiple verbs share a single argument structure. This combination of frameworks doesn't just shape how clauses are put together—it also changes the way we make sense of sequences of events.

In the Philippine context, Bautista [6] and Borlongan [9] point out that long-term contact between English and regional languages has produced interesting hybrid grammatical features in Philippine English, particularly in argument marking, auxiliary use, and verb behavior. Bautista [6], for instance, highlights some innovative predicate patterns, such as extended auxiliary constructions and light verb-type expressions, such as *make use of*, *give emphasis*, and *take action*, that actually function as single, unified predicates, not just as plain verb-noun combinations.

2.3. Complex Predicates in Media, Public Communication, and Institutional Discourse

Earlier research on complex predicates has mostly drawn

on traditional written texts and spoken data, where the language is more controlled or “canonical.” For example, Alsina [1], Butt [11] and Hook [21] looked closely at light-verb constructions and verb–verb combinations in narratives and elicited speech. Compared to these, digital discourse has received far less attention in research on complex predicates. Work on computer-mediated communication tends to emphasize register mixing and grammatical variation rather than predicate structure itself. As Crystal [15] notes, online communication blends feature of speech and writing, producing hybrid grammatical patterns, where formal passives like *will be conducted* often appear alongside more conversational stance markers. Even so, studies in educational contexts suggest that institutional online texts still largely follow conventional grammatical patterns, including complex verb phrases, despite being posted on interactive platforms [24].

With the growth of digital communication, linguistic research has slowly shifted toward institutional online discourse, showing how platforms like Facebook shape grammatical choices. Tagg [32] observes that social media encourages compressed but syntactically dense constructions, as institutions aim to share information efficiently under space and attention constraints. This often results in compact predicates that bundle several grammatical meanings into a single clause, such as *will be announced*, *has already been posted*, or *is now open*. More recent studies back this up, showing that social media doesn’t really “dumb down” grammar—instead, it often encourages the use of auxiliary-heavy predicates to handle lots of information, signal stance, and uphold institutional authority [15, 24]. In the Philippine context, Lorenzo and Bautista [26] found that university Facebook posts frequently use passives, modals, and perfect constructions to report actions, indicate task completion, and lay out procedures. These choices help institutions communicate clearly and efficiently, sounding authoritative without having to write long, complicated sentences.

Studies in basic education settings point to a similar pattern. Reyes [29], for example, shows that complex predicates often appear in high school online communications, particularly when schools describe multi-step events, report activities, or recognize achievements. These structures seem to help keep messages orderly and easier for readers to follow. In the same way, Daguió [16] identifies recurring verb–verb and verb–noun patterns in school announcements across Northern Mindanao, suggesting that these predicate choices are shaped not only by institutional routines but also by local linguistic practices. Even with these findings, however, little attention has been given to complex predicate structures in the official Facebook pages of public schools in the Philippines. Considering the country’s multilingual setting and the growing reliance on social media for school communication, this gap is worth addressing. The present study responds to this by examining the types, morphosyntactic features, and syntactic roles of complex predicates in actual Facebook posts from MSU–

Tamparan Community High School and Datu Mamintal Adiong Senior Memorial National High School.

2.4. Morphosyntax in the Philippines and Philippine English Contexts

The literature shows a growing interest in the unique morphosyntactic features of Philippine languages and Philippine English, offering useful insights into how predicates are formed in multilingual contexts like the Philippines. Bautista [6], one of the leading scholars on Philippine English grammar, points out several innovative verb patterns that create distinct kinds of predicate complexity. These include nonstandard verb–noun combinations, extended light-verb constructions, and hybrid phrasal predicates—patterns that are noticeably different from what’s usually found in more traditional Inner Circle varieties.

Building on this, Borlongan [9] conducted a large-scale corpus study of contemporary Philippine English, documenting ongoing grammatical shifts shaped by Filipino bilingualism. Taken together, these studies show how contact between languages influences both the structure and the functional use of complex predicates in Philippine English, resulting in patterns that are systematic rather than random. His study’s comprehensive findings demonstrate that language contact with local Philippine languages continues to shape the morphosyntax of Philippine English, particularly in areas such as verb complementation and argument structure.

Studies on Philippine languages further broaden the understanding of predicate formation patterns in the local linguistic context. Descriptive and typological studies have consistently shown that Philippine languages have rich verbal morphology, featuring things like affix stacking, voice alternations, and aspectual marking—all of which play a key role in forming complex predicates [31, 25]. Rubino [31], in his grammatical description of Philippine languages such as Ilocano and Filipino, documents extensive patterns of verbal affixation in which multiple affixes co-occur to encode voice, aspect, and focus within a single predicate (e.g., Filipino verbs marked simultaneously for actor focus and perfective aspect). These findings suggest that predicate meaning is often distributed across several morphological elements, rather than being carried by just one verb. Lobel [25], drawing on comparative data from several Philippine languages, shows that verb sequencing and predicate layering are common ways to encode event structure, including motion, direction, and outcomes.

3. Methodology

This section presents the procedures and analytical framework employed in the study. It explains the research design and methods, outlines how the corpus was compiled, and describes the steps taken in data analysis, ensuring that the study remains transparent, reliable, and replicable.

3.1. Research Design

This study used a qualitative descriptive research design supported by quantitative analysis. The qualitative part focused on identifying, classifying, and describing complex predicate structures in institutional Facebook posts, while the quantitative part looked at the frequency and percentage of each predicate type. The study is corpus-based, relying on naturally occurring texts rather than elicited or experimental data. This approach is well-suited for exploring grammatical patterns in authentic institutional digital communication.

3.2. Research Method

The study employed a descriptive linguistic analysis informed by syntactic and morphological theory. Established frameworks guided the analysis of constructions such as passive voice, modal auxiliaries, copular predicates, perfect aspect constructions, and light verb constructions. All examples were manually annotated to ensure accuracy and consistency across the analysis. Each sentence in the corpus was examined individually and evaluated against strict linguistic criteria for complex predicates, including predicate unity and shared grammatical features such as tense, aspect, and voice. Simple lexical verbs and adjective–verb sequences were excluded from the analysis.

3.3. Corpora

The corpus of this study consisted of official Facebook posts from MSU–Tamparan Community High School and Datu Mamintal Adiong Sr. Memorial National High School during the academic year 2025–2026. Only publicly available posts written in English were included. These posts ranged from announcements and reports to congratulatory messages and updates on school events. All the texts were compiled into a single document and divided into 419 complete sentences, of which 60 sentences containing complex predicate structures were selected for closer analysis. Non-linguistic elements, such as emojis, repeated content, and unrelated hashtags, were excluded to maintain corpus consistency and reliability.

3.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out in several stages. First, all sentences in the corpus were reviewed to identify verb constructions. Sentences containing potential complex predicates

were then examined more closely using both syntactic and morphological analysis. The identified complex predicates were classified into the following types: passive constructions, modal auxiliary constructions, copular predicates, perfect aspect constructions, and light verb constructions. Each complex predicate was subsequently morphologically tagged using standard linguistic notation to indicate relevant grammatical features such as tense, aspect, and voice.

To obtain quantitative results, the frequency of each complex predicate type was computed by counting its occurrences in the corpus. The percentage distribution was then calculated. For example, if passive constructions occurred 29 times out of a total of 60 complex predicate tokens, the percentage was computed as:

$$\left(\frac{29}{60}\right) \times 100 = 48.33\%$$

This formula was applied consistently across all complex predicate types to ensure accuracy and comparability of results.

Finally, the computed frequencies and percentages were interpreted in relation to the institutional and informational nature of Facebook discourse. By clearly explaining the analysis steps, the criteria used to classify the data, and the calculations used to obtain frequencies and percentages, the study seeks to make its findings reliable, valid, and open to replication by other researchers.

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents and discusses the study's findings on complex predicate structures in institutional Facebook discourse. The results are organized according to the research questions and are presented through a combination of tables and interpretive discussion. Each subsection begins with a brief overview of the relevant table, followed by a more detailed analysis and explanation of the findings.

4.1. Types of Complex Predicate Structures Used in the Corpus

This subsection focuses on the first research question, which looks at the types of complex predicate structures found in the corpus. Table 1 summarizes the different predicate types identified in the institutional Facebook posts, showing their structural patterns, frequencies, and percentage distribution across the dataset.

Table 1. *Distribution of Complex Predicate Structures in the Corpus.*

Complex Predicate Type	Structural Pattern	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Passive constructions	BE + V-en	29	48.33

Complex Predicate Type	Structural Pattern	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Modal auxiliary constructions	<i>MOD (will) + V-base</i>	14	23.33
Copular predicates	<i>BE + NP / AdjP</i>	11	18.33
Perfect aspect constructions	<i>HAVE + V-en</i>	5	8.33
Light verb constructions	<i>Light V + N</i>	1	1.67
Total		60	100

As shown in Table 1, passive constructions account for the largest share of complex predicates in the corpus, representing almost half of all instances. This pattern suggests that the schools favor impersonal, action-focused reporting, highlighting events and outcomes rather than the individuals carrying them out. This trend fits with earlier research on institutional and educational communication, which often finds that passives appear frequently in formal announcements and reports [8, 29]. In the Philippines, Lorenzo and Bautista [26] similarly note that university Facebook posts regularly use passive constructions to report actions, give instructions, or share decisions—helping maintain an institutional voice while keeping individual authors in the background.

The prominence of passive constructions also reflects broader tendencies in digital institutional communication. Although social media platforms are often associated with informal language use, studies suggest that institutions retain conventional grammatical strategies to signal authority and credibility, even in online settings [15, 24]. The present findings support this claim, showing that schools continue to rely on traditional formal structures, such as passives, despite operating within an interactive digital environment.

Modal auxiliary constructions appear as the second most frequent type, indicating that institutional Facebook posts are strongly future-oriented and are frequently used to announce plans, schedules, and forthcoming activities. This is evident in posts such as *"The regular classes will start on August 3, 2025"* and *"The summit will be held on December 1–2, 2025"*, where the modal auxiliary will combine with a lexical verb to project future institutional actions. For example, in the sentence *"The program will continue until October,"* the modal construction conveys the school's commitment and sets a clear timeline for the event. This finding supports the observations of Reyes [29] and Daguio [16], who point out that future-oriented modal constructions are a key feature of school-based online announcements, helping institutions convey intent and certainty while keeping messages clear and concise.

Copular predicates (BE + NP/AdjP) make up around 18.33% of the complex predicates in the corpus. Even though they are less frequent than passives and modals, copular constructions play a key role in evaluation and stance-taking in institutional discourse. Expressions like *"The activity was a success,"*

"The venue is ready," or *"We are proud of our students"* allow schools to assign value, demonstrate readiness, and foster a sense of shared institutional identity. This aligns with Biber and Conrad [7], who argue that copular clauses are especially useful for evaluation because they combine simple syntax with rich meaning. In digital contexts, these constructions also help balance informational content with affective or relational nuances, a point Kuteeva and Mauranen [24] similarly note in their work on academic online discourse.

Perfect aspect constructions (HAVE + V-en) and light verb constructions (Light V + N) appear much less frequently, together accounting for under 10% of the total. The limited use of the perfect aspect seems to reflect a preference for immediacy and present relevance over detailed temporal framing, which is more common in narrative or academic writing [22]. This observation aligns with Tagg's [32] point that social media often encourages concise, direct language to match readers' limited attention spans.

Light verb constructions are almost absent, which is interesting considering that Philippine English typically uses them productively in other registers [6, 9]. Their rarity here suggests that genre and purpose—clarity, efficiency, and immediacy in school Facebook posts—matter more than general variety-specific tendencies. Overall, the corpus shows a strong reliance on auxiliary-based constructions, especially passives and modals. These patterns support claims that institutional digital discourse remains grammatically conservative even online [15], while also showing how the demands of a particular genre—clear, authoritative, and efficient communication—shape which complex predicates are chosen and how often they appear.

4.2. Morphosyntactic Features Governing the Formation of Complex Predicates

This subsection focuses on the second research question, which examines the morphosyntactic features that govern how verbs are formed and combined in complex predicate constructions. Table 2 presents the auxiliaries involved, the required verb forms, and the grammatical features encoded in each type of complex predicate.

Table 2. Morphosyntactic Features of Complex Predicate Constructions.

Predicate Type	Auxiliary Used	Verb Form Required	Encoded Grammatical Features
Passive	BE	<i>V-en (past participle)</i>	Voice, tense, agreement
Modal	Will	<i>V-base</i>	Mood (futurity), tens
Copular	BE	<i>NP / AdjP complement</i>	Attribution, evaluation
Perfect	HAVE	<i>V-en</i>	Aspect (completion/relevance)
Light verb	take	<i>Nominal complement</i>	Event structure

One noticeable feature of the corpus is the heavy reliance on the auxiliary *be* in passive constructions, which almost always pairs with a past participle (*V-en*) to mark voice and tense. Examples like “*The event was held on July 27–28, 2025*” and “*Outstanding contestants were recognized during the ceremony*” show how the auxiliary carries tense and agreement while the lexical verb supplies the main action. This kind of division between auxiliary and lexical verb reflects what Huddleston and Pullum [22] describe as a hallmark of English auxiliaries, where grammatical categories like tense and voice are realized separately from lexical meaning. The consistency of this pattern suggests that even in a digital setting, these posts follow standard English morphosyntactic conventions quite closely.

Modal auxiliaries follow the same auxiliary-focused pattern. In the corpus, every modal predicate uses *will* with a base-form verb, for example, “*The regular classes will start on August 3, 2025*” and “*The program will continue until October.*” This shows how schools clearly communicate future actions and institutional plans, without making the sentences any more complicated than they need to be. The main verb’s lack of inflection reflects a key morphosyntactic rule of English modals [28]. Functionally, this structure allows institutions to communicate futurity and commitment clearly without adding syntactic complexity. Previous studies note that modals are commonly used in online institutional communication to project plans and intentions in an authoritative but concise way [24, 29].

Copular predicates (*BE + NP/AdjP*) work a little differently since they let non-verbal elements carry most of the meaning. Sentences like “*Day 6 of the program is a success*” or “*The venue is ready*” show how *be* links the subject to a noun or adjective complement. Even though these structures are simple, they’re important because they expand predication beyond just lexical verbs. As Biber and Conrad [7] note, copular clauses are really handy for evaluation, allowing institutions to assign attributes or express judgments without complex verbal forms. On Facebook posts, this makes it easy for schools

to convey readiness, achievements, or a shared sense of identity efficiently.

Perfect aspect constructions (*HAVE + V-en*) are less frequent but follow a clear pattern. Examples like “*Our review sessions have come to an end*” and “*Students have showcased their talents*” show how *have* encodes completion or current relevance. Huddleston and Pullum [22] note that perfect constructions situate past events relative to the present, making them useful for summarizing achievements. Their limited use here suggests that school-based posts focus more on immediate or forward-looking information than on reflective or retrospective narration, consistent with Tagg’s [32] observations about social media discourse.

Finally, the corpus had only one clear light verb construction: “*Students chose to take part in the initiative.*” In this sentence, *take* functions as the light verb, while *part* carries most of the event meaning. The rarity of light verb constructions is quite striking compared to academic or formal writing, where they show up more often [11, 6]. This suggests that school Facebook posts lean toward using direct, lexical verbs rather than spreading meaning through verb–noun combinations, likely to keep messages straightforward and immediate.

Overall, the corpus shows a strong preference for predictable, auxiliary-based predicate structures. These patterns support theoretical perspectives that treat complex predicates as unified grammatical units [11] and indicate that, even in online settings, institutional digital discourse remains fairly conservative, favoring clarity, efficiency, and authority in grammatical choices.

4.3. Influence of Complex Predicate Structures on Sentence Meaning and Syntactic Organization

The third research question looks at how complex predicate structures affect both sentence meaning and overall syntax. Table 3 presents the semantic and syntactic effects observed for each type of complex predicate in the corpus.

Table 3. Effects of Complex Predicates on Meaning and Syntax.

Predicate Type	Effect on Sentence Meaning	Effect on Syntactic Organization
Passive	foregrounds events; backgrounds agents	Promotes non-agent subjects
Modal	Encodes futurity and commitment	Auxiliary-headed VP; no embedding
Copular	Assigns evaluation or identity	Simple clause with rich semantics
Perfect	Signals completion or relevance	Adds aspect without clause expansion
Light verb	Highlights participation/action	Predicate meaning centered on Noun

Passive constructions seem to play a central role in shaping sentence meaning because they spotlight events while leaving agents in the background, or leaving them out entirely. Take sentences like “*The winners were crowned during the ceremony*” or “*Academic excellence was promoted through the program*.” Here, the focus is clearly on the outcomes, not on who did the action. This aligns with what functional accounts of passivization suggest: that passives help manage information flow and keep the thematic focus clear [8, 34]. In school contexts, this is helpful because it allows institutions to frame actions as collective or procedural, giving the text a more neutral, authoritative tone. Other studies have noticed the same trend in educational announcements and reports, where keeping things formal and impersonal is usually the goal [29, 26].

Modal auxiliary constructions shape sentence meaning by showing futurity and signaling institutional commitment. For example, sentences like “*The initiative will be launched this November*” or “*The winners will be awarded on Sunday*” make it clear what is planned and expected, positioning the school as organized and forward-looking. Structurally, these constructions stay pretty compact—the modal leads the verb phrase, and there is no extra embedding—so the sentence stays simple but still carries a lot of information. This fits with what Crystal [15] notes about institutional online texts favoring concise clauses that still have a strong pragmatic impact. Using modals lets schools communicate certainty and authority efficiently, without needing long or complicated explanations.

Copular predicates mainly help schools show evaluation and take a stance. For example, sentences like “*The activity was a success*” or “*We are proud of our students*” let the institution assign value and highlight a shared sense of identity. They’re simple in structure, but they carry a lot of meaning. Biber and Conrad [8] mention that copular clauses are useful for evaluation because they treat judgments as stable states rather than just fleeting actions. On school Facebook posts, this kind of structure lets schools communicate pride, success, and unity without having to use long or complicated sentences.

Perfect aspect constructions shape meaning by showing completion and relevance. In sentences like “*We have ex-*

tended our gratitude” or “*Delegates have gathered from different regions*,” the perfect signals that something is finished but still matters at the moment. Grammatically, it adds aspect without making the sentence more complicated, showing how complex predicates can pack several layers of meaning into one unit [11]. That said, perfect constructions do not appear very often in the corpus, suggesting that detailed temporal framing is not the main goal of school Facebook posts.

Altogether, these findings suggest that complex predicates are not just formal grammar tricks. They are real tools for meaning-making in institutional Facebook communication. They allow schools control the flow of information, show authority, express evaluation or stance, and keep sentences simple, confirming that traditional morphosyntactic patterns still hold up even in a digital, semi-formal setting.

5. Conclusions

This study examined how complex predicate structures are used in school Facebook posts, focusing on their types, morphosyntactic features, and their role in shaping sentence meaning and structure. The results show that auxiliary-based predicates are the main grammatical tool in this kind of institutional digital communication.

Passive constructions came up the most, which suggests that schools tend to focus on actions and results rather than on naming who did them. Modals and copular predicates were used fairly often as well, giving announcements a forward-looking and evaluative feel. Perfect aspect and light verb constructions appeared only rarely, suggesting that these posts favor clarity, brevity, and concision over providing detailed time frames or using more complex verb forms.

Looking at it morphosyntactically, the findings show that these posts lean on standard English auxiliaries—*be*, *have*, and *will* to do the heavy lifting for tense, aspect, mood, and voice, while the main verbs carry the actual action or meaning. All in all, it appears that even in this digital, interactive space, school Facebook posts stick closely to conventional English grammar while still conveying authority, clarity, and a sense of order.

Finally, complex predicate structures play a key role in shaping

meaning and syntax by allowing institutions to manage information flow, express stance, and maintain syntactic economy.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are offered for English language teaching, especially in grammar instruction, materials development, and the use of digital texts in the classroom.

First, English teachers could bring real school Facebook posts into the classroom when teaching verb phrases, auxiliaries, and voice. The data show clear patterns of passives, modals, and copular predicates, which help students see grammar not just as abstract rules but as practical tools for meaningful communication.

Second, teaching complex predicates is more effective when students learn through tactile means, where they see how forms connect to their functions. Teachers can point out, for example, how passives shift the focus to actions, how modals express plans or commitments, and how copular predicates express evaluation or stance. Doing small hands-on tasks, such as switching sentences, analyzing short sample posts, or rewriting quick announcements, can help these ideas click and feel more real to students.

Third, teacher education programs should conduct a seminar-workshop to show that just because it is social media, it does not mean the English has to be informal or sloppy. Understanding that school Facebook pages often stick to standard grammar can help future teachers model English that is accurate and context-appropriate, even online.

Finally, curriculum developers and materials writers could incorporate examples from institutional digital texts into textbooks and learning modules. This bridges traditional grammar teaching with contemporary language use, helping students navigate both academic and institutional English in today's digital world.

Abbreviations

MWEs	Multi-Word Expressions
N	Noun
NP	Noun Phrase
V	Verb
VP	Verb Phrase
V-en	Past Participle of a Verb
AdjP	Adjective Phrase
MOD	Modal/s
TAM	Tense, Aspect and Modality
MSU	Mindanao State University
Sr.	Senior

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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Biography



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