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The Use of Vietnamese in English Phonology Classes: Voices from Tertiary Teachers and Students

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Abstract

Using the mother tongue (L1) to improve four English language skills, namely listening, reading, writing, and speaking for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, and to enhance their understanding and learning process has been investigated throughout the years. However, very few studies focus on the context of Vietnamese as the L1 in a course related to English language components such as an English phonology course. Therefore, this research focuses on the use of Vietnamese by lecturers and students in this course. Specifically, the study explores teachers' and students' perceptions of using Vietnamese and how they used it in these courses. A five-point Likert scale questionnaire was distributed to 238 students majoring in English language studies at one of the universities in Vietnam to determine their perception and practice. Meanwhile, semi-structured interviews were also conducted with five lecturers of an English phonology course. The data from the questionnaire was analyzed descriptively and thematic analysis was used to analyze the responses from the interviews. The findings revealed that all the lecturers and students used Vietnamese primarily for academic purposes, strongly supporting its use in an English Phonology class. The results also showed that L1 played an important role in learning and teaching. In addition, students showed considerably positive attitudes towards the use of Vietnamese in this classroom context. The study provides some suggestions to enhance the use of L1 in classes related to English language components, and recommendations for future research.

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Keywords: Bilingual approach, English phonology course, L1 in an L2 class, Vietnamese, Vietnamese perceptions.

1. INTRODUCTION

The role of L1 in an EFL class has been discussed for years, and there are debates among researchers, teachers, and even learners on how much it is used (Hawa et al., 2021; Le, 2022; Mahmud, 2018). Proponents find that L1 plays a vital part in students' learning and teachers' teaching (Iswati & Hadimulyono, 2018; Manara, 2007; Sah, 2017). Others reject its considerable contribution to the acquisition of English (L2), adding that L1 may hinder the L2 learning process (Alrabah et al., 2016; Aoyama, 2020; Shabir, 2017; Yaqubi & Pouromid, 2013), and research has found that this is the case (Senowarsito & Ardini, 2019). To reconcile these two opposing perspectives, the others conclude that L2 learners can also benefit from the judicious use of L1 (Almohaimeed & Almurshed, 2018; İnal & Turhanlı, 2019; Shuchi & Islam, 2016).

In the context of Vietnamese EFL classrooms, Vietnamese use is a widespread practice. Anh (2012), Nguyen and Duy (2019), and Le (2022) agree that Vietnamese should be used to explain difficult terminologies in the English language. Hung and Anh (2014), however, hold the opinion that Vietnamese should be restricted, affirming that the dominating language in the classroom should be English so that students get ultimate target-language exposure.

L1 increases students' learning opportunities (Li, 2018), and it has been used in a variety of classrooms when teaching students with different English language skills. Agustin and Mujiyanto (2015) say that L1 is used in teaching four skills of English, viz. listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with a higher frequency in a listening and speaking class. Their finding is in line with two previous studies, one is by Kafes (2011) when the researcher recorded and observed English-speaking courses with Turkish as the L1; the other is by de la Campa and Nassaji (2009) in conversation courses with German as the L1. Aoyama (2020) also finds that L1 is used in English communicative activities when students seek help from their teachers or their peers. Apart from L1 practice in teaching four English language skills, it is useful in teaching grammar (Nguyen & Duy, 2019; Saruwatashi, 2020), and vocabulary (Debreli, 2016), or in providing comments or feedback (Mohebbi & Alavi, 2014; Nguyen et al., 2016).

Although the L1 role has been examined in classes of four English language skills (Agustin & Mujiyanto, 2015; de la Campa & Nassaji, 2009; Hawa et al., 2021; Kafes, 2011), there have been few studies exploring its role in classes related to English language components such as English phonology classes. Moreover, Vietnamese as an L1 in an L2 class has also been studied (Anh, 2012; Le, 2022; Nguyen, 2020; Nguyen & Duy, 2019), but those studies focus on L1 use in teaching language skills. Therefore, the present study is aimed at investigating how teachers and students used and perceived Vietnamese in English phonology classes. The study addresses the following four research questions:

1. What are teachers' practices of using Vietnamese in English phonology classes?
2. What are teachers' perceptions towards the use of Vietnamese in English phonology classes?
3. What are students' practices of employing Vietnamese in English phonology classes?

4. What are students' attitudes to the employment of Vietnamese in English phonology classes?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Proponents for Bilingual Approach: When to Use L1

Cook (2008) refers to a bilingual method of the use of L1 to establish L2's meanings. This approach has become more popular than the English-only approach, which was the primary one in the twentieth century (İnal & Turhanlı, 2019). Cook (2008) discussed some situations where L1 can be used in an EFL class, namely grammar explanation, task instructions, and other classroom activities.

In the context of English grammar instructions, many studies have been conducted and support Cook's (2008) view (Anggoro & Nguyen, 2021; Mohebbi & Alavi, 2014; Saruwatashi, 2020). Other researchers add that L1 is used when teachers explain complex grammar rules or language patterns (Agustin & Mujiyanto, 2015; Almohaimeed & Almurshed, 2018; Mahmud, 2018; Sah, 2017). In other contexts, L1 is used when teachers give instructions or clarifications to students completing their tasks or exercises (Debreli, 2016; de la Campa & Nassaji, 2009). Subsequent studies suggest that clear L1 instructions for tasks done in English help students understand deeply what they should do, and thus they perform better (Hasrina et al., 2018; Nguyen & Duy, 2019; Shabir, 2017). Furthermore, the literature also affirms students speak their shared L1 to help complete tasks or do certain assigned activities in EFL classrooms (Aoyama, 2020; Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015). Aoyama (2020) adds that students also prefer to ask questions to their teachers in L1 instead of asking other students because teachers may give them the best advice. Mohebbi and Alavi (2014) argue that L1 is helpful among students when they work in groups, and more importantly, teachers also prefer to use L1 when they participate in student group discussions.

The use of L1 is necessary in some situations, for example in teaching vocabulary. With the support of L1, teachers can easily explain new vocabulary to students, which results in quick and deep understanding (Debreli, 2016; Manara, 2007; Sah, 2017; Saruwatashi, 2020). To elaborate on this view, studies find that new concepts or terminology definitions are best explained in L1 (Aoyama, 2020; Iswati & Hadimulyono, 2018; Nguyen & Duy, 2019). Another common use of L1 is in providing comments or feedback on students' work (de la Campa & Nassaji, 2009; Manara, 2007; Mohebbi & Alavi, 2014; Nguyen et al., 2016). With constructive feedback, students and teachers can understand one another, which is termed rapport among students and teachers, as proposed by Nguyen et al. (2016), Trinh (2016), Mahmud (2018), and Saruwatashi (2020). Another circumstance of using L1 is when teachers aim to build positive interaction between teachers and students (Sah, 2017). When the amount of interaction increases, the need to socialize among students and teachers arises, which can be well-achieved when L1 is used (Debreli, 2016; Le, 2022).

Finally, the other purpose of L1 use is for effective classroom management (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015; Saruwatashi, 2020; Shabir, 2017). More specifically, L1 should be used to give clear instructions, manage discipline, and draw students' attention. These aspects of classroom management create a friendly classroom

environment (Bruen & Kelly, 2017; Hasrina et al., 2018; Nguyen et al., 2016), decreasing students' anxiety (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015), which positively affects their communication skills (Kafes, 2011).

To summarize, regardless of the various benefits of L1 in an EFL class, the ultimate goal is to facilitate learning (Grim, 2010; Iswati & Hadimulyono, 2018; Nguyen & Duy, 2019). They strongly believe the absence of L1 may limit students' learning process, which affects learners' motivation (Hasrina et al., 2018; Nguyen & Duy, 2019). Therefore, the use of L1 is necessary (Mart, 2013), which links to enhanced L2 acquisition (Li, 2018). However, the use of L1 in an EFL class has also been criticized.

2.2 Opponents of Bilingual Approach: L1 Should Be Avoided

The absence of L1 in EFL classes is attributed to how people acquire that language. Cook (2008) points out that people acquire L1 without any support from another language. As a result, L2 learning should take place with no reference to L1. He also states that learners need to learn L2 independently with a separation from L1. Therefore, the existence of L1 in an L2 class is inadvisable.

Supporting the view that L2 should be maximally used in the classroom and that L1 may hinder the acquisition of L2, Nazary (2008) finds that tertiary students are not willing to use L1 in the classroom for more exposure to L2. The same consideration also applies to students whose L1 are Bahasa Indonesia (Agustin & Mujiyanto, 2015), Arabic (Alrabah et al., 2016), and Japanese (Aoyama, 2020). Shabir (2017) investigates a more variety of first languages, including Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Thai, and Arabic, and also finds negative impressions on L1 use in EFL classes.

Another consideration of L1 use in an EFL classroom is related to language levels (Agustin & Mujiyanto, 2015; Manara, 2007; Nguyen, 2012). Almohaimeed and Almurshed (2018) conclude that advanced learners are more likely to reject the use of L1 while beginners and intermediate learners prefer to use L1. A similar conclusion is drawn by Bozorgian and Fallahpour (2015) when they find that pre-intermediate students need more use of L1. The same case applies to learners with low-level proficiency (İnal & Turhanlı, 2019; Nguyen & Duy, 2019).

Finally, research on L1 and L2 preference has also focused on teachers' perceptions. Much research found that teachers also have negative attitudes towards L1 use in L2 instruction. For example, Yaqubi and Pouromid (2013) affirm teachers should take L1 use into earnest consideration. Mart (2013) agrees with this view, for the overuse of L1 may hinder the target language learning. Therefore, L2 should be prioritized in language learning so that learners can have more opportunities to practice the target language (Mahmud, 2018; Shuchi & Islam, 2016). This raises the question of how much L1 should be ideally used in an L2 classroom.

2.3 To What Extent is L1 Use Appropriate?

Previous studies have provided evidence that L1 has brought more pros than cons, but the practice still needs to be judicious to a proper extent. de la Campa and Nassaji (2009), Mart (2013), Mahmud (2018), and İnal and Turhanlı (2019) suggest that with a reasonable amount of L1 use in EFL classes, it can offer benefits for

students' learning outcomes instead of disadvantages. Shuchi and Islam (2016) warn that if L1 is not judiciously used, it may disrupt the L2 learning process.

It is then significant to justify what it means by 'judicious' use. First, it must take learners' levels into consideration. The literature shows that teachers should determine the proper time and amount of L1 use based on the student's language levels (Agustin & Mujiyanto, 2015; Almohaimeed & Almurshed, 2018; Le, 2022; Nguyen, 2012). Anh (2012) believes that different classrooms need different amounts of L1 use. Second, the use of L1 needs to consider the situations suggested by Cook (2008) or other unavoidable circumstances. Finally, teachers must be advised that L1 be used as moderately and as limited as possible (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015; Bruen & Kelly, 2017; Shuchi & Islam, 2016). This advice has also been widely advocated among Vietnamese teachers teaching EFL classes.

2.4 The Context of Vietnamese as L1 in EFL Classes

Vietnamese as L1 has been used by teachers and students in EFL classes. There are also mixed viewpoints concerning the case (Ngan, 2018). According to Nguyen (2020), the proper use of Vietnamese facilitates the L2 learning process, defining its significance in an English class. Nguyen and Duy (2019) propose many benefits of Vietnamese use in this context, which involves saving time, increasing learners' motivation, especially among low-proficiency students, and dealing with students' problems in studying. Anh (2012) and Nguyen and Duy (2019) favor Vietnamese for English grammar and vocabulary instructions. Nguyen et al. (2016) and Le (2022) show social benefits of Vietnamese such as chatting to create a relaxed classroom atmosphere, which is in line with Mohebbi and Alavi (2014), Trinh (2016), Mahmud (2018), and Saruwatashi (2020).

Despite the potential benefits of Vietnamese as L1 in EFL classrooms, there are some restrictions on and disfavor of its use. Hung and Anh (2014) argue that English should be the dominant language and that Vietnamese should only be used by teachers when students cannot understand them. Grant and Nguyen (2017) state that Vietnamese should not be used habitually in an English classroom. Nguyen (2012) agrees with judicious Vietnamese use by considering students' levels but still insists that its use needs to be minimal. Grim (2010), Mohebbi and Alavi (2014), and Nguyen and Duy (2019) state that L1 saves time in an L2 classroom, and L1 is suitable for limited-time budget classes (Nguyen, 2012). Therefore, Vietnamese is highly popular in English classrooms with careful consideration of extent, frequency, and purpose.

To summarize, the literature has provided conflicting views on the use of L1, including in the Vietnamese context, in EFL instruction. Some studies recommend using L1 in teaching English language components such as grammar and vocabulary. The literature also emphasizes that L1 must be used in certain circumstances such as in teaching vocabulary or technical terms. However, other studies claim that L1 needs to be minimized or avoided at all because it hinders target language exposure, which links to language acquisition. Students and teachers also perceived L1 use negatively. In addition, other studies suggest using L1, but its use needs to be judicious and kept minimal. In fact, these previous studies focus mainly on English language skills, such as speaking, or practical language components, such as grammar. The use of L1 in a more theoretical language knowledge course such as linguistics has not been properly researched. Therefore, the present study analyzed the teachers' and students' use of

Vietnamese and their perceptions of using this language in an English Phonology class, which is a part of linguistics courses for students majoring in English language studies.

3. METHODS

This study employed a mixed methods design to collect and analyze the data to answer the research questions. This design deeply explores variables and can elaborate on an existing phenomenon (Fraenkel et al., 2012). In this research, the data from the interview and the survey help to have an insight into the nature of using Vietnamese in the English phonology classroom. The results from the qualitative and quantitative data are used to determine the convergence on the interpretation of the examined problem in this research.

3.1 Setting and Participants

This research was conducted in a Faculty of Foreign Languages at a university in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. English Phonology course was selected for this study because it is one of the sub-courses included under English linguistics courses. This course is one of the crucial branches of linguistics and includes both individual sounds and patterns of sounds (Hawkins, 2018). In this course, students learned topics related to phonemes, syllables, stress, and intonation.

The participants are students and lecturers from the selected faculty. They were chosen for the fact that they meet the study requirements regarding sampling size and the nature of the study. There are nearly 3.000 students enrolling in English Language Studies at the faculty. The number of students who have completed the English phonology course as a compulsory course was approximately 1.700 students, and 238 of them (170 males and 68 females) agreed to participate in the quantitative data collection for this study. Meanwhile, the qualitative data was collected from all five lecturers of the English phonology course (three females and two males). For anonymity, they were assigned pseudonyms, i.e., P1, P2, P3, P4 and P5, representing participant lecturers. They have a Master's degree in English language teaching, with more than three years of experience in teaching English phonology.

3.2 Instruments

The current study used a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview to collect the data. Based on the literature review of L1 use and the different purposes of L1 use in EFL classes, the authors designed a questionnaire to investigate students' practices and attitudes. Semi-structured interviews were used to discover teachers' practices and perceptions. The two research instruments were finalized after addressing the comments from two other experienced researchers in the field.

The questionnaire, which is the instrument for the quantitative data, consists of two parts. Part 1 is related to students' practices with four questions to determine how much Vietnamese has been and should have been used, what purposes were, and in what aspects of the course Vietnamese should be used. Each question in this part provides a list of options from which participants can choose. These questions were created based on different studies conducted by Cook (2008), Debreli (2016), Nguyen

et al. (2016), Trinh (2016), Mahmud (2018), Aoyama (2020), Saruwatashi (2020), and Le (2022). Meanwhile, Part 2 is to investigate their attitudes towards the use of Vietnamese with 11 statements in three categories: participation in the classroom (Aoyama, 2020; Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015), learning motivation (Hasrina et al., 2018; Nguyen & Duy, 2019) and learning outcomes (Hasrina et al., 2018; Nguyen & Duy, 2019; Shabir, 2017). Part 2 employs the five-point Likert scale from 1 to 5.

For the qualitative data collection, a semi-structured interview was chosen because this type of interview is more flexible, allowing the researchers to interview the participants most thoroughly by probing techniques, i.e., asking for clarifications carefully and indirectly (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). There are two parts to the interview: teachers' practices and teachers' perceptions. To explore their practices, the questions focus on how much Vietnamese is used in their English phonology class, its purposes, and the rationale for their use. For their perceptions, the authors asked the participants to explain the benefits of using Vietnamese in teaching and learning English phonology, the roles of Vietnamese in such classes, and their views on how much and when it should be used. The interview questions were created based on different researchers (Anggoro & Nguyen, 2021; Cook, 2008; Mohebbi & Alavi, 2014; Saruwatashi, 2020).

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

3.3.1 The questionnaire

The questionnaire was delivered online to students through the faculty's Facebook groups, which are managed by faculty staff. The researchers provided instructions with the questionnaire to state that only students who had completed the English phonology course may complete the questionnaire and that the participant responses would only be used for the specified research purposes. Participation in completing the questionnaire was voluntary. All the data collected from 238 students then was entered into SPSS 25.0 and a detailed analysis was made. The Cronbach's alpha and the descriptive statistics were analyzed, using frequency percentages and mean scores. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was determined using Cronbach's Alpha. According to Taber (2018), the sufficient value which is commonly considered reliable is 0.70. The reliability of the questionnaire returned by 238 students is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha for each category of the questionnaire.

No.	Categories	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Participation in the classroom	.876
2.	Learning motivation	.888
3.	Learning outcome	.920

3.3.2 The semi-structured interview

The interview was conducted individually using the Zoom platform after the participants agreed to be interviewed. Before the interview, the researchers informed the purpose of the study clearly and asked for consent from the interviewees. With their permission, the researchers recorded the interview. After the interviews, the authors listened to each of the recordings and transcribed them. After that, the authors

started to use a thematic analysis strategy to identify keywords, phrases, and ideas and put them into appropriate codes and themes. This method was used for the fact that it is flexible and accessible, and it ensures the coding and theming based on the content of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The authors then found the similarities and differences in the ideas of the interviewees. The perceptions and practices were then defined and thoroughly analyzed. The data analysis procedure of the interview data is detailed in Table 2, using the 6-phase model from Braun and Clarke (2012).

Table 2. Steps in data analysis.

No.	Phases	This research's phase description
1.	Familiarizing yourself with the data	The researchers listened to each recording carefully and started transcribing. They read the transcripts a few times and took notes where necessary.
2.	Generating initial codes	The researchers looked for codes from the scripts. Two researchers did the work separately, and then compared and discussed the codes.
3.	Searching for themes	Based on the codes, the researchers constructed themes. This step involved double-checking the codes and finding the new themes so that they did not leave any codes out of the proper themes.
4.	Reviewing potential themes	The two researchers rechecked the themes and tried to compare the information so that there was no mistake in codes for themes and vice versa.
5.	Defining and naming themes	In this step, the name of each theme and its meaning were finalized, which were used in the result section.
6.	Producing the report	The researchers drafted the report, relating the themes to each research question, as stated in the result section.

4. RESULTS

This study was guided by four research questions outlined in the introduction section. Therefore, this section is organized based on the research questions, where the result for each research question is presented separately.

4.1 Teachers' Practices

The results show that Vietnamese as L1 was used regularly in English phonology classes. All five lecturers interviewed in this study admitted that they used Vietnamese in English phonology classes. Four of them used a considerable amount of Vietnamese language in their classroom, and one lecturer used a moderate amount of the language.

The purposes of using Vietnamese reflect academic and social nature. All five lecturers agreed that Vietnamese was used to explain difficult English phonology terminologies related to speech articulators, intonations, syllables, or phonemes. P1, P4, and P5 translated from English to Vietnamese when their students did not understand them. P1, P2, P3, and P5 shared the idea that they always needed to use Vietnamese when correcting quizzes, analyzing lesson questions, and explaining test questions to ensure that their students understood them. P2, P3, and P4 used Vietnamese to summarize or review lessons with students. In giving instructions, P2 and P4 usually used Vietnamese, such as instructions on how to pronounce English sounds, whereas P1, P3, and P5 explained how to do tasks, quizzes, and tests, and

informed students about the course syllabus in Vietnamese. Only P1 used Vietnamese for social purposes, as shown in the following extract.

- (1) “Vietnamese was used to tell stories about the lesson, so students can listen and relax”. (P1)

In addition, both P1 and P5 used Vietnamese so that students would have an opportunity to compare the two languages. It is reflected in the following interview extract.

- (2) “This is the best way to get students exposed to critical analysis of both Vietnamese and English phonology”. (P5)

All lecturers were comfortable using English in teaching, and they always felt confident to give a lesson without using Vietnamese; however, they realized that students would not understand them well and that the students did not have the same level of English proficiency, so the English-only policy in such classes was inappropriate. P1 admitted that the amount of Vietnamese use increased over the course since the use of Vietnamese was more convenient and beneficial to students, especially to increase their material understanding. P2, P4, and P5 thought that teachers should adapt to the situation, such as students’ English levels and the nature of the lesson, in applying the English-only policy. P5, for example, stated:

- (3) “Individual sounds like vowels and consonants should be taught in English only, and syllable and intonation can be taught in Vietnamese”. (P5)

In conclusion, all lecturers used Vietnamese in English phonology classes. However, there was a difference in its frequency among lecturers. Their reasons for using Vietnamese, either academic or social, also varied. It was found that teachers used Vietnamese because they needed to ensure students’ material understanding and to improve their learning outcomes. It was not because they could not use English in teaching the lesson.

4.2 Teachers’ Perceptions

In this study, teachers’ perceptions include perceptions on the benefits of using Vietnamese, the preference between Vietnamese and English, the circumstances of its use, and its roles.

4.2.1 *Benefits of Vietnamese to teachers*

According to all the interviewees, Vietnamese helps them teach better in general. For example, P1 reported that they needed to use Vietnamese to teach difficult concepts, as reflected in the following extract.

- (4) “Emotions are necessary when teaching students, especially teaching some difficult concepts which cannot be well-expressed in English. It is Vietnamese that helps you do that”. (P1)

She also emphasized that a sense of humor contributes to a relaxed classroom atmosphere, and no other language creates a better sense than L1. P4 and P5 agreed

that adding Vietnamese helps facilitate better learning activities. P2 and P5 said that it was easier for teachers to express ideas in Vietnamese when teaching difficult terminology, as shown in the following extract.

- (5) “Vietnamese helps me make sure that what I convey to students is understood correctly”. (P3)

In addition, P1, P3, P4, and P5 believed that Vietnamese helped them manage the class more effectively. P1 said that she found it easier to remind students in Vietnamese about the lesson. P3 and P4 also agreed with this view, and they used Vietnamese to manage class activities. P2, however, had a different view than the other four lecturers, as stated in the following excerpt.

- (6) “Both Vietnamese and English can be used to manage the class. I have experience of using both languages in managing students’ misbehavior and giving instructions”. (P2)

4.2.2 Benefits of Vietnamese to students

All interviewed teachers believed that using Vietnamese could make students more motivated to learn and more interested in participating in class activities. P1, P3, P4, and P5 stated that using Vietnamese made students more involved in class activities. They were also more confident to ask questions in class. They added that by using Vietnamese, students could express their ideas clearly, answer questions more frequently, and discuss the lesson with their peers comfortably. However, P2 claimed that, in addition to language selection, clear instruction was also significant for students’ motivation and classroom participation, as shown in the following extract.

- (7) “Students’ involvement depends on both the language use and teachers’ clear instructions”. (P2)

According to the lecturers, Vietnamese use improved students’ overall course performance. They believed that students found it easy to retain difficult concepts when they were delivered in Vietnamese. Moreover, P1, P3, P4, and P5 claimed that students completed tasks more successfully; as a result, they performed better in the test. In addition, P5, as reflected in the following extract, believed that teaching English phonology in Vietnamese helped students in their future linguistics-related courses.

- (8) “I think using Vietnamese elicits students’ critical thinking in comparing Vietnamese and English, which gave them valuable background knowledge, benefiting them in other linguistics or interpreting courses”. (P5)

However, P2 disagreed with other teachers. He claimed that students’ learning outcomes were not only determined by what language was used, as stated in the following extract.

- (9) “More factors need to be considered to determine whether it ensures success in completing tasks or taking tests”. (P2)

To summarize, all lecturers agreed that Vietnamese did not affect the English phonology learning process to a great extent. In fact, it enhanced the learning process because students were more motivated and could understand the lesson better. Overall, Vietnamese facilitated the learning process.

4.2.3 *Preference to use Vietnamese*

P1, P3, P4, and P5 preferred using Vietnamese to English in English phonology classes. They confirmed that it was necessary to use Vietnamese in this context. For classes focusing on language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, or writing, Vietnamese should be avoided, as perceived by P3 in the following extract.

(10) “We should consider students’ levels, too, but overall Vietnamese must be used”. (P3)

P2, however, did not favor Vietnamese even though he admitted that there were some benefits of using it. He concluded that Vietnamese should be considered as a choice, not a must.

4.2.4 *Circumstances of using Vietnamese: How much and when?*

All the teachers believed that under any circumstances, Vietnamese should be used in teaching English phonology classes. However, there was a disagreement among the lecturers regarding how much it should be used. P1, P4, and P5 stated that the amount of English and Vietnamese in the English phonology class should be equal. P3 proposed that Vietnamese should not be used more than 70% of the teaching time, while P2 preferred to use it at most 20%, depending on students’ proficiency level.

There are some suggested situations for Vietnamese use. P1, P4, and P5 said that Vietnamese was used to compare Vietnamese and English phonology, to grade quizzes, tasks, and tests, to check students’ understanding, and to give them instructions in doing tasks. All lecturers affirmed that Vietnamese should be used in explaining difficult phonology concepts. P2, P3, P4, and P5 stated that Vietnamese should be used to demonstrate native speakers’ pronunciation. For this purpose, P2 said:

(11) “I usually give tips about pronunciation, so that students can improve theirs”. (P2)

P3 and P5 also recommended that Vietnamese be used to analyze English phonology comprehensively. Most importantly, P2 expressed a contrasting viewpoint to that of P1, P4, and P5 in the following extract.

(12) “We should not translate Vietnamese and English when teaching English phonology”. (P2)

P1, P4, and P5 often translate English into Vietnamese in teaching English phonology classes. P1, P2, and P4 stated Vietnamese could be used to socialize in the classroom. They realized that Vietnamese could be used to create a relaxed atmosphere, through socialization. P2 clarified that Vietnamese should be spoken to tell jokes related to the lesson.

4.2.5 *English-only or Vietnamese-only?*

The lecturers were confident that English should not be the only language used in teaching as long as students’ understanding was the concern. In addition, they were aware that students wanted to use Vietnamese in English phonology classes. P4 stated:

- (13) “Imagine that you explained English phonology terminologies in English only, almost all of which were alien to students, and then your students would not understand anything”. (P4)

They also agreed that the use of Vietnamese helped students learn the topics in English phonology such as phonemes, syllables, stress, and intonation, and helped them learn more effectively. However, P2 shared a different view, where he claimed that students’ expectations were more complex than what other teachers believed, as in the following excerpt.

- (14) “It’s hard to say yes or no to either; it’s all about students’ course expectations, and it is extremely hard to determine their expectations”. (P2)

Furthermore, P2 added that teaching methods should also be considered.

- (15) “It’s about the teaching method as well. If teachers make their lesson more interesting by adding some clips or visual aids or demonstrations, their students’ understanding, and performance will improve”. (P2)

4.2.6 The role of Vietnamese: Final word

The participants used different words to describe the role of Vietnamese in English phonology classes. P1 considered it “essential” while P2 and P5 used the word “supporting”. P3 believed that Vietnamese was “necessary”, and P4 considered it “important”. Regardless of the different words used, all the lecturers agreed that Vietnamese is inevitable in English phonology classrooms, and it always plays a certain part in students’ learning process and their learning outcomes. As P4 stated in the following extract.

- (16) “I believe it is difficult to avoid using L1 in my class. It must be present for its own reasons. So, why not make use of L1 to support students’ learning?” (P4)

Overall, teachers agreed that Vietnamese should be used for some academic and social purposes. P1, P3, P4, and P5 recommended that Vietnamese be used frequently, while P2 stated that it should not be used as frequently. They all provided different benefits of using Vietnamese in both teaching and learning. In addition, in linguistics courses such as English phonology classes, the English-only policy should not apply, for the absence of Vietnamese hinders the learning process. Therefore, there should be a presence of Vietnamese in English phonology classes because it plays a significant role in teaching and learning English phonology.

4.3 Students’ Practices

The questionnaire revealed that almost all students used Vietnamese in English Phonology classes. However, 1% of the students did not use it at all. The frequency of Vietnamese use was significantly high. More than half of the students used Vietnamese frequently. Figure 1 demonstrates these results in detail.

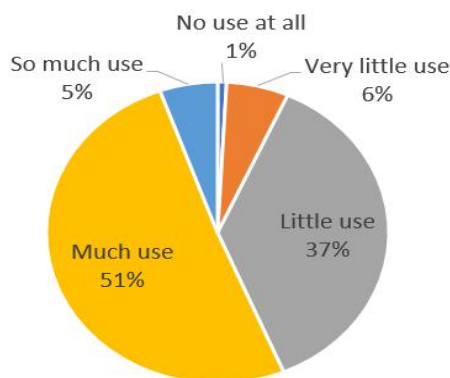


Figure 1. Vietnamese use by students.

The purposes of using Vietnamese by students varied. The most common purpose was to discuss the lesson with their peers, followed by asking questions to the teachers. Some other common purposes were to answer questions and to chat with classmates about topics unrelated to the lesson. None of the students stated that they used Vietnamese to raise new ideas or for other purposes. The details are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Purposes of using Vietnamese in the English phonology class by students.

Purposes	Number of responses	Percent
To discuss the lesson with my friends.	186	38.9
To ask questions to the teacher.	145	30.3
To answer the questions from the teacher.	88	18.4
To raise new ideas.	0	0
To chat with friends about something else, not about the lesson itself.	58	12.4
Others:	0	0

Half of the students used much Vietnamese in English phonology classes, whereas only a third of them believed this was an ideal amount. In fact, nearly two-thirds of them said that little use of Vietnamese would be perfect. Detailed percentages are shown in Figure 2.

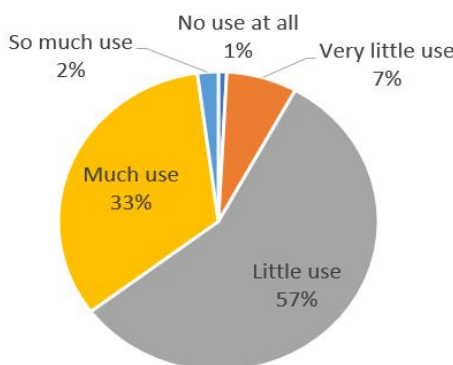


Figure 2. The amount of Vietnamese to be ideally used in English phonology classes.

Regarding when Vietnamese should be used most frequently, the majority of students responded that it was “syllables”. In addition, “intonation” also accounts for a considerable percentage, followed by “vowels” and “consonants”. Some students

also believed that “stress” needed to be taught using Vietnamese. These findings are depicted in Figure 3.

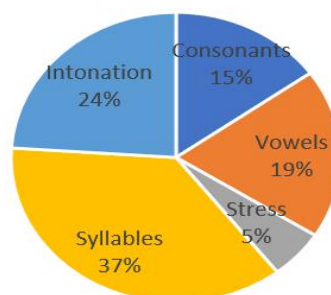


Figure 3. Aspects of phonology that should be taught in Vietnamese.

4.4 Students’ Attitudes

The researchers employed three contributors to evaluate students’ attitudes, i.e., students’ participation, students’ motivation, and students’ learning outcomes. First, students’ classroom participation, as in Table 4, consists of five statements, all of which have a mean score of over 4.4, to determine whether students were involved in the classroom activities. Overall, the students’ responses varied, but the mean scores show Vietnamese helped students increase their willingness to get involved in the classroom. More specifically, Vietnamese improved their participation in classroom activities, helped them to ask questions more easily, made them confident in expressing ideas, and set more freedom in peer discussion.

Table 4. Students’ participation in classroom activities.

Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am more willing to participate in the classroom activities.	238	1.00	5.00	4.4118	.81039
I can ask questions more easily.	238	1.00	5.00	4.4664	.76094
I can express my ideas more confidently.	238	1.00	5.00	4.4454	.81336
I can discuss the lesson with my friends more freely.	238	1.00	5.00	4.4916	.73915
Valid N (listwise)	238				

Table 5 shows students’ increased motivation in learning. The mean score ranges from 4.32 to 4.47, which shows strong agreement among students. This confirms that students were more motivated by the presence of Vietnamese in phonology classes. They claimed that they were more comfortable in doing activities, more encouraged in completing assignments, and most importantly, they were more motivated to learn more topics related to English phonology.

Table 6 demonstrates students’ learning outcomes with the help of Vietnamese. As the cases presented in Table 3 and Table 4, the mean score is considerably high, which demonstrates that students gained a very satisfactory learning outcome using Vietnamese in their class. Students could understand and retain the lesson better. The result also reveals that students were more successful in completing their assignments and performed better on tests.

Table 5. Students' motivation.

Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I feel more relaxed in the classroom activities.	238	2.00	5.00	4.4664	.76094
I am more encouraged to do assigned tasks.	238	1.00	5.00	4.3151	.88914
I feel more motivated learning about English phonology.	238	1.00	5.00	4.3151	.98376
Valid N (listwise)	238				

Table 6. Students' learning outcomes.

Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I remember the lesson better.	238	1.00	5.00	4.4076	.8604
I understand English phonology terminologies better.	238	1.00	5.00	4.4580	.77699
I can do assigned tasks more successfully.	238	1.00	5.00	4.4538	.77130
I can perform well in my English phonology tests.	238	1.00	5.00	4.3824	.90055
Valid N (listwise)	238				

To summarize, the results reveal that students had a highly positive attitude toward using Vietnamese in English phonology classes. Indeed, Vietnamese have boosted their learning in different aspects including participation, motivation, and learning outcomes. Although students generally used Vietnamese in their phonology lessons, a majority of them preferred to use it in a moderate amount. They used Vietnamese for different purposes, the most popular of which was to discuss with their classmates and to ask questions to teachers. They expected that Vietnamese be used most frequently in learning the topic of 'English syllables', while 'word stress' needs the least utilization.

5. DISCUSSION

This study was designed to discover teachers' and students' practices and perceptions towards the use of Vietnamese in English phonology courses. The result has shown that both teachers and students used Vietnamese in their linguistics class and generally had positive attitudes towards this use. This section provides the interpretation of the results and relates them to previous studies so that a deeper understanding of the research problem can be acquired.

5.1 The Teachers' Voices

Most lecturers used Vietnamese very frequently while only one used it in a moderate amount, which supports earlier studies concerning L1 use in EFL classrooms. The purposes of using Vietnamese by lecturers can be categorized into class management, academic purposes, and cultural or social purposes. Among those purposes, our study revealed that the primary purpose was academic. Teachers used Vietnamese to explain difficult terminologies to students. This purpose is also commonly found in other studies, such as [Anh \(2012\)](#), [Bruen and Kelly \(2017\)](#), [Iswati](#)

and Hadimulyono (2018), İnal and Turhanlı (2019), Nguyen and Duy (2019), and Aoyama (2020). This result shows that explanations for phonological terminologies were the key reason for using Vietnamese. Another popular academic purpose for Vietnamese use was to give instructions, which supports other previous studies (e.g., Alrabah et al., 2016; Debreli, 2016; de la Campa & Nassaji, 2009; Hawa et al., 2021; Le, 2022). The Vietnamese instructions in English phonology classes varied, including instructions on how to pronounce sounds and how to complete tasks or tests.

There are some new academic purposes which were found in the study. First, Vietnamese was used to review and summarize the lesson, which is an effective strategy to improve students' understanding. Second, Vietnamese was used to grade or provide feedback for students' quizzes, tests, or lesson questions, and English-Vietnamese translation. Notably, although Vietnamese was used for management and social purposes, they were not often practiced by lecturers. It seems Vietnamese was primarily used for academic purposes in English phonology classes, the most popular of which were for terminology clarifications.

Furthermore, all teachers agreed that Vietnamese helped them in teaching, which positively affected their attitude. This result is in line with the results of previous studies (e.g., Anggoro & Nguyen, 2021; Hawa et al., 2021; Iswati & Hadimulyono, 2018; Le, 2022; Manara, 2007; Sah, 2017). Overall, the presence of Vietnamese supported their teaching in many ways both academically and in classroom management. All lecturers also claimed that Vietnamese use positively affected students' learning process, including their motivation, participation, and learning outcomes.

Although this research has found that there was a need to use Vietnamese in teaching, lecturers warned that the language should be used with care and in appropriate amounts. They need to consider the student's language proficiency and the lesson content. In other words, judicious use is recommended. This finding agrees with previous studies conducted by de la Campa and Nassaji (2009), Mart (2013), Mahmud (2018), İnal and Turhanlı (2019), and Le (2022). More importantly, the benefits of Vietnamese use are strengthened when teachers also use appropriate teaching methods and media. Some of them include using online platforms or websites (Nurhayati, 2019), boardgames (Łodzikowski & Jekiel, 2019), smartphone apps (Nguyen et al., 2021), or phonological system simplification (Celik, 2008).

5.2 The Students' Voices

Students have a highly positive attitude towards the use of Vietnamese in English phonology classes. They used Vietnamese very often in the classroom and expected that their teachers also use it frequently. According to the students, all topics of English phonology, especially syllables, need to be taught in Vietnamese. Students learned more when the language was used. This result aligns with previous studies conducted by Agustin and Mujiyanto (2015), Shuchi and Islam (2016), and Almohaimeed and Almurshed (2018). The results show Vietnamese helped them in various learning aspects, namely motivation, participation, and learning outcomes. First, student participation in the class activities increased. The improved learning participation was a result of student learning motivation. Because the students were motivated, they participated more in learning activities. In addition, when their motivation and participation increased, they could understand the lesson better, and complete their

tasks or tests better. Student learning outcome is the primary benefit of using L1 in teaching. The finding corresponds to previous studies by Grant and Nguyen (2017), Sah (2017), Shabir (2017), Hasrina et al. (2018), Nguyen and Duy (2019), Saruwatashi (2020), Anggoro and Nguyen (2021), and Le (2022).

In summary, the findings from the student questionnaire confirm how lecturers perceived the benefits of Vietnamese use on students' learning, and the benefits students got best reflected what Vietnamese teachers practiced. Both teachers and students appreciated the irrefutable role of L1 in English phonology classes. Although in practice students used more Vietnamese than they hoped, and there were some disagreements regarding the impacts of Vietnamese in English phonology classes.

6. CONCLUSION

The use of Vietnamese positively affected students and teachers in teaching and learning activities in English phonology courses. For students, Vietnamese was used very frequently in the classroom, which got them more engaged in the classroom activities and tasks, made them more motivated to learn, and improved their learning outcomes. They also expected that Vietnamese be used in teaching all topics in English phonology courses, with specific emphasis on syllables. In addition, they spoke Vietnamese mostly for academic purposes. For lecturers, Vietnamese has been used for management and social purposes, but most frequently for academic purposes to teach English phonology terminologies. The lecturers suggested some other situations for effective use of Vietnamese, i.e., pronunciation instruction and analysis of phonology components. Most importantly, Vietnamese use should be judicious for the right purpose, at an appropriate amount, and within learners' English language proficiency.

Based on the research results, the authors can make some recommendations for more effective teaching of English phonology, which applies to other language knowledge courses, using L1 as the main language instruction. First, the use of L1 will have a satisfactory advantage if teachers also employ different approaches to teaching. Every student has different learning styles, and if teachers use different techniques and strategies in their teaching, students can benefit more from the instruction. For example, teachers may use videos, animations, analogs, and different activities to improve students' learning experience. Second, regardless of the approaches the lecturers use, it is suggested that they do not only use English or L1. English-only instructions hinder students' learning, and L1 helps only to a limited extent. Third, teachers should determine the frequency of L1 use based on students' English language proficiency. Fourth, English phonology includes complex concepts, so lecturers should focus on key points in helping students understand the materials.

Regardless of its significant findings, the study has some limitations which can be considered in future research. The questionnaires in this study reflected students' practices and attitudes. However, the results from the questionnaire cannot provide in-depth information about these two aspects, so that an interview needs to be considered in future research, where more questions are asked to ascertain what students expect and think about the use of L1. The other shortcoming of our study is the small number of interviewees. We invited all the lecturers who teach English phonology; however, this sampling size was small, and thus our results would not be generalizable to a larger

population. For future research, more EFL teachers from different universities should be recruited to participate in the study.

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A Comparison of English, Acehnese, and Indonesian Monophthongs

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Abstract

Foreign language learners tend to approximate the quality of non-native vowels to their existing vowel systems. This phenomenon becomes more complicated in learners who already have more than one vowel system in their linguistic repertoire. When learning English, Acehnese-Indonesian speakers are likely to already have two other vowel systems, Acehnese and Indonesian. Thus, the quality of English monophthongs produced by these speakers may resemble the equivalent of Acehnese and Indonesian monophthongs. This study compares the quality of English monophthongs to equivalent Acehnese and Indonesian monophthongs produced by Acehnese-Indonesian speakers. A total of 29 students from a Modern Islamic Boarding School in Aceh participated in this study. The students were recorded producing nine English, 11 Acehnese, and seven Indonesian monophthongs embedded in target words produced in a carrier sentence. The study found that the nine English monophthongs were produced at an approximate quality to either Acehnese and/or Indonesian monophthongs. In some cases, the English vowel was produced similarly to both the equivalent vowels in Acehnese and Indonesian. In other cases, the English vowel was produced more similarly to either Acehnese or Indonesian. The

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findings of this study provide insights into how Acehnese-Indonesian learners filter English vowels through their existing L1 and L2 sounds and allow for a better understanding of this phenomenon via existing conceptual models. The findings also point to the often-ignored influence of other languages in a speaker's repertoire on the learning and production of a new language.

Keywords: Acehnese, English, Indonesian, monophthongs, vowel quality.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a multilingual country where most citizens speak more than one language, a local language, and Indonesian as the national language (Sobarna, 2007). In addition to these languages, Indonesians also learn English from the secondary school level, and this is the only compulsory foreign language taught in the Indonesian education system (Kirkpatrick & Sussex, 2012), where it is the second compulsory language learned in schools after Indonesian. Thus, English may not necessarily be a second language for Indonesians who speak local languages, but it may actually be their third language when they start learning it in secondary schools. One example of a regional language is Acehnese, the eighth most spoken language in Indonesia (Wirachmi, 2022).

In the context of Indonesia, there have been several studies on the production of English vowels by Indonesian speakers (Fata et al., 2017; Low, 2016; Perwitasari et al., 2016; Perwitasari et al., 2015). Widagsa (2015), for example, compared the production of English vowels by Indonesian speakers to Indonesian vowels. However, the Indonesian vowels were taken from another study, and thus, this comparison may not be reflective of the actual influence of Indonesian vowels on the production of English vowels. Further, the speakers who participated in the study were from various parts of Indonesia and were, therefore, likely to produce Indonesian vowels differently due to regional differences (Widagsa, 2015; Widagsa & Putro, 2017). Another study on vowels, compared English vowels to Sundanese and Javanese vowels (Perwitasari, 2019). However, this study did not account for Indonesian vowels and dismissed them as a subset of Javanese and Sundanese vowels, arguing that Sundanese and Javanese have more vowels than Indonesian, and thus, all vowels in Indonesian exist in Javanese and Sundanese. In both Widagsa (2015) and Perwitasari (2019), the multilingual nature of Indonesian speakers was not considered. In addition, there is a dearth of published studies comparing the production of English vowels to those in Indonesian or other regional languages.

Such comparisons are of interest as it has been posited that learners tend to filter non-native vowels through their existing first (L1) and second language (L2) sounds (Alispahic et al., 2017; Best & Tyler, 2007; Escudero, 2005; Flege, 1995), and in the context of Acehnese-Indonesian bilingual speakers, such filtering may affect the production of English vowels by these speakers. In relation to this point, and the lack of studies focusing on the influence of vowels from Indonesian and/or regional languages on the production of English vowels by Indonesian speakers, this study aims to begin filling this gap. In particular, this study aims to compare the quality of English vowels to equivalent Acehnese and Indonesian vowels produced by Acehnese-

Indonesian speakers, with a particular focus on learners in an Islamic boarding high school. This type of school is of particular interest because the school has a unique policy requiring students to speak English with their schoolmates and teachers during their three-year tenure at the school. The results of this study provide insights into how Acehnese speakers produce English monophthongs in relation to their production of Acehnese and Indonesian monophthongs. More specifically, this study addressed the following question:

- To what extent are equivalent monophthongs in English, Indonesian, and Acehnese produced similarly by the speakers?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Perception and Production of Non-Native Sounds

Studies on the perception of non-native sounds, whether as an L2, third language (L3), or additional language, attempt to explain how language learners perceive non-native sounds in relation to the sounds in their existing language (Escudero, 2005). Lipińska (2015), for example, found evidence of a lack of separation in vowels across three languages among subjects whose L1 was Polish and English and German their L2 and L3 respectively. She found that the subjects perceived German /oe/ as being “similar” to Polish /u/, and sometimes merged it with English /ɔ:/ and Polish /ɔ/ (Lipińska, 2015, p. 88), and suggests that the subjects L1 and L2 influence their L3 production.

Another study of L3 German monophthongs compared the quality of these vowels to Malay and English monophthongs in order to observe the cross-linguistic influence of L1 Malay and L2 English on L3 German vowels (Yunus & Pillai, 2020). The findings suggest that speakers tend to produce equivalent L3 monophthongs with similar acoustic properties to their L1. For instance, L3 German monophthongs (/i/, /e:/, /ʊ/, /u:/, /ɔ/ and /a/) were produced with a similar quality to five equivalent Malay vowels (/i/, /e/, /u/, /o/ and /a/). Similarities between the production of the English and German vowels were also found, which suggests that the production of the former may have also influenced the way the German monophthongs were produced. At this juncture, it should be noted that the features of the English monophthongs of the speakers in this study were typical of those produced by Malaysian speakers of English in terms of vowel quality and the lack of quality contrast between typical vowel pairs (Pillai et al., 2010; Tan & Low, 2010). There was a tendency to collapse ‘new’ L3 monophthongs to closely located L1 or L2 vowels such as L3 German /ø:/ which was produced closer to English /ʊ/ (Yunus & Pillai, 2020).

2.2 Models of Speech Perception and Production

Many models have been proposed to explain how perception affects the acquisition of non-native sounds. These models include the Speech Learning Model (SLM) (Flege, 1995), Second Language Linguistic Perception (L2LP) (Escudero, 2005), and the Perceptual Assimilation Model (PAM) (Best, 1994; Best & Tyler, 2007).

The core idea of SLM is that the authentic production of L2 sounds often has a perceptual basis (Flege, 1995), where when learning L2 sounds, learners identify the L2 sounds through their existing L1 sounds (Flege, 1987). Flege (1991, p. 702) called this process of language processing “interlanguage identification”. Based on phonemic similarity between L1 and L2 and to represent how L2 learners perceive non-native sounds in relation to their L1 sounds, Flege (1987) taxonomically divided L2 sounds into three distinctive categories: identical, similar, and new. This comparison can be made through phonemic and phonetic comparisons. The former involves the universal representation of certain sounds by referring to the IPA symbols. Thus, if two sounds in two different languages share the same IPA symbol, the two sounds are considered ‘identical’. In addition, if the two sounds in two languages share the same symbol but one of them has an additional feature, such as lengthening, the two sounds are classified as ‘similar’. An example of this would be English /i:/ and Malay /i/. If the two sounds in the two different languages do not share the same IPA symbol, the two sounds are classified as ‘new’ (e.g., English /ɔ:/ and Malay /o/). However, the term ‘identical’ needs to be treated with caution because even though the same symbols are used to represent sounds from a different language, their actual quality in terms of production may be different as is the case with Malay and English /t/.

The second model, PAM, explains the acquisition of non-native sounds at the initial stage of language acquisition (Best, 1994; Best & Tyler, 2007). Initially, the model (Best, 1994) was developed to describe the way infants perceive new sounds in their L1 environment. The model was later extended to account for the acquisition of an L2 (Best & Tyler, 2007). PAM posits that when non-native listeners listen to non-native sounds, they will assimilate the sound to any similar L1 sounds due to experience of their native sounds into three possible categories based on their goodness fit to native sounds. They will hear the sounds as good or poor examples of their L1 sounds (categorized), distinct from any of their L1 sounds (uncategorized), or as ambient non-speech sounds (non-assimilated). While the categorized assimilation model can be divided into these three possible scenarios, their ease of acquisition is based on the two categories.

The first is the ‘two-category’ where two non-native contrasts are assimilated into two different native sounds. The second is the ‘single category’, where two non-native contrasts are assimilated into a single native phoneme, either as equally good or poor examples of the native phoneme. Discrimination varies from ‘good’ to ‘very good’ if one of two non-native contrasts is perceived as a member of one L1 while the other is not. This type of assimilation is named ‘category-goodness’, which has two additional possible assimilations. The first type is ‘categorized-uncategorized’, in which discrimination could be good if one of the contrasts is assimilated into the native sound (categorized) while the other is heard as a non-native sound (uncategorized). The second type is ‘uncategorized-uncategorized’. in which discrimination would be moderate if both sounds are heard as non-native sounds and are not assimilated to any existing L2 sounds.

The L2LP model by Escudero (2005) set out to fill the gaps in SLM and PAM. This is because PAM only accounted for the perception and production of non-native sounds at the initial stage of language development, while SLM accommodated the perception and production of non-native sounds at the end stage of language development. Thus, L2LP explains the perception and production of non-native sounds at the initial, developmental, and end stages of second language acquisition (Escudero,

2005). To explain the cross-linguistic influence of L1 and L2, the model expects that optimal perception of L1 and L2 sounds is first established (Escudero, 2005). Optimal perception is defined as the maximum-likelihood condition a person perceives a certain sound as the intended sound in the listener's production environment (Escudero, 2005). For example, if the vowel /i/ is produced at the F1 value of 280Hz and no other sound in this language is produced at this F1 value, it is 100% likely that this F1 value will be perceived as the front vowel /i/ in the said language. Thus, when determining the ease of acquisition of a target sound, the F1 and F2 values of the target sound are first determined as the optimal condition of the sound. When these values are compared to the optimal condition of the closest sound in speakers' L1, the optimal condition for L2 acquisition can be established. The optimal condition of this L2 sound depends on the vowel system of speakers' L1 and target language and the ability of the learners to perceive the distance between the optimal L1 condition and the optimal L2 condition.

In relation to this cross-linguistic comparison, the L2LP model put forward three possible scenarios and predictions of non-native vowel perception. The first is the 'new' scenario, which occurs when two non-native sounds are perceived as a single sound. The second is the 'subset' scenario which occurs when two non-native sounds are perceived as more than two existing L1 sounds. An example of this scenario is Dutch learners of Spanish perceiving Spanish /i/–/e/ as Dutch /i:/, /ɪ/, and /ɛ/. The third is a 'similar' scenario that occurs when L2 learners equate two non-native sounds to two existing native sounds. This scenario is considered very challenging for L2 learners because they are copying their L1 category to perceive the non-native sounds, and this full copying of L1 sounds is expected to occur among beginner L2 learners. For example, early Spanish learners of English tend to initially perceive English vowel contrast /i:/–/ɪ/ in the words 'sheep–ship' as Spanish /i/.

3. METHODS

This research is situated within the framework of positivism. It approaches the production and perception of sounds as an external reality that can be objectively observed and comprehended. Within this perspective, there is a belief in the existence of an external reality that can be explored and understood (Antonina, 2017). As a result, the researcher refrained from influencing the participants' sound production during data collection. The data collection process adhered to scientific methods, and subsequent analysis was conducted using statistical analysis (Grix, 2004). This ensures impartiality and objectivity throughout the research process, thus minimizing potential biases. Methodologically, the pursuit of truth relies on testing hypotheses through scientific experimentation and manipulation of observed conditions. The choice of employing the positivist paradigm led to the adoption of a quantitative approach, with the collected data subjected to statistical analysis for interpretation. The following sections explain the methods used in this study.

3.1 Speakers

A total of 29 students consisting of 14 males and 15 females (average age 18) were selected from a Modern Islamic Boarding School in Aceh. They were in their

first and second years of school and had scored 70 to 80 marks for English in the previous two semesters. They were all from the West Aceh region and were fluent in Acehnese and Indonesian. Written consent was obtained from the student participants prior to the data collection.

3.2 Data Collection

Three types of materials were administered to elicit the production of English, Indonesian, and Acehnese vowels. The materials for the English production tests consisted of ten words containing English monophthongs (see Appendix A). The monophthongs used in the study were based on American English monophthongs as described in [Ladefoged and Johnson \(2014\)](#). American English was selected because of its dominant position compared to British English, especially in popular media ([Gonçalves et al., 2018](#)). In Indonesia, major television channels tend to air American movies and series, which makes American English more commonly heard by Indonesian speakers. Nevertheless, the Indonesian school curriculum for English does not specify which English variety should be used ([Lauder, 2010](#)).

Words were selected where the target vowel appeared in a consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) context. The target monophthongs for the Acehnese production test were also placed in a CVC context. Eleven words (see Appendix B) were selected, targeting eleven Acehnese oral monophthongs described in previous studies ([Asyik, 1987](#); [Durie, 1985](#); [Pillai & Yusuf, 2012](#); [Yusuf, 2013](#); [Yusuf et al., 2022](#)). For the Indonesian production test, seven Indonesian words targeting Indonesian monophthongs described in previous studies ([Soderberg & Olson, 2008](#); [van Zanten & van Heuven, 1984](#)) were used (see Appendix C). The target for Indonesian monophthongs was placed in CVCVC, with target vowels placed in the final CVC syllable except for Indonesian *tetap* ‘remain’ which is in the first CVC syllable. The students were required to read target words in a carrier sentence for each respective language:

English : *I say ... again.*

Indonesian : *Saya bilang ... lagi.* [I say ... again.]

Acehnese : *Nyoe lam Bahasa Aceh ...* . [This in Acehnese is]

The sentences containing the target words in English and Indonesian were presented on PowerPoint slides on a computer screen. For Acehnese, pictures associated with the target words and cue words in Indonesian were presented on the slides. This was because, unlike Indonesian, Acehnese does not have a standard spelling, and many spelling variations exist ([Santoso, 2013](#)). Thus, the students may be unfamiliar with one form of certain spelling. The students were recorded reading each word three times, producing 870 tokens for English, 870 tokens for Acehnese, and 609 tokens for Indonesian. This was done for all languages, starting from English, Indonesian, and Acehnese. The students were asked to pause for about three seconds between each sentence containing the target word. They finished all the words in one take before proceeding to the second and then third repetitions. All recordings were done in a quiet room in the computer laboratory at the school. The production test was recorded with a Zoom H6 recorder connected to a headset microphone. The recordings

were sampled at 44.000 Hz and 16-bit rate and recorded in the WAV format to maintain the quality of the recordings.

3.3 Data Analysis

The formant measurement was done in PRAAT version 6.2.14 (Boersma & Weenink, 2022). Only the first (F1) and second formants (F2) were measured to determine the quality of vowels. These two formants could be used to plot the quality of the vowels into the F2/F1 vowel space. Even though the quality of a vowel can be represented by many formants, the first two formants are adequate to represent the vowel quality in the vowel space. If F1 is similar between two vowels, they should have different F2 values to be considered as different vowels (Beňuš, 2021). The onset and offset of the vowel were determined by manually inspecting the waveform and spectrogram of the target vowel. As for quantitative data analysis, one-way ANOVA was used to ascertain whether the production of English vowels equivalent to Acehnese and Indonesian vowels exhibited any significant differences. In case significant results were recorded, a post hoc comparison using a Bonferroni adjustment was used to see if English vowels are significantly different from Acehnese, Indonesian, or both. Mauchly's Test of Sphericity was calculated to determine whether sphericity was violated. In order for the sphericity assumption to be met Mauchly's Test of Sphericity should be nonsignificant. Should the sphericity be violated, Greenhouse-Geisser is used if $\epsilon < 0.75$ in Mauchly's test, and Huynh-Feldt is used if $\epsilon > 0.75$ (Roever & Phakiti, 2017).

The classification of English vowels to equivalent Acehnese and Indonesian vowels was based on identical IPA symbols used to represent English, Acehnese, and Indonesian vowels. The use of phonetic symbols to compare the quality of sounds in a different language was also used in previous studies (Bohn & Flege, 1992; Flege, 1987) and, more recently, in the context of Indonesia (Perwitasari et al., 2016). Table 1 compares the English, Acehnese, and Indonesian monophthongs. English has ten monophthongs based on American English by Ladefoged and Johnson (2014), Acehnese has ten monophthongs based on the description by Asyik (1987), and Indonesian has six monophthongs based on the description by van Zanten (1986) and Soderberg and Olson (2008). Missing from the list of Indonesian monophthongs is /ɛ/, which van Zanten (1986) and Soderberg and Olson (2008) did not mention, but was included in data collection in the second syllable of the Indonesian *bebek* 'duck'. Furthermore, it is important to note that Acehnese has many dialects, but the vowels in this study were based on the Pase dialect, which has been used as the reference for studies on Acehnese vowels (Masykar et al., 2021; Pillai & Yusuf, 2012; Yusuf, 2013).

Table 1. Comparison of monophthongs across Acehnese (Asyik, 1987), Indonesian (Soderberg & Olson, 2008; van Zanten & van Heuven, 1984), and American English (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2014).

English	Acehnese	Indonesian
/i:/	/i/	/i/
/ɪ/	/e/	/e/
/ɛ/	/ɛ/	/ə/
/æ/	/u/	/a/
/ʌ/	/ə/	/u/
/ɑ:/	/ʌ/	/o/

Table 1 continued ...

/ɔ:/	/a/	
/ʊ/	/u/	
/ɜ:/	/o/	
/u:/	/ɔ/	

Based on IPA similarity, English vowels were classified into four categories (see Table 2). Similar to Acehnese and Indonesian vowels (SAI), Identical to Acehnese and Indonesian vowels (IAI), Identical to Acehnese vowels (IA), and Novel to Acehnese and Indonesian vowels (NAI). The first three sets of comparison comprise English /i:/, /ɔ:/, and /u:/. Acehnese and Indonesian vowels have similar vowels to these three English vowels but without vowel lengthening. This set was classified as SAI. The second set contains only one English /ɛ/, which has an identical sound in Acehnese and Indonesian. This set was classified as IAI. The third set also contains only one English /ʌ/, which has an identical sound only in Acehnese but not in Indonesian and was classified as IA. The findings were then interpreted with reference to SLM (Flege, 1987, 1995), PAM (Best, 1994; Best & Tyler, 2007), and L2LP (Escudero, 2005).

Table 2. Classification of English vowels to Acehnese and Indonesian vowels.

Classification	English	Acehnese	Indonesian
SAI	/i:/	/i/	/i/
	/ɔ:/	/ɔ/	/ɔ/
	/u:/	/u/	/u/
IAI	/ɛ/	/ɛ/	/ɛ/
IA	/ʌ/	/ʌ/	-
NAI	/ɪ/	/i/	/i/
	/ɑ:/	/ɔ/	/ɔ/
	/ʊ/	/u/	/u/
	/æ/	/ɛ/	/ɛ/
		/a/	/a/

SAI: Similar to Acehnese and Indonesian;

IAI: Identical to Acehnese and Indonesian;

IA: Identical to Acehnese;

NAI: New to Acehnese and Indonesian.

Note that the /ɒ/ and /ə/ vowels and diphthongs were not included in this study.

4. RESULTS

The following section presents the result of the study by comparing English vowels to Acehnese and Indonesian vowels produced by the students. Each English vowel is compared based on the classification made in Table 1.

4.1 English /i:/, and Indonesian and Acehnese /i/

English /i:/ is the first vowel in the Similar to Acehnese and Indonesian (SAI) category. The scatter plots comparing the production of English /i:/, and Indonesian and Acehnese /i/ by the Acehnese-Indonesian speakers are presented in Figure 1. As shown in the plots, the three vowels are clustered in the upper left section of the vowel space for both males and females. However, the vowels produced by the female speakers appear to be more spread out, while those by the male speakers are

concentrated in one area of the vowel space. English /i:/ and Indonesian /i/, on the other hand, are more spread out in the vowel space compared to Acehnese /i/ for the female speakers.

A one-way repeated-measures ANOVA indicated that the three vowels were not significantly different in terms of F1, $F(2,56)=1.09$, $p=0.343$, and F2, $F(2,56)=0.726$, $p=0.49$. This finding confirms the visual assumption that the English /i:/, and Indonesian and Acehnese /i/ were similar in terms of quality.

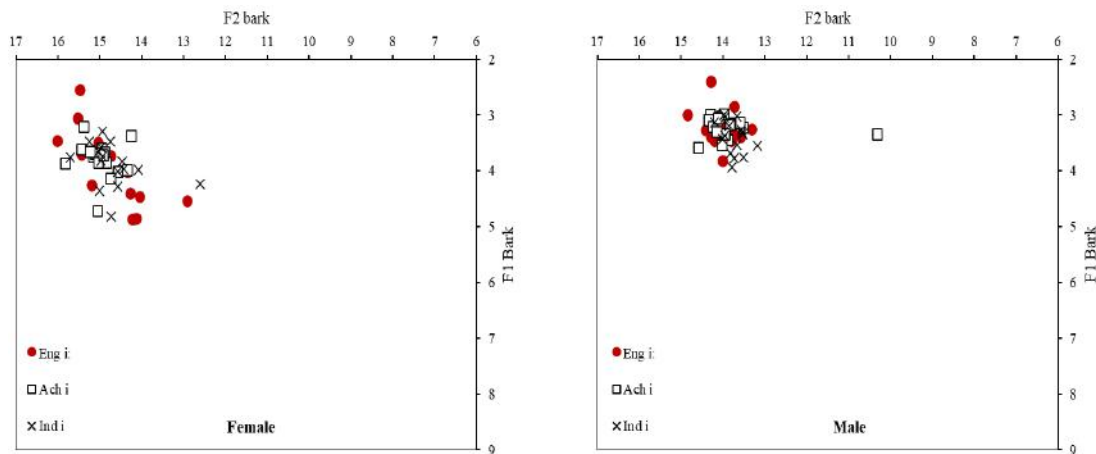


Figure 1. Scatter plots of English /i:/, Indonesian /i/, and Acehnese /i/.

4.2 English /ɔ:/, and Indonesian and Acehnese /ɔ/

English /ɔ:/ is the second vowel in the SAI category. The scatter plots comparing the production of English /ɔ:/, and Indonesian and Acehnese /ɔ/ by the speakers are presented in Figure 2. A visual inspection of the vowel distribution in the vowel space suggests that the production of the English /ɔ:/ differed from Acehnese and Indonesian /ɔ/. The placement of English /ɔ:/ in the vowel space indicates that this vowel was contrasted with Indonesian and Acehnese /ɔ/. The production of English /ɔ:/ was also more spread out among the female speakers. Acehnese and Indonesian /ɔ/ produced by the male speakers tended to concentrate on one area of the vowel space. Some female speakers produced English /ɔ:/ in close proximity to Acehnese and Indonesian /ɔ/. From the plots, it can be said that English /ɔ:/ was produced higher and more retracted for both male and female speakers. Acehnese and Indonesian /ɔ/ were produced lower and more fronted.

A one-way repeated-measures ANOVA indicated that the three vowels were significantly different in terms of F1, $F(2,56)=78.88$, $p<0.001$, and F2, $F(2,56)=117.52$, $p<0.001$. A post hoc comparison using a Bonferroni adjustment showed that F1 of English /ɔ:/ was significantly different from Acehnese /ɔ/ ($p<0.001$) and Indonesian /ɔ/ ($p<0.05$). The F2 of English /ɔ:/ was significantly different from Acehnese /ɔ/ ($p<0.001$) and Indonesian /ɔ/ ($p=0.001$).

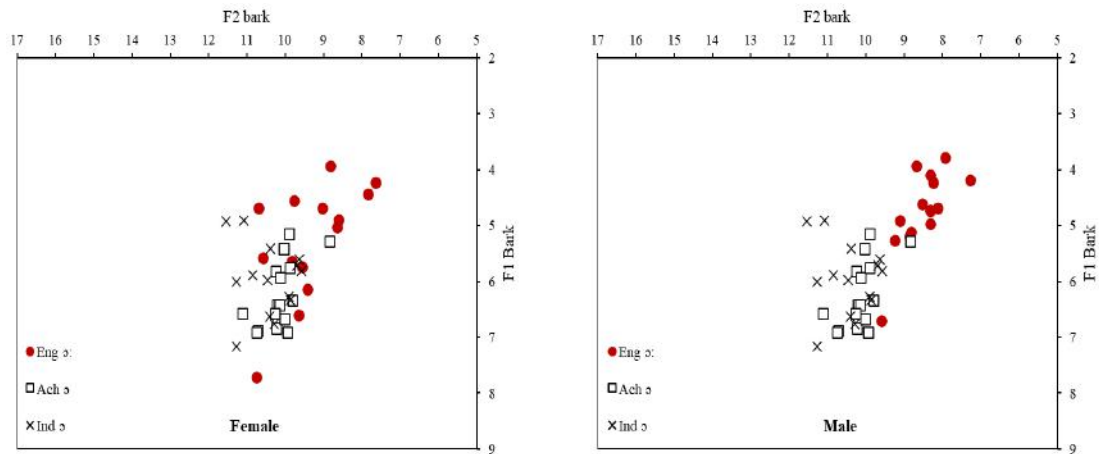


Figure 2. Scatter plots of English /ɔ:/, Indonesian /ɔ:/, and Acehese /ɔ:/.

4.3 English /u:/, and Indonesian and Acehese /u/

English /u:/ is the third and last vowel in the SAI category. The scatter plots comparing the production of English /u:/, and Indonesian and Acehese /u/ by the speakers are presented in Figure 3. English /u:/ appears to have been produced distinctly from Indonesian /u/ but is more similar to Acehese /u/. This pattern is mostly similar for both males and females. Acehese /u/ is located more fronted, while in Indonesian, this vowel is located further back in the plots. English /u:/ appears to have been produced between Acehese and Indonesian /u/.

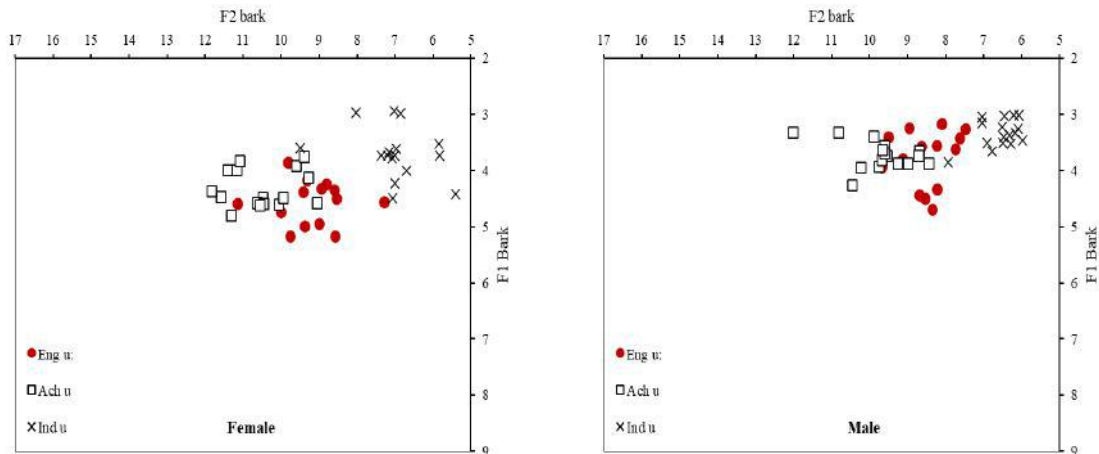


Figure 3. Scatter plots of English /u:/, Indonesian /u/, and Acehese /u/.

However, a one-way repeated-measures ANOVA indicated that the three vowels were significantly different in terms of F1, $F(2,56)=17.564$, $p<0.001$, and F2, $F(2,56)=17.050$, $p<0.001$. A post hoc comparison using a Bonferroni adjustment showed that the F1 of English /u:/ was significantly different from Acehese /u/ ($p<0.001$) but not significantly different from Indonesian /u/ ($p=1.00$). The F2 of English /u/ was not significantly different from Acehese /u/ ($p=0.17$) but significantly different from Indonesian /u/ ($p<0.001$). These results suggest that the quality of English /u:/ may be considered a mix between the quality of Acehese /u/ and Indonesian /u/. In terms of F1, English /u:/ was closer to Indonesian /u/, while in terms

of F2, English /u:/ was closer to Acehnese /u/. The speakers may be approximating the quality of English /u:/ through both Acehnese and Indonesian /u/. Compared to Acehnese and Indonesian /i/ and /ɔ/, where these vowels were produced similarly in terms of quality, Acehnese and Indonesian /u/ were produced quite distinctly.

4.4 English, Indonesian and Acehnese /ɛ/

The English vowel /ɛ/ is the only vowel classified in the Identical to Acehnese and Indonesian (IAI) category. The scatter plots comparing the production of English, Indonesian, and Acehnese /ɛ/ are presented in Figure 4. There were obvious overlaps of the three vowels for both male and female speakers, with the overlaps being more apparent for males. For the male speakers, the three vowels were concentrated in one location as if they were one indistinguishable vowel. For female speakers, Indonesian /ɛ/ appears to have been produced a little bit higher while Acehnese /ɛ/ was slightly more back in the plot than English /ɛ/. As can be seen in the plots, some productions of English /ɛ/ overlap with Indonesian /ɛ/, while some overlap with Acehnese /ɛ/.

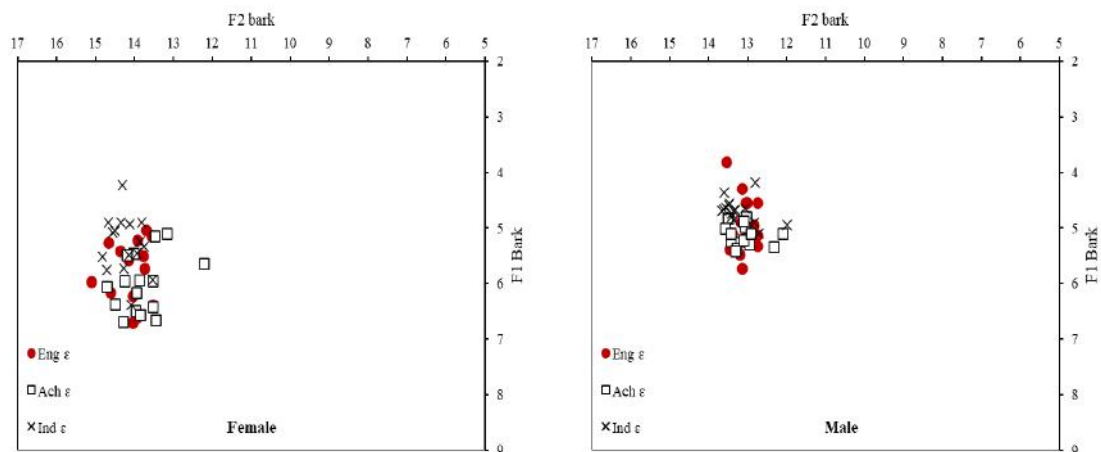


Figure 4. Scatter plots of English /ɛ/, Indonesian /ɛ/, and Acehnese /ɛ/.

A one-way repeated-measures ANOVA indicated that the three vowels were significantly different in terms of F1, $F(2,56)=23.107$, $p<0.001$, and F2, $F(2,56)=4.910$, $p<0.011$. A post hoc comparison using a Bonferroni adjustment showed that F1 of English /ɛ/ was significantly different from Indonesian /ɛ/ ($p<0.002$) but not significantly different from Acehnese /ɛ/ ($p=0.060$). The F2 of English /ɛ/ was not significantly different from Acehnese /ɛ/ ($p=0.082$) and Indonesian /ɛ/ ($p<0.066$). These findings suggest that the quality of English /ɛ/ was significantly different from Indonesian /ɛ/ in terms of F1 but not in terms of F2. The quality of English /ɛ/ and Acehnese /ɛ/ were not different in terms of F1 and F2. In other words, English /ɛ/ was produced with a similar vowel quality as Acehnese /ɛ/.

4.5 English and Acehnese /ʌ/ and Indonesian and Acehnese /a/

English /ʌ/ is the only vowel classified as Identical to Acehnese (IA). However, since the location in the vowel space of English /ʌ/ produced by these speakers is assumed to be close to Acehnese and Indonesian /a/, this vowel in both these languages is included in the analysis. The scatter plots comparing the production of English /ʌ/,

Acehnese /ʌ/, Acehese, and Indonesian /a/ by the speakers are presented in Figure 5. The placement of the vowels in the plots suggests that the quality of English /ʌ/ was different from that of Acehese /ʌ/ for both male and female speakers. Most female speakers produced English /ʌ/ similar to Acehese and Indonesian /a/.

A one-way repeated-measures ANOVA indicated that the three vowels were significantly different in terms of F1, $F(2,40)=20.51, p<0.001$ but F2, $F(2,56)=4.910, p=0.97$. A post hoc comparison using a Bonferroni adjustment showed that F1 of English /ʌ/ was significantly different from Acehese /a/ ($p<0.001$) but not significantly different from Indonesian /a/ ($p=0.626$). These results suggest that the quality of English /ʌ/ was significantly different from Acehese /a/ only in terms of F1 but not in terms of F2. The quality of English /ʌ/ and Indonesian /a/, on the other hand, were similar in terms of F1 and F2. In other words, English /ʌ/ was produced similarly to Indonesian /a/.

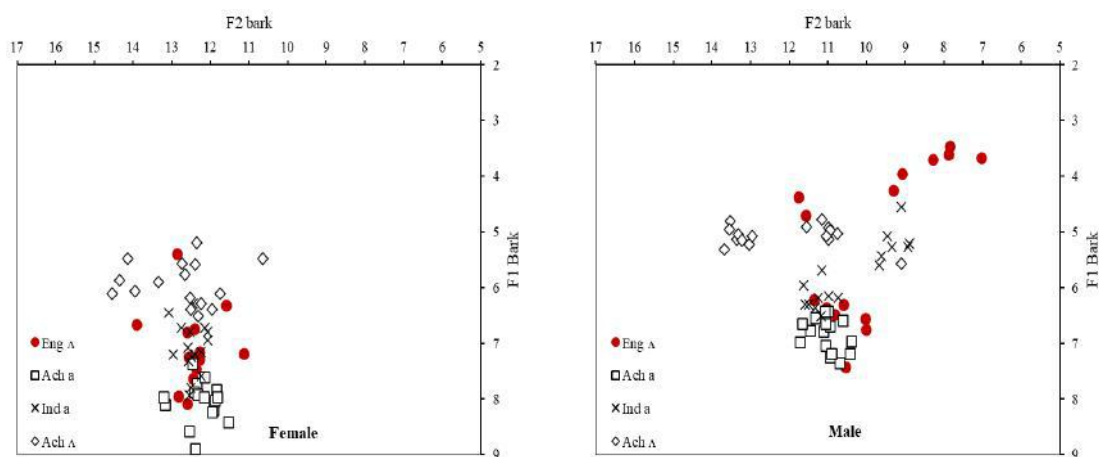


Figure 5. Scatter plots of English and Acehese /ʌ/ and Indonesian and Acehese /a/.

4.6 English /ɪ/, and Indonesian and Acehese /i/

English /ɪ/ is the first vowel in the New to Acehese and Indonesian (NAI) category. Unlike English /i:/, English /ɪ/ is novel to Acehese and Indonesian vowels. However, its proximity to Indonesian and Acehese /i/ may have led the Acehese-Indonesian speakers to approximate English /ɪ/ to native Acehese and Indonesian /i/. The scatter plots comparing the production of English /ɪ/, Indonesian /i/ and Acehese /i/ are presented in Figure 6. The placement of the vowels in the plots suggests that the three vowels were produced similarly by both males and females.

A one-way repeated-measures ANOVA indicated that the three vowels were not significantly different in terms of F1, $F(2,56)=.360, p=0.107$. As for F2, Mauchly's Test of Sphericity was significant $p<0.05$, and thus, the result of Hyun-Feldt was used with $\epsilon=0.814$. The results indicate that the three vowels were not significantly different in terms of F2 $F(2,56)=2.017, p=0.143$. No post hoc test was conducted since there was no significant difference for either F1 or F2 found among the three vowels. In other words, English /ɪ/ and Indonesian and Acehese /i/ were produced similarly in terms of their vowel quality.

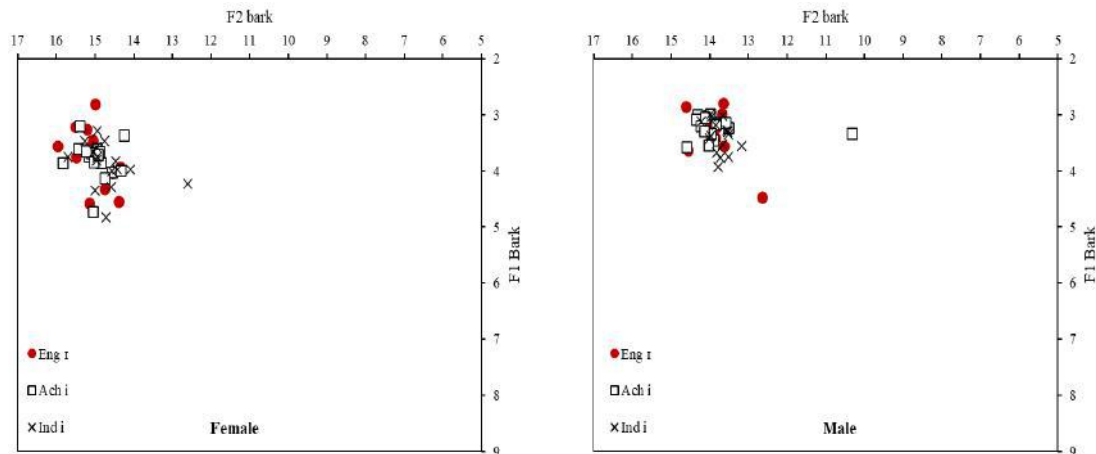


Figure 6. Scatter plots of English /i/, Indonesian /i/, and Acehnese /i/.

4.7 English /æ/, Acehnese and Indonesian /ɛ/ and /a/

English /æ/ is the second English vowel in the NAI category. Acehnese and Indonesian /ɛ/ is the closest vowel to English /æ/. However, since some students may also pronounce ‘bat’ based on its written orthography, the vowel /a/ in Acehnese and Indonesian was also compared with English /æ/. The scatter plots comparing the production of English /æ/ with Acehnese, Indonesian /ɛ/, and Acehnese and Indonesian /a/ are presented in Figure 7. The male and female speakers produced the English /æ/ with a different pattern. Most female speakers produced English /æ/ closer to Acehnese and Indonesian /ɛ/. On the other hand, the male speakers tended to produce English /æ/ closer to Acehnese and Indonesian /a/.

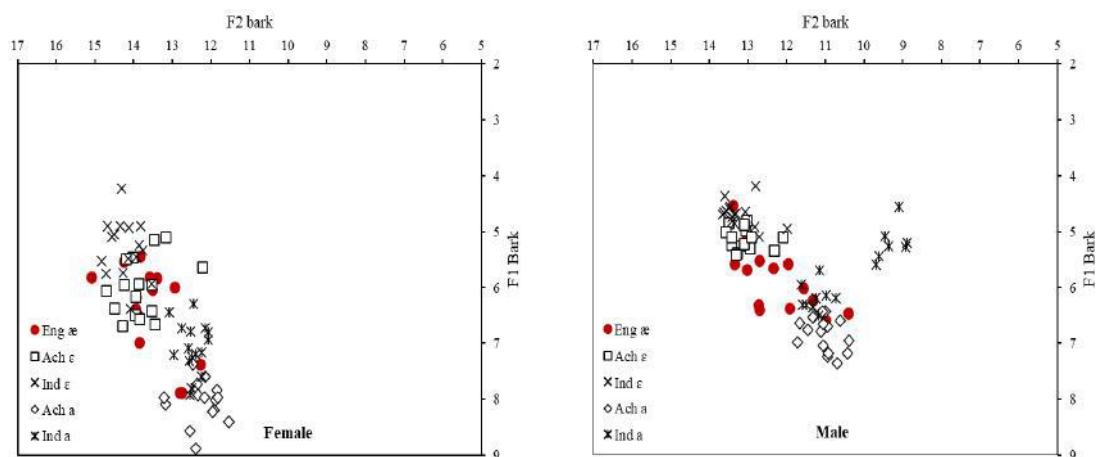


Figure 7. Scatter plots of English /æ/, Acehnese, and Indonesian /ɛ/ and Acehnese and Indonesian /a/.

A one-way repeated-measures ANOVA indicated that the five vowels were significantly different in terms of F1, $F(2,56)=129.66$, $p<0.001$, and F2 $F(2,56)=98.47$, $p<0.001$. A post hoc comparison using a Bonferroni adjustment showed that F1 of English /æ/ was significantly different from that of Acehnese /ɛ/ ($p<0.002$), Indonesian /ɛ/ ($p<0.001$), Acehnese /a/ ($p<0.001$), but not Acehnese /a/ ($p=0.484$). The F2 of English /æ/ was significantly different from Acehnese /ɛ/ ($p=0.013$), Indonesian /ɛ/ ($p=0.001$), Acehnese /a/ ($p=0.001$), and Indonesian /a/

($p=0.001$). These results suggest that English /æ/ was produced differently from Acehese and Indonesian /ɛ/ and Indonesian /a/ and was similar only in terms of vowel height with Acehese /a/.

4.8 English /ɑ:/, and Acehese and Indonesian /ɔ/

English /ɑ:/ is the third English vowel in the NAI category. Acehese and Indonesian /ɔ/ are the closest vowels to English /ɑ:/. The scatter plots comparing the production of English /ɑ:/, and Indonesian and Acehese /ɔ/ are presented in Figure 8. It is clear that there was a lack of separation between English /ɑ:/ and Indonesian and Acehese /ɔ/. For the male and speakers, the vowels in the three languages appear to be clustered together.

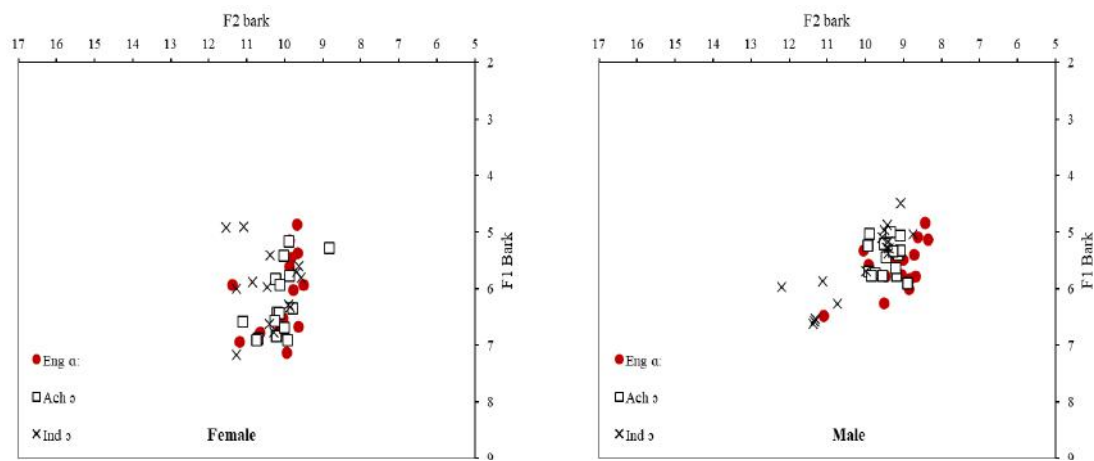


Figure 8. Scatter plots of English /ɑ:/, Indonesian /ɔ/, and Acehese /ɔ/.

A one-way repeated-measures ANOVA indicated that the three vowels were not significantly different in terms of F1, $F(2,56)=0.801$, $p<0.454$ but F2 $F(2,56)=5.492$, $p<0.023$. A post hoc comparison using a Bonferroni adjustment showed that F2 of English /ɑ:/ was significantly different from that of Indonesian /ɔ/ ($p<0.047$) but not from Acehese /ɔ/ ($p=0.33$). These results suggest that the quality of English /ɑ:/ was significantly different only from that of Indonesian /ɔ/ in terms of F2 but not in terms of F1. The quality of English /ɑ:/ and Acehese /ɔ/ was not different in terms of F1 and F2. In other words, English /ɑ:/ was produced similarly to Acehese /ɔ/ and higher than Indonesian /ɔ/.

4.9 English /ʊ/, and Indonesian and Acehese /u/

English /ʊ/ is the last English vowel in the NAI category. Unlike English /u:/, the vowel /ʊ/ is novel to Acehese and Indonesian. However, its close proximity to Indonesian /u/ and Acehese /u/ may have led to the Acehese-Indonesian speakers producing English /ʊ/ close to the two Acehese and Indonesian back vowels. The scatter plots comparing the production of English /ʊ/, and Indonesian and Acehese /u/ are presented in Figure 9, where English /ʊ/ was produced similarly to Acehese /u/ for both male and female speakers. The three vowels were similar in terms of F1 but differed across F2. This is evident from the placement of Acehese /u/ to the left

of the vowel space, while the Indonesian /u/ is to the right of the vowel space. Interestingly, English /ʊ/ is placed between Acehnese /u/ and Indonesian /u/.

A one-way repeated-measures ANOVA indicated that the three vowels were significantly different in terms of F1, $F(2,56)=21.893$, $p<0.001$, and F2 $F(2,56)=52.565$, $p<0.001$. A post hoc comparison using a Bonferroni adjustment showed that the F1 of English /ʊ/ is not significantly different from that of Acehnese /u/ ($p=0.08$) but significantly different from Indonesian /u/ ($p<0.05$). F2 of English /ʊ/ was not significantly different from Acehnese /u/ ($p=0.17$) but significantly different from Indonesian /u/ ($p<0.01$). The results suggest that the quality of English /ʊ/ was different from Indonesian /u/ but similar to Acehnese /u/.

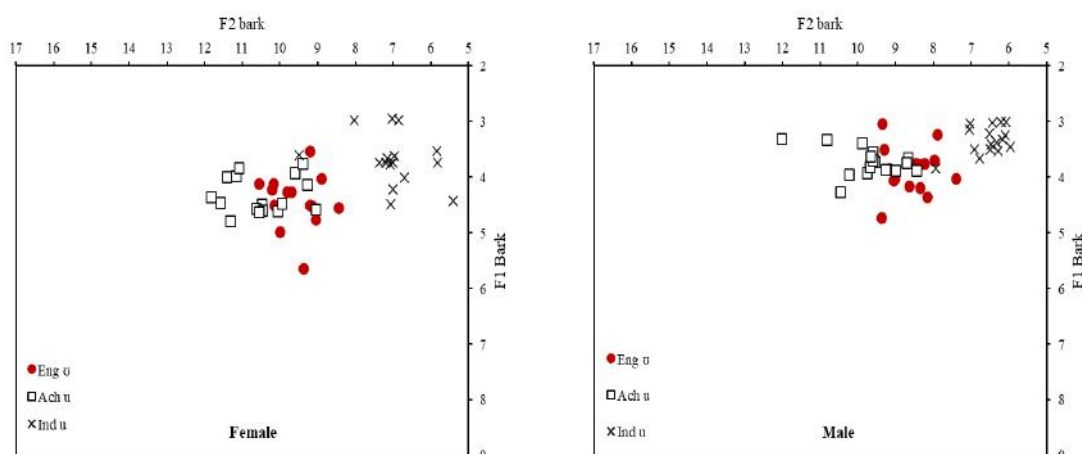


Figure 9. Scatter plots of English /ʊ/, and Indonesian and Acehnese /u/.

5. DISCUSSION

As previously mentioned, SLM, PAM, and L2LP concur that when learning a new language, L2 learners tend to filter the target language sound through their existing sounds (Alispahic et al., 2017; Best & Tyler, 2007), and thus, the production of non-native sounds, at least in their initial stage of development, may resemble some existing native vowels. This study found that the production of English vowels is, to some extent, related to how Acehnese and Indonesian vowels are produced. In other words, the quality of some English vowels may be similar to Acehnese and Indonesian vowels, especially for vowels that have a similar quality to native vowels.

Table 3 summarises the comparisons of English monophthongs with those in Indonesian and Acehnese.

Table 3. Comparison of the quality of English vowels with Acehnese and Indonesian vowels by Acehnese-Indonesian English speakers.

Similarities	Examples
Produced similarly to L1 Acehnese and L2 Indonesian vowels	English /ɪ/ and English /i:/ → L1 Acehnese and L2 Indonesian /i/
Produced similarly to L1 Acehnese but not to L2 Indonesian vowel	English /ʊ/ → L1 Acehnese /u/ only

Table 3 continued...

Produced more similarly to L1 Acehnese than to L2 Indonesian	English /ɛ/ → L1 Acehnese /ɛ/ with some similarities to L2 Indonesian /ɛ/ English /ɑ:/ → L1 Acehnese /ɔ/ with some similarities to L2 Indonesian /ɔ/.
Produced more similarly to L2 Indonesian than to L1 Acehnese	English /ʌ/ → L2 Indonesian /a/ with some similarities to L1 Acehnese /a/
Produced with some similarities to both L1 Acehnese and L2 Indonesian	English /u:/ → L1 Acehnese /u/ in terms of vowel height (F1) and L2 Indonesian /u/ in terms of vowel fronting/retraction (F2).

In the case of English /i:/ and /ɪ/, they were produced similarly to Acehnese and Indonesian /i/, thus resulting in a loss of phonemic distinction between the English vowels. Such loss has been reported in neighbouring varieties of English (Deterding, 2003; Pillai et al., 2010; Sharbawi, 2006; Tan & Low, 2010). The L2LP model (Escudero, 2005) classified this type of assimilation as a ‘new’ category. In the PAM model (Best & Tyler, 2007), this is referred to as ‘single-category’ assimilation. Thus, when producing the two vowels, the Acehnese-Indonesian speakers in this study may have been referring to their existing vowels, that is, Acehnese and Indonesian /i/, and produced both /i:/ and /ɪ/ as /i/. This may have happened because Acehnese and Indonesian only have one high-front vowel, /i/, and thus, the speakers may have mapped the novel English /ɪ/ to Acehnese and Indonesian /i/.

In the second case, partial similarities in vowel quality were found, and sometimes with either Acehnese or Indonesian, especially when there was a discernible difference in vowel quality between the latter two vowels. For instance, English /ʊ/ was produced similarly to Acehnese /u/ but distinct from Indonesian /u/. In the case of /u:/, only one aspect of vowel quality was similar to Acehnese and Indonesian vowels because Acehnese and Indonesian /u/ do not actually share the same properties in terms of vowel height. Thus, in this study, English /u:/ shared similar properties to Acehnese and Indonesian /u/, but the difference is in terms of vowel fronting, the vowel was produced similarly to Acehnese /u/, while in terms of height, it was similar to Indonesian /u/. This can be said to fall under the ‘two-category’ scenario in PAM (Best & Tyler, 2007) and the ‘similar’ scenario in L2LP (Escudero, 2005).

A similar scenario was also observed for English /ʌ/, where the speakers produced this vowel similarly to Indonesian /a/ but not Acehnese /ʌ/. One possible explanation for this is that in the dialect of the current speakers, the West Aceh dialect, the vowel /ʌ/ is different in terms of vowel quality from the Acehnese dialect in Pase (Pillai & Yusuf, 2012). The different realization of Acehnese /ʌ/ in the West Aceh dialect was first raised in studies on West Acehnese (Masykar et al., 2021). The studies found that Acehnese speakers from West Aceh produced the Acehnese /ʌ/ in the word *göt* as /ə/, /ɛ/, and /ɔ/. Such variation may have resulted in the speakers having a different realization of Acehnese /ʌ/. However, it is not clear why English /ʌ/ was realized as Acehnese and Indonesian /a/ instead of any variation of Acehnese /ʌ/ from the West Aceh dialect. Thus, it is safe to assume that for the current speakers, English /ʌ/ has the same quality property as Acehnese and Indonesian /a/.

In the case of English /ɑ:/, which is novel to both Acehnese and Indonesian vowel systems, it tended to be realized similar to the mid-back Acehnese and Indonesian /ɔ/. English /ɑ:/, and Acehnese and Indonesian /ɔ/ shared the same quality in terms of vowel fronting but differed considerably in terms of height. This scenario

was also observed in English /ɛ/, Acehnese and Indonesia /ɛ/. English /ɛ/ was produced similarly to Acehnese /ɛ/ compared to Indonesian /ɛ/ but with some similarity to Indonesian /ɛ/ in terms of vowel fronting.

In the third case, /æ/ and /ɔ:/ were produced with a significantly different quality from equivalent Acehnese and Indonesian vowels. The quality of English /æ/, which is novel to Acehnese and Indonesian vowels, was different from any existing Acehnese and Indonesian central vowels. The differences were contributed mainly by the fact that some speakers produced English /æ/ similarly to Acehnese and Indonesian /ɛ/ while some speakers produced it similarly to Acehnese and Indonesian /a/. The quality of English /ɔ:/ was different from either Acehnese or Indonesian /ɔ/. This result is particularly interesting considering that English /ɔ:/ has comparable vowels in Acehnese and Indonesia.

6. CONCLUSION

Through a comparison of the quality of English vowels to equivalent L1 Acehnese and L2 Indonesian vowels produced by Acehnese-Indonesian speakers, this study found that Acehnese-Indonesian speakers produced some English vowels similar to existing L1 Acehnese and L2 Indonesian vowels, and the similarity appeared to be more pronounced toward L1 Acehnese than L2 Indonesian.

The findings of this study provide insights into how Acehnese-Indonesian learners filter English vowels through their existing L1 and L2 sounds and allow for a better understanding of this phenomenon via existing conceptual models. The findings also point to the often-ignored influence of other languages in a speaker's repertoire on the learning and production of a new language. However, given the limitations of this study in relation to the sample type and size, as well as the test words that were used, further studies with a bigger sample, different test words, other speaking contexts, and speakers with different levels of proficiencies could provide more insights into the influence of sounds from existing languages on new languages being learned by multilingual Indonesian speakers. Lastly, this study did not consider the potential impact of Acehnese diphthongs and nasal sounds on the pronunciation of English vowel sounds, which should be the focus of future research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Table A1. Word list for English monophthongs

No	Target Words	Target Vowels
1	pot	/ɑ:/
2	bit	/ɪ/
3	beat	/i:/
4	bet	/ɛ/
5	bat	/æ/
6	bud	/ʌ/
7	foot	/ʊ/
8	food	/u:/
9	port	/ɔ:/
10	bird	/ɜ:/

Appendix B

Table B1. Word list for Acehnese monophthongs.

No.	Target Words	Word Class	Target Vowel	English
1	<i>cit</i>	adverb	/i/	‘too, also’
2	<i>cut</i>	noun	/u/	‘small, title for women of noble descent’
3	<i>pét</i>	verb	/e/	‘close / shut eyes’
4	<i>tet</i>	verb	/ə/	‘burn’
5	<i>pôt</i>	verb	/o/	‘blow, to fan’
6	<i>göt</i>	adjective	/ʌ/	‘good, fine’
7	<i>cop</i>	verb	/ɔ/	‘sew’
8	<i>pat</i>	conjunction	/a/	‘where’
9	<i>peut</i>	adjective	/u/	‘four’
10	<i>cèt</i>	verb	/ɛ/	‘paint’

Appendix C

Table C1. Word list for Indonesian monophthongs.

No.	Target Words	Target Vowels	Glossary
1	<i>bibit</i>	/i/	‘seed’
2	<i>bubuk</i>	/u/	‘powder’
3	<i>bebek</i>	/ɛ/	‘duck’
4	<i>babat</i>	/a/	‘food from animal abdomen’
5	<i>bobot</i>	/ɔ/	‘weight’
6	<i>bobok</i>	/o/	‘sleep’
7	<i>tetap</i>	/ə/	‘remain’



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Pronunciation of English Velar Nasal (Angma) by Undergraduate Students in Pakistani Universities

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Abstract

Pakistani English (PakE) is an emerging variety of English that is in the process of developing its own norms and standards. Besides, distinguishing lexical and syntactic structures, it also has unique phonological features (Baumgardner, 1993; Hassan, 2004; Rahman 1991). Many Pakistani linguists have discussed unique consonantal and vocalic features of Pakistani English (PakE). However, there has not been any significant research conducted on the pronunciation of English velar nasal or angma /ŋ/ by Pakistani English speakers. This study analyses the pronunciation of English velar nasal by Pakistani English speakers. The sample was selected from 20 undergraduate students of the Department of English studying in the first semester of a large-scale public sector university located in Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan. A number of 20 English lexical items were selected and were divided into three categories according to the distribution of angma in the English language. The items were presented to the participants in diagnostic sentences. PRAAT, the speech and phonetics analysis software, was used to analyse the data. The findings revealed that Pakistani English speakers pronounce angma inaccurately in the medial position and insert velar plosive /g/ in the polymorphemic words. However, in the final position, angma is pronounced

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correctly by most Pakistani English speakers. The findings highlight that Pakistani English speakers are not concerned about the morpheme boundary and pronounce angma without /ŋg/ coalescence. Thus, it is found that Pakistani English speakers have distinguished pronunciation. The study recommends more research on Pakistani English pronunciation as well.

Keywords: /ŋg/ coalescence, English velar nasal, Pakistani English (PakE).

1. INTRODUCTION

The global status of English is acknowledged worldwide. It is no longer the sole possession of the British. The total number of non-native speakers is far greater than that of native speakers. Kachru (1986) demonstrated this spread of English in his model of three concentric circles, the inner circle, the outer circle, and the expanding circle (Tajeddin & Pakzadian, 2020). Pakistan stands in the outer circle and Pakistani English is emerging as a distinct variety loaded with innovations that can be attributed not only to different geographical, and social backgrounds but also to the different first languages of the speakers and multilingualism in Pakistan (Mahboob, 2004; Rahman, 2011). Pakistani English (PakE) often referred to as Pinglish, has its own distinctive phonological features (Baumgardner, 1993; Hassan, 2004; Rahman 1991). These phonological features have been documented by various researchers. Most of the research studies are available on the segmental features of Pakistani English.

It is observed that many renowned linguists have expressed their views about World Englishes (WE). Baumgardner (1993, p. 50) believes that World Englishes are “unique and variegated sociolinguistic mosaic” and each variety whether in the process of standardizing or standard is associated integrally with this unprecedentedly “international phenomenon” (Kilickaya, 2009). Each circle of the influential three concentric model of Kachru (1986) (inner, outer, and expanding) shows diverse functions of English and its patterns of acquisition, and world wide spread (Bruthiaux, 2003). Jenkins (2007) asserts that the varieties of inner circle have been codified and defined but outer and expanding circles’ varieties are being gradually standardized. These new Englishes have deviated from native or colonial British or American Englishes and are profoundly affected by co-existing regional or indigenous languages (Mesthrie, 2006). Phillipson (2008) writes that World Englishes is also an outcome of multiculturalism. The role of the English language is being transformed in a global context and forms and uses diverge from a single standard (Crystal, 2003). People can communicate through a plethora of World Englishes (Canagarajah, 2005).

Pakistani English’s (PakE) roots are deeply laid deep in colonial pre-partition British India. Ali (1993, p. 3) wrote, the native languages of South Asia and English grew in diverse directions, “the Germanic group under the influence of Roman Christianity being drawn to Latin and Greek; the Indo-Iranian, bearing affinities to Sassanian-Pahlavi and Sumerian on the one hand, and Persian and Arabic under Islamic influences on the other”. Spear (1965, p. 124) remarked that Macaulay in 1835 with his distinctive English self-complacent pride and imperialist outlook avowed, “we have a great moral duty to perform in India”. The foremost aim was to fashion out a special class

of people who were “Indian in colour and blood but English in taste and character, in morals and intellect” and to promote “British English literature and science” through English medium schools, colleges, and universities (Costa, 2019).

The spread of English in British India happened because of the economic and social mobility accompanying it. English was acquired either by formal schooling or by direct contact with native speakers of English. The learners received input in South Asia locally, indigenized, and non-native because native English-speaking teachers were scanty to fulfil the demand. The majority of the English teachers were Indians. As a result of non-native teachers’ coaching, varieties of English in India came into existence. These factors have contributed to the institutionalization and evolution of South Asian English as a native variety (Mahboob, 2004). The local uses and needs of English, and the limited interaction with the native speakers of English brought about the ‘nativization’ of English in the Indian sub-continent (Baumgardner, 1993). Sidhwa (1993, p. 213) writes, “although Raj has since been banished, and the Empire repossessed, the status of English in Pakistan is still intact. This phenomenon is the most important reason for contributing to the “emergence of English as a World Language” (Gul, 2022).

The research is based on the following questions:

1. How do Pakistani undergraduate students pronounce English velar nasal (angma) at word final position?
2. How do Pakistani undergraduate students pronounce English velar nasal (angma) at word medial position?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Pakistani English (PakE)

Pakistani English (PakE) is a non-native English variety developing its innovative norms and standards (Irfan, 2022). It is categorized in the Kachruvian outer circle and has its roots in pre-partition British India (Mahboob & Ahmar 2004). English in Pakistan has been influenced by the local languages. The influences are on its phonology, syntax, and lexis (Rahman, 2011). Its phonology has its own distinctive features. A handful of research studies are available on the phonology of Pakistani English. Very few studies analyse the supra-segmental features. Usmani (1965) focuses on the stress patterns of Pakistani English. Rahman (1991), Mahboob and Ahmar (2004) and Afsar and Kamran (2011) discuss the consonants of Pakistani English. This section presents a summary of previous research available on distinct segmental features of Pakistani English vowels and consonants.

Mahboob and Ahmar (2004), in their study, have divided the vowels into two main groups. The invariant vowel realizations are found in the first group which are spoken by the Pakistani speakers without significant variation in Received Pronunciation (RP), whereas the second group has variant vowel realizations articulated by Pakistani speakers. They label PakE a rhotic variety of English based on the collected samples. Mostly, the participants pronounce [r] in given contexts, for instance, ‘force’ [fɔ:rs] and ‘warm’ [wa:rm]. However, the postvocalic [r] is uttered inconsistently, for example, ‘start’ and ‘letter’. It is noted that the Pakistani speakers

articulate dental stops rather than the RP dental fricatives, such as, [t] and [d] in ‘north’ [nɔ:rt] and ‘then’ [den] (Mahboob & Ahmar, 2004, p. 1011).

Mahboob and Ahmar (2004, p. 1012) report a few more PakE phonological features as non-reduction of unstressed vowels in spellings such as, ‘immediately’ [ɪmɪdʒɪtli]. The /ə/ is noted only in the connected speech. Epenthesis is another feature that was perceived in a consonant cluster. The first consonant was a voiceless sibilant and the second consonant was a stop, such as, ‘stronger’ [ɪstrɔ:ŋɡɹ] and ‘start’ [ɪstɑ:rt]. In British English voiceless plosives are aspirated in the stressed position and unaspirated in the unstressed positions, whereas Pakistani English speakers do not make this distinction. Mahboob and Ahmar (2004) point out that Pakistani English speakers articulate the voiceless stops /t/ and /p/ in words such as ‘letter’ or ‘happy’. Afsar and Kamran (2011) also confirm this finding and mention that double letters are germinated by Pakistani English speakers.

Rahman’s (1991) research population was based on Urdu, Punjabi, and Pashtu speakers. He mentions that Pashtu speakers produced voiceless dental fricative as voiceless dental stop /t/. He views that degree of rhoticity in PakE is intricately related to sociolinguistic factors. Urdu language does not have a phonemic separation between /v/ and /w/. The same is the case with Pashto speakers, for example, ‘love’ [luo] (Rahman, 1991, p. 33). He also describes that Punjabi speakers break up the consonant cluster by inserting a short vowel /ə/ between the stop and the sibilant as in ‘speak’ [səpi:k] and ‘stall’ [səta:l]. However, Pashto speakers do not undergo any issues with the consonant cluster because Pashto smoothly allows these clusters. Finally, Pakistani speakers do not aspirate stops in word initial position if they happen to occur before a vowel, as the word ‘kit’ is realised as [kɪt].

Afsar and Kamran (2011) discuss that Pakistani English speakers produce English dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ as dental stops and /t^h ɖ /as dental stops. Syed et al. (2017) also mention that Pakistani speakers produce a rhotic /r/ with a strong trilling and they cannot perceive the difference between English /r/ and their own rhotic /r/. It is also difficult to make a distinction between /v/ and /w/ for Pakistani English speakers.

According to Rahman (1991), these two sounds are assimilated in Pakistani English. Mahboob and Ahmar (2004) report that their participants produced variants of /w/ for both /v/ and /w/. Afsar and Kamran (2011) had a different finding and reported that /w/ is produced as a labiodental approximant /ʋ/. So, in Pakistani English, /ʋ/ corresponds to British English /w/. Syed et al. (2017) also confirm this finding that in Pakistani English, /w/ is [+sonorant and –round]. The lip rounding of English /w/ and friction of English /v/ is absent.

It is interpreted that the allophonic variation of /l/ that exists in British English is not maintained in Pakistani English. In British English /l/ is produced clearly at the onset position while it has a dark or velarized pronunciation at the coda position (Roca & Johnson, 2007), whereas in Pakistani English /l/ is clear at both the onset and the coda position (Afsar & Kamran 2011; Mahboob & Ahmar 2004; Rahman 1991; Syed et al. 2017). However, Syed et al. (2017) report that Pakistani English speakers are able to perceive the difference between clear and dark l variants which means that they can acquire these as well. Afsar and Kamran (2011) report that Pakistani English speakers produce palato-alveolar fricative /ʒ/ as /j/. Syed et al. (2017) confirm this finding that in British English /ʒ/ is produced as [-sonorant and +strident] whereas in Pakistani English it is produced as [+sonorant and -strident].

Significantly, it is found that no previous research study is available on the production of this sound. Syed et al. (2017) report the findings of an unpublished study in their paper that in the words ‘sing’ and ‘pink’ by Saraiki speakers produce the sound /ŋ/ as /sing/ and /pink/ instead of [siŋ] and [piŋk]. They mention that English velar nasal is realized as a combination of alveolar nasal and velar stop by Pakistani English speakers. However, the details are not available and the claim comes from an unpublished study.

2.2 English Velar Nasal [ŋ]

The phonological status of the velar nasal is unique because of the positional restrictions that it implies—that it is not allowed at the onset position and can only occur at the medial and final positions. Its phonemic status is also contested. However, Giegerich (1992) argues that the presence of minimal sets such as ‘ran’ [ran], ‘ram’ [ram], and ‘rang’ [rang] in almost all varieties of English shows that English clearly has three nasal phonemes with three different places of articulation.

Bailey (2019) argues that in some parts of England, the velar nasal has different variants. There is an absence of ng-coalescence which results in post-nasal [g] in words such as ‘young’ and ‘singer’. These will be pronounced as [jʊŋg] instead of [jʊŋ] and ‘singer’ as [siŋgə] instead of [siŋə]. In these areas, ‘finger’ and ‘singer’ are pronounced in the same way. Bailey (2019) mentions that this absence of ng-coalescence was not geographical in the past. According to Wells (1982), the post-nasal [g] started disappearing in London English in the 16th century. Before this, all varieties of English had non-coalesced pronunciation of velar nasal and the post nasal [g].

Roach (2009) mentions that in BBC pronunciation if there are letters ‘nk’ in the middle of a word, a /k/ will always be pronounced. Thus, the pronunciation of the word ‘sink’ will be /siŋk/. However, if the letters ‘ng’ occur medially they will be pronounced in two different ways: a) without ng coalescence as [ŋg], and b) with ng coalescence as [ŋ]. The difference between the two pronunciations is because of the morphological structure of the words. If [ŋ] occurs word medially, it will be pronounced with velar plosive as [ŋg] if the word has one single morpheme, for example, in the word ‘finger’ /fiŋgə/, velar nasal occurs word medially and it has only one morpheme. The sound [ŋ] will be pronounced without velar plosive if it is at the morpheme boundary for example in the words ‘singer’ and ‘hanger’ we have two morphemes: ‘sing’+‘-er’, ‘hang’+‘-er’. Hence, these will be pronounced as /siŋə/ and /hæŋə/.

Word ending with the letters ‘ng’ is always pronounced with ng coalescence as [ŋ]. There is an exception to the above-mentioned rules with reference to the comparative and superlative suffixes. The word ‘long’, for example, will be pronounced as /lɒŋ/ without the velar plosive sound. However, it will be pronounced with velar plosive in its comparative /lɒŋgə/ and superlative form /lɒŋgist/. Roach (2009) says that we can then treat comparative and superlative forms of adjectives as single morphemes to understand this rule of velar nasal pronunciation.

As a result of this, the rule must be modified: it must state that it is comparative and superlative. Roach (2009) argues that English speakers are ignorant of this rule, however, when a foreigner mispronounces this sound (pronounces /ŋg/ instead of /ŋ/ or vice versa), the native English speakers can notice that a mispronunciation has occurred. Ladefoged and Johnson (2014) present the following spectrogram of nasal

consonants. The spectrogram below shows that in the pronunciation of velar nasal /ŋ/ velar pinch is visible. The second and third formants of the vowel before /ŋ/ come closer for the velar pinch.

3. METHODS

The current study seeks to analyse the production of velar nasal /ŋ/ by Pakistani English speakers. It aims to analyse whether Pakistani English speakers are able to pronounce the words containing /ŋ/ correctly or not. The /ŋ/ sound occurs word medially and word finally. So, this study analyses the pronunciation of velar nasal in all the possible environments at word medial and final positions.

Twenty undergraduate students both male and female from a large-scale university located in Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan were selected. They were students in the Bachelor of Science in English (BS English) program having a background in phonetics and phonology. The researchers used the random sampling technique. The mother tongue of the students was Urdu (11 students) and Punjabi (nine students). Twenty English lexical items were selected which were divided into three categories according to the distribution of angma in the English language.

Table 1. Selection of Angma lexical items

ŋ at word final position (pronunciation= ŋ)	Words with ŋ in the medial position (pronunciation = ŋg)	Words with ŋ in the medial position (pronunciation= ŋ)
song	finger	singer
king	hunger	hanger
hang	anger	strongly
long	longer	things
wrong	single	swinging
touching	bangles	singing
feeling	jungle	

The test words were used in six diagnostic sentences.

- The famous singer was singing a song in front of a king in the jungle.
- Only a single boy had broken his finger while touching the hanger.
- He strongly criticized the wrong things.
- I can hang out with friends for a long time without any feeling of hunger.
- I can no longer tolerate his anger.
- The girl with bangles is swinging in the park.

The participants were unaware of the objective of the experiment so that data could be as natural as possible. They were provided the list of the above-mentioned sentences and were given time to study it for a few minutes. After familiarizing them with the sentences, they were asked to read them aloud at their own pace. The researcher recorded the responses of each individual in PRAAT software at 8000HZ.

The data was analysed using PRAAT software (<https://www.fon.hum.uva.nl/PRAAT/>). PRAAT helps phoneticians analyse, synthesize, and manipulate speech (Boersma & van Heuven, 2001). Each word containing /ŋ/ was annotated in PRAAT at the segment layer. The pronunciations were marked as correct or incorrect. The pronunciation was marked as correct or incorrect by comparing it with the pronunciation of the respective words in Standard British

English. The standard British English pronunciation of the test words has been taken from <https://tophoneics.com/>.

Table 2. Position of η in lexical items

η at word final position (pronunciation= η)	Words with η in the medial position (pronunciation = ηg)	Words with η in the medial position (pronunciation= η)
song /sɒŋ/	finger /fɪŋgə/	singer /sɪŋə/
king /kɪŋ/	hunger /hʌŋgə/	hanger /hæŋə/
hang /hæŋ/	anger /æŋgə/	strongly /strɒŋli/
long /lɒŋ/	longer /lɒŋgə/	things /θɪŋz/
wrong /rɒŋ/	single /sɪŋgl/	swinging /swɪŋɪŋ/
touching /tʌʃɪŋ/	bangles /'bæŋglz/	singing /sɪŋɪŋ/
feeling /fi:liŋ/	jungle /dʒʌŋgl/	

The theoretical framework of this study can be demonstrated in Figure 1. The study analysed the pronunciation of English velar nasal at three positions i.e., non-coalesced form in word medial position, coalesced form in word medial position, and at word final position.

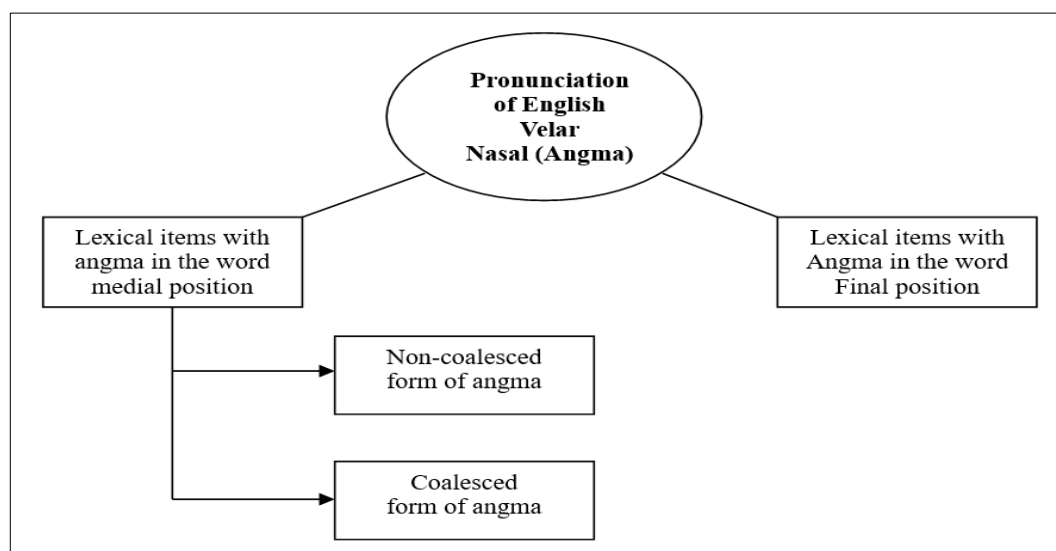


Figure 1. Theoretical framework.

4. RESULTS

The results are presented in the following sub-sections corresponding to the distribution of angma.

4.1 η in the Final Position

Figures 2 and 3 show that most of the participants were able to pronounce the angma at word final position correctly without inserting an additional velar plosive /g/. However, the results differ if the following sound is a consonant or a vowel. In the diagnostic sentences, the words ‘long’, ‘wrong’, and ‘touching’ had a following consonant while the words ‘song’, ‘king’, ‘hang’, and ‘feeling’ had a following vowel.

Pakistani English speakers can pronounce it correctly when it occurs before a consonant, however, they insert a velar plosive /g/ when it is followed by a vowel. The spectrogram of a participant saying ‘song’ and ‘king’ have been presented below where angma has been pronounced clearly without the insertion of /g/.

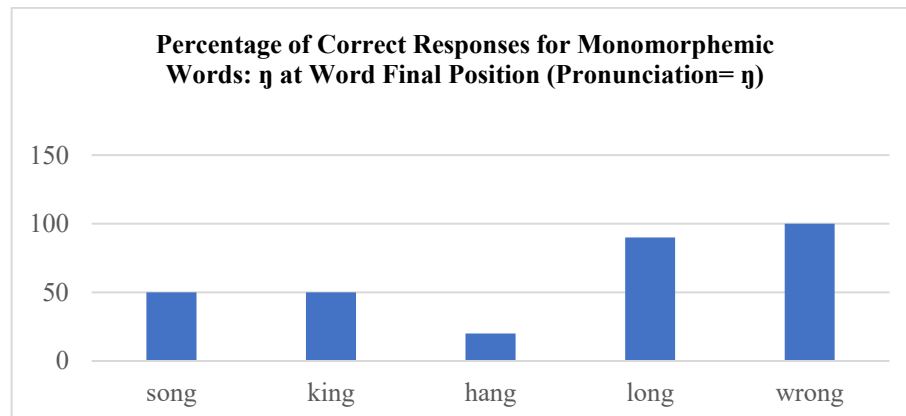


Figure 2. Percentage of correct responses for monomorphemic words in final position.

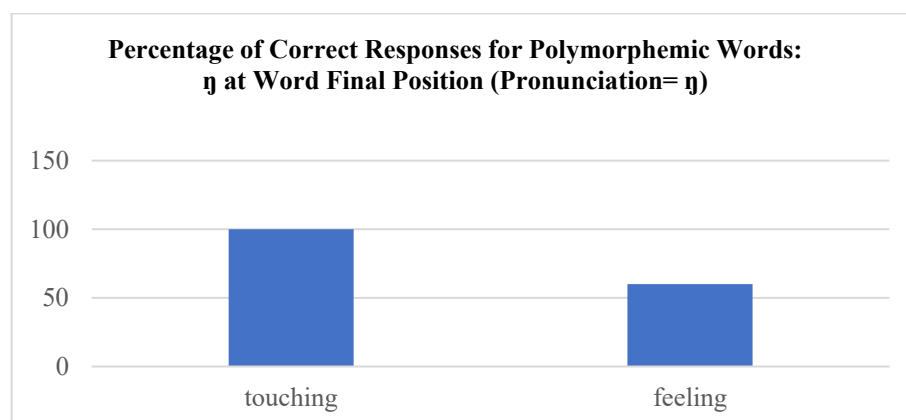


Figure 3. Percentage of correct responses for polymorphemic words in final position.

Figure 4 demonstrates spectrograms of ‘song’ and ‘king’.

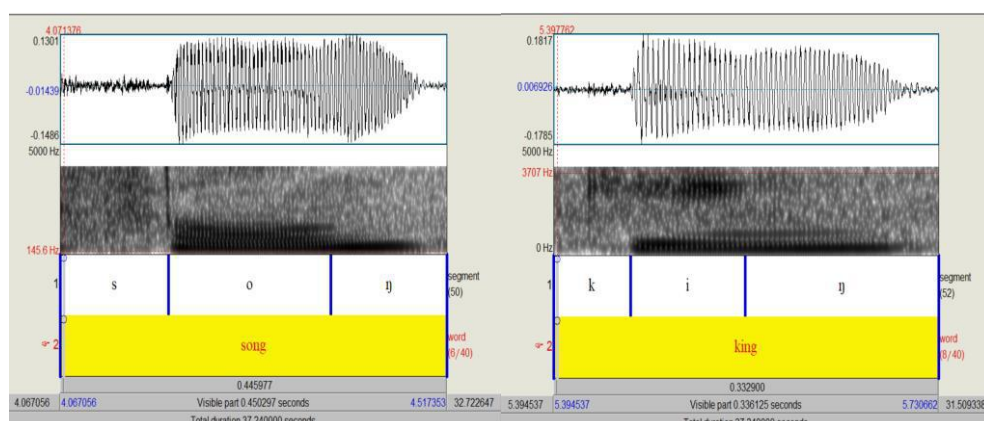


Figure 4. Spectrograms of ‘song’ and ‘king’.

4.2 η in the Medial Position (Pronunciation = η g)

The results of this section are interesting and reveal that Pakistani English users ignore the morpheme boundary and pronounce mono-morphemic and poly-morphemic words containing angma in the medial position in the same way i.e., by inserting /g/.

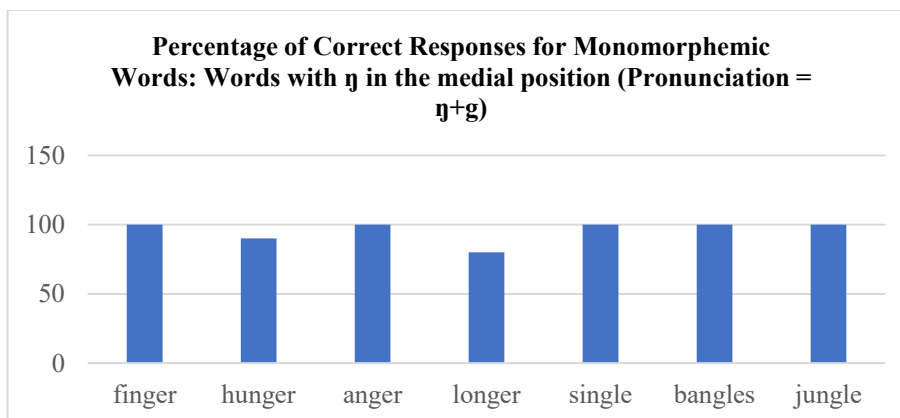


Figure 5. Percentage of correct responses for monomorphemic words in medial position.

Figure 5 shows that in the monomorphemic words, all the participants inserted /g/. So, their pronunciations of the words were marked as correct. The spectrogram in Figure 6 shows the pronunciation of the word ‘anger’ by a participant. The /g/ sound has been pronounced by the participant as can be seen from the spectrogram, the burst and extra duration after the burst are visible.

Figure 6 shows the spectrogram of ‘anger’.

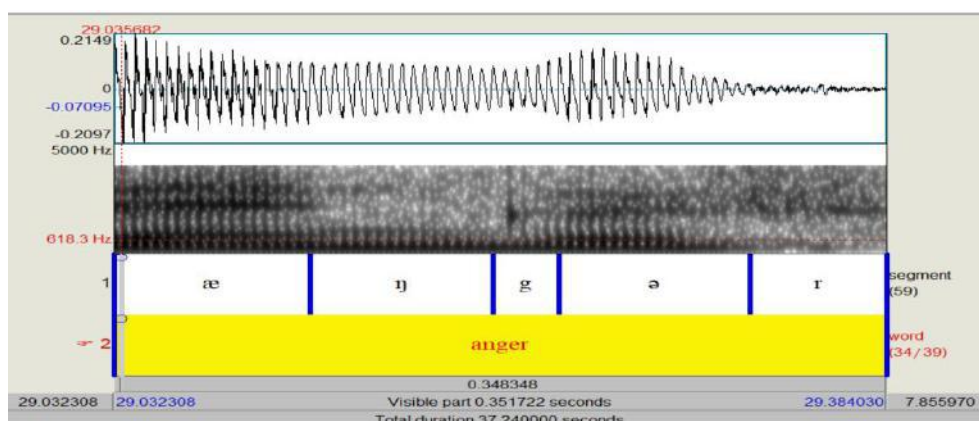


Figure 6. Spectrogram of ‘anger’.

Most of the poly-morphemic words containing angma in the middle were pronounced incorrectly i.e., by Pakistani English speakers. The graph in Figure 7 shows that 10% of participants pronounced ‘singer’ and ‘hanger’ correctly while 20% pronounced ‘singing’ correctly.

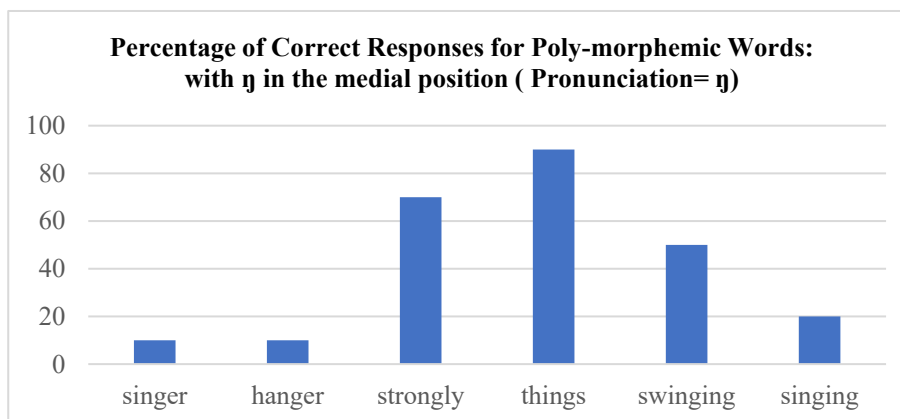


Figure 7. Poly-morphemic words: η in the medial position.

The spectrograms of ‘finger’ /fɪŋə/ and ‘singer’ /sɪŋə/ have been compared in Figures 8 (the spectrogram of ‘finger’ (mono-morphemic)) and 9 (the spectrogram of ‘singer’ (poly-morphemic)) to show that these are pronounced in the same way by Pakistani English speakers. The words ‘strongly’ and ‘things’ were however pronounced correctly because angma is in the pre-consonant position in both words, i.e., /l/ and /s/ appear after angma in these words.

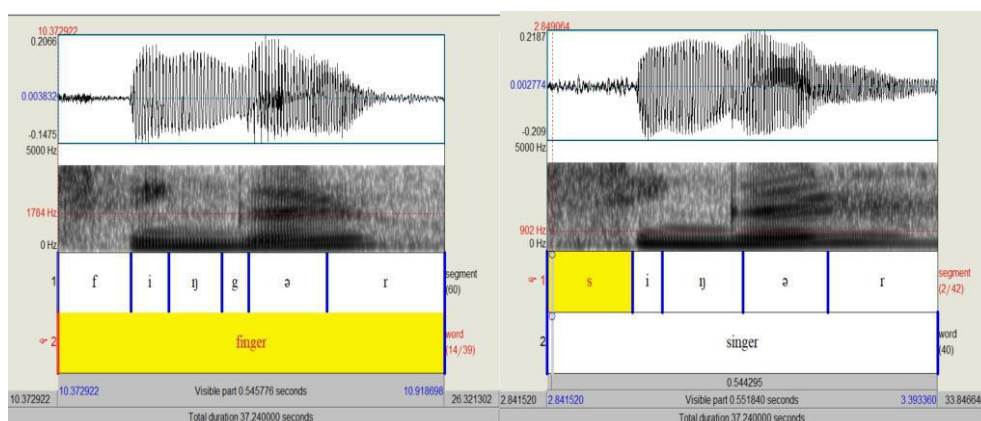


Figure 8. Spectrogram of ‘finger’ (mono-morphemic).

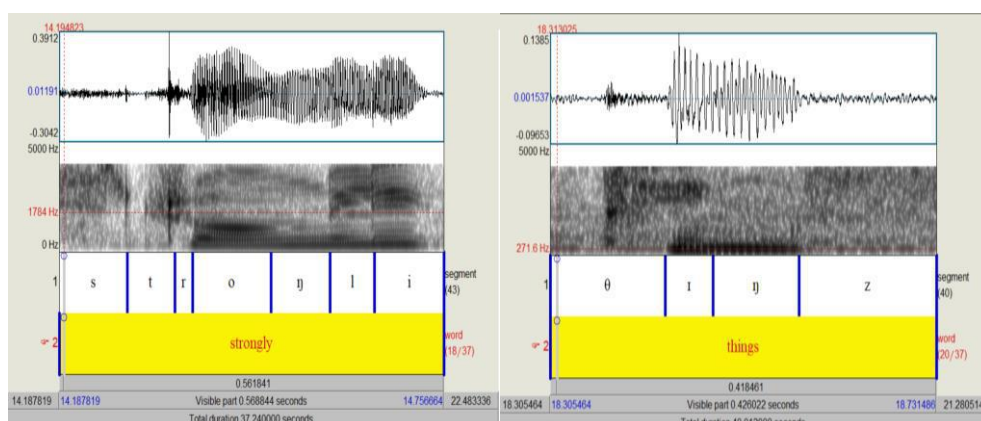


Figure 9. Spectrogram of ‘singer’ (poly-morphemic).

Figure 10 shows the spectrogram of double angma. In the case of the double angma sound, it has been pronounced correctly at word final position. However, in the medial position, /g/ is inserted as can be clearly seen from the spectrogram.

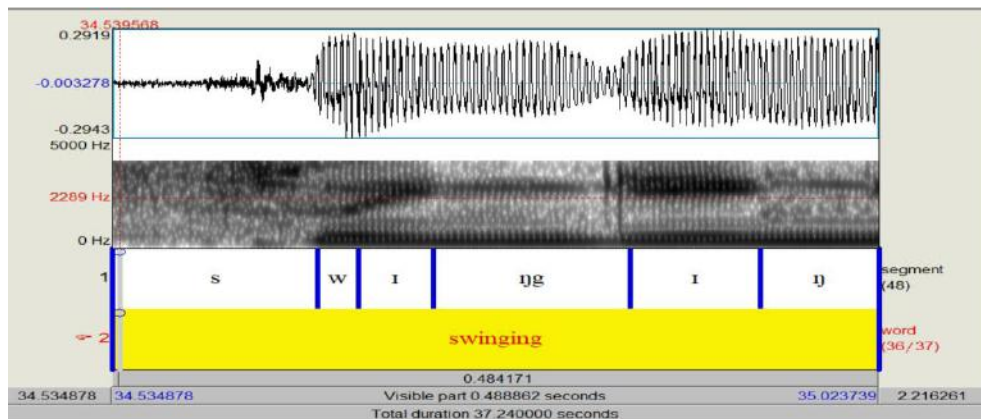


Figure 10. Spectrogram of double angma.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that Pakistani English (PakE) is an emerging variety. [Kachru \(1986\)](#) categorises Pakistani English in the outer circle. [Baumgardner \(1987\)](#) also believes that PakE is a systemized indigenous variety. The linguists view that velar nasal was once pronounced without the /ng/ coalescence across all varieties of English. Gradually /g/ started disappearing in the late modern English period. [Bermúdez-Otero and Trousdale \(2012\)](#) discuss that in present-day English [ŋg] combination occurs only in pre-vocalic environments or in mono-morphemic items such as ‘finger’. In English, the non-coalesced [ŋg] form still exists in the North West and West Midlands of England. This non-coalesced form also exists in Pakistani English.

The current research reveals that Pakistani English speakers do not realize the difference between the non-coalesced [ŋg] form and the coalesced [ŋ] form. They pronounce the mono-morphemic and poly-morphemic words containing /ŋ/ in the same way. The results show that Pakistani English speakers pronounce the words ‘finger’ and ‘singer’ in the same way as /fɪŋgə/ and /sɪŋgə/.

[Syed et al. \(2017\)](#) English velar nasal is phonologically realized as a combination of the alveolar nasal and velar stop, however, this research argues that Pakistani English speakers produce non-coalesced [ŋg] form which is a combination of velar nasal and velar stop. [Bailey \(2019\)](#) argues that in English spoken in the Northwest and West Midland parts of England, there is an absence of ng-coalescence which results in post-nasal [g] in words such as ‘young’ and ‘singer’. These are pronounced as [jʊŋg] instead of [jʊŋ] and singer [sɪŋgə] instead of [sɪŋə]. In these areas, ‘finger’ and ‘singer’ are pronounced in the same way. Pakistani English is also similar to these varieties.

The results of this study also go in line with the study conducted on Polish ESL learners by [Gonet et al. \(2012\)](#). Their results reveal that Polish ESL learners find difficulties in the correct production of the velar nasal in different contexts (i.e., intervocalic angma, pre-consonant angma, double angma, word final angma).

6. CONCLUSION

It is concluded that Pakistani English has unique phonological features. The study reveals that most of the Pakistani English speakers pronounce the non-coalesced form of /ŋg/ at word medial position irrespective of the monomorphemic or polymorphemic words. In monomorphemic words non-coalesced form is considered correct; however, in polymorphemic words, the coalesced form should be used. Only in the final position, some Pakistani English users use the coalesced form i.e., /ŋ/. In the case of double angma as well, the Pakistani English speakers were able to use the coalesced form at the word final position, however, they could not produce coalesced form at the word medial position (as shown in Figure 10).

It is implied that a further study can do a detailed analysis of the environmental factors such as the words and phonemes following the /ŋ/ sound, and how a pause after the final position of /ŋ/ affects its pronunciation. The results of this study have revealed that the pronunciation of angma has shown different phonetic representations when occurring in the pre-vocalic or pre-consonantal position.

Furthermore, this research study was limited to only 20 students with Urdu and Punjabi as their first languages. A further study can take a diverse and representative sample with more participants. A consideration of various first languages spoken in Pakistan can also provide insightful cross-cultural variations. A research study can also be conducted to check the effects of exposure and instruction on the pronunciation of this sound.

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Language Development in Writing through Pair-Reviews in EFL Learning

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Abstract

English as a foreign language (EFL) writing is one of the most important skills besides speaking for candidate teachers in the undergraduate English programs at higher institutions. The current study hypothesizes that pair-reviews or collaboration in the teaching and learning process of paragraph writing contributes to students' successful language development. The subject of the study was a class (N=28) of third-semester students majoring in English language teaching at the Faculty of Islamic Education and Teacher Training of Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol in Padang, Indonesia. The students' writing skills were developed through exposure to actual writing by introducing paragraph developments. Through the process of planning and writing, they were guided to the use of pair-reviews. After a training period, they were tested for the final exam, in which no review was allowed. The study found that students' writing competence as the result of pair-reviews varied depending on the type of paragraphs being developed. The student's average score was 73.5 in the illustration type, 78.28 in the comparison type, and 71.96 in the categorization type. In general, students' average scores during this pair-review were 74.58. In the post-test, students' average score was 79.3, indicating that pair-reviews significantly affect their writing competence. A conclusion was drawn regarding the influence of pair-reviews on their final writing product (post activity). The study further elaborates on the

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activities during pair-reviews, roles, and the practice of collaboration in Minangkabau culture and traditions in Padang.

Keywords: Collaboration, pair-reviews, paragraph, review, writing.

1. INTRODUCTION

The use of collaborative learning (two or more people working in a group to complete the assigned task) has been robust in almost all disciplines due to the wide range of skills or competencies and affective values it transfers to learners. Its contributions in an educational setting are salient; as Miguel et al. (2023, p. 2) put it, “Collaborative learning settings constitute a field of study that enables the investigation of crucial factors such as learning participation and its degree of active interaction, the features or profiles of the workgroup, and the degree of group engagement”. In the current development of the learning model, the literature noted various types of collaborative learning, such as pair and peer collaboration, depending on the number of participants involved (Alwaleedi et al., 2019; Besral et al., 2021; Elola & Oskoz, 2010). In addition, the digital system was used in collaborative learning to facilitate peers in groups to complete a writing task (Sundari & Febriyanti, 2023). In addition, Ruvalcaba and Barbara (2022) asserted that research on cultural disparities in the form of children’s collaboration provides significant information for how to ‘promote children’s growth as collaborators’. They believed that children varied widely in their ability to collaborate, which is a crucial 21st-century talent for classrooms, businesses, and community life.

Pair-review or collaboration is used in this study because learners communicate or engage with each other to add or construct information or to share thoughts and feelings while completing tasks. Since ‘interaction is the heart of communication’ (Brown, 2015), it fits the development of third-semester students of English major at Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol in Padang, Indonesia. The students are already in the post-elementary level but still lack communication skills, especially in grammar and vocabulary. Therefore, special attention must be paid to their language development in the teaching and learning process of paragraph writing.

The current study examines the advantages of pair-reviews, which implement pairwork. As stated previously, pair-review is an activity in which students collaborate in pairs to provide written and oral comments on one another’s writing through active involvement with one another’s development over numerous versions. Pair response in this study is what Liu and Hansen (2002) referred to as ‘peer feedback’, ‘peer review,’ or ‘peer editing’ in teaching L2 writing, which is the use of learners as sources of information and interactants for each other in such a way that learners assume roles and responsibilities usually taken on by a formally trained teacher, tutor, or editor in commenting on and critiquing each other’s drafts in both written and oral formats.

The Pair Interaction Model (PIM), created by Yassi et al. (2023), significantly impacts the present practice of pair-reviews in writing. As such, its design and effectiveness have been scrutinized for more than a decade. The teaching strategy is relatively efficient in enhancing the learners’ grammatical competence and four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), particularly their communication skills and speaking performance.

Recent studies on writing in the context of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learning show that students may be encouraged to communicate orally to their pairs or peers to check, share, or negotiate ideas (Storch, 2002; Swain & Lapkin, 1998). Both types have been practiced worldwide, resulting in positive awareness of students as writers, readers, or reviewers. In addition, most studies on these topics reported that students produced better-quality paragraphs or essays after teachers used pair and peer reviews. This improvement happened because they were reminded of their mistakes (spelling, grammar, and choice of words) and other writing components, such as the organization and content of relevant ideas (Storch, 2002; Swain & Lapkin, 1998). However, these findings lacked focus on the target language (e.g., English) achievement. In addition to the absence of exact writing components for elementary and intermediate levels, the previous studies go beyond describing what students do in the review process, particularly in Indonesian or Asian contexts. Thus, to eliminate the gaps, this study focuses on describing students' average achievement of paragraph writing during the implementation of the pair-reviews process and proving the hypothesis that students had better achievement in writing after the implementation of pair-reviews. Most importantly, the current study would determine what the students did when exposed to the pair-review process in writing.

Vygotsky (1978) theorized that learners could surpass their current level by engaging in collaborative learning activities with more skilled individuals in a particular area. Learners' comprehension of specific knowledge can be improved with the assistance of more capable peers. In other words, social interactions contribute to learners' comprehension and progression toward higher-order thought by activating their existing information or constructing new knowledge to encompass a new cognitive framework. In addition, Ma (2009) discovered that high-quality social interactions in the collaborative learning activity, i.e., negotiation of meaning, testing tentative constructions, and applications of newly constructed meaning, supported the development of higher-order thinking skills. Similarly, students in an ESL grammar lesson can improve their grasp of grammar and acquire higher-order thinking skills through social interactions in a collaborative learning exercise.

Each sentence must fit into this organizational framework while composing a paragraph (Hussen, 2015). In a well-written paragraph, thoughts and sentences are organized, logically, and united by the main theme. The more precise and unified a paragraph is, the more meaningful the message it conveys to readers. In addition, students should be able to use a series of grammatically accurate, related words and sentences. If students do not organize words in at least the minimally acceptable order, they may be unable to convey the desired message effectively. A strong paragraph results from the intelligent selection of a subject sentence; knowing how to select a good topic sentence for each paragraph helps students organize the sequence of their material logically.

EFL students need English writing skills ranging from writing a short paragraph and a summary to composing an essay. This highlights the significance of paragraph writing for students. This is because composing paragraphs is a prerequisite for composition and essay writing (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996; Ly et al., 2021). Therefore, students require assistance from their teachers to develop the skills necessary to create excellent English paragraphs. The essential concept of the process approach to writing instruction, which includes the steps of pre-writing (planning), drafting, editing, and rewriting (Brown, 2015; Reid, 1988), must be taken into account to produce good and

qualified paragraphs. To address the issues, this study poses the following research questions to be answered:

1. What is the average achievement of students' paragraph writing during the implementation of the pair-reviews process in EFL learning to write?
2. Do the students have better achievement in writing after the implementation of pair-reviews?
3. What did the students do when exposed to the pair-review process in writing?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Collaborative learning theory, in which learning and knowledge are socially created, provides the foundation for pairwork and written reviews. [Liu and Hansen \(2002, p. 3\)](#) described collaborative learning as the form of learning that occurs through dialogue with peers and asserted that particular types of knowledge are best learned in this manner. Recently, collaborative learning theories have begun to influence both the theoretical and methodological aspects of L2 writing education. Collaborative learning theories have had a significant impact on L1 writing instruction. Studies have shown that in writing groups, students were promoted to self-reflection, knowledge sharing, and critical thinking ([Sukirman, 2016; Zhang, 2020](#)) and that learning is engaged through the classroom environment and enhances students' work.

Social cultural research indicated that collaborative writing activities encourage students to reflect on their language use and work together to solve language-related difficulties ([Tok & Kandemir, 2015](#)) and to facilitate the co-construction of language knowledge and a higher level of performance by pulling their linguistic resources to overcome the encountered challenges ([Ohta, 2001; Swain, 2000](#)). The students work collaboratively to generate writing within a structured framework that encourages them to use a greater variety of temporal linkers, attitude words, contrast clauses, set phrases, and discourse markers.

To aid partners in focusing on the review, a review format in the form of a worksheet should be provided. Collaborative writing is defined by the writer's knowledge of the writing process and the intervention of a teacher or peers at any moment during the writing process to improve writing abilities rather than solely correcting errors ([Yang, 2006](#)). To better equip students' learning, [Dobao \(2012\)](#) created collaborative discourse, the dialogue between learners while they collaborate to solve language challenges, to facilitate L2 learning (e.g., [Kim, 2008; Storch, 2002](#)).

2.1 Collaborative Learning Theory

[Latifah \(2020\)](#) contend that collaboration varied in how they add to learning. Other researchers, such as [Lai et al. \(2016\)](#), considered it critical to understand collaboration learning partnerships. According to [Zhang \(2018\)](#), collaborative writing is usually used to facilitate an engaging classroom environment in the second language classroom. Therefore, collaborative writing is a useful educational exercise in language classes to enhance learning opportunities. EFL teachers witness that collaborative writing provides many opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding of the language, allows students to work together in pairs or groups to produce good writing, and helps the students write with their peers a specific email.

The students must work together to produce good learning, in other words. In short, collaborative writing offers an opportunity to practice literature review and scholarly writing and promote reflection, knowledge sharing, and critical thinking (Sukirman, 2016).

In the mid-1970s, when teachers and researchers examined what children performed when writing, the process-based approach to writing instruction was introduced. Several ways typical to this methodology were discovered, such as 'process', 'making sense', and 'innovation' have replaced 'accuracy', and 'pattern'. Teachers are advised to delay training on using subject sentences and outlines until after students have begun to investigate their ideas (Zamel, 1983). At this level, linguistic precision was deemphasized. Instructors began providing adequate time for students to draft and refine their ideas. Nonetheless, writing instructors should allow students to select their writing tasks to boost their confidence so that they can adequately use their English to modify what they know about their chosen writing topic.

2.2 Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development

According to Vygotsky (1978), cognitive development is the product of social interaction in which an individual learns to extend his or her existing competence under the leadership of a more experienced individual. It was well-known then that social contact is a mechanism for individual development because, in the presence of a more proficient participant, the beginner is dragged into and operated within the area of the expert's strategic problem-solving processes. The distance between a person's actual level of development and their prospective level of development is referred to by Liu and Hansen (2002) as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

There is a high probability that an individual ZPD will be created if efforts are focused in the right direction. Regular use of pair-reviews among students of the same age or status will make it easier for them to communicate, and this social connection and dialogue with others is regarded as essential for the transition from complicated to conceptual thought (Vygotsky, 1978).

2.3 Feedback in Collaborative Writing

Ferris (2003, p. 70) acknowledged the following practical benefits of peer response: (1) students gain confidence, perspective, and critical thinking skills from being able to read texts written by peers on similar tasks, (2) students receive more feedback on their writing than they could from the teacher alone, (3) students receive feedback from more diverse guidance bringing multiple perspectives, and (4) students receive feedback from non-expert readers on how their texts could be improved.

Classroom community formed through novice paragraph writing classes can be sustained if there are at least a few members as initiators whose skills are above average. Referring to Vygotsky (1978), these master students are usually appraised and respected; therefore, the rest of the class usually accepts their critiques and comments.

3. METHODS

This study mainly reflected our experiences during the teaching and learning process of paragraph writing. Since the study explored students' competencies and performances during and after the pair-reviews, it applied the Ex-Post Facto method in which analysis and conclusion were drawn in accordance with the past event or situation. It is argued that the effects were caused by immediate treatments before the event or condition. The phenomenon has occurred, so the researchers intended to trace causal factors or what affected or influenced something.

3.1 The Participants and the Course

This study population consisted of 28 third-semester students (III TBI-A) enrolled in the Paragraph Writing course during the Academic Year 2022/2023. In this case, one of the authors served as a lecturer and documented all of the students' products of writing together with their reflections on the teaching and learning process. Students were assigned to write six different types of paragraph developments during the course, each containing 100 to 150 words. The course consisted of 16 sessions to achieve the goals of learning, namely, "students are able to plan, write, and revise English texts for the purposes of describing, explaining, comparing, or discussing certain topics by using appropriate techniques and procedures either individually or in groups".

Through the learning activities, students were introduced to the types of paragraph development together with topic, purpose, and target readers. Discussions in pre-teaching activities were directed to plan (drafting) the paragraph. Therefore, each student should write the outline, including the topic or title, topic sentence, and supporting sentences. Once the draft was completed, each student continued to write their paragraphs. Meanwhile, students were introduced to the assessment of writing because they are prepared to be future English teachers. They were also introduced to the particular format review to be implemented in the following review process. Students chose their pairs independently without the intervention of the lecturer. The rest of the weeks were used to do the same activities, depending on the types of paragraphs being taught. The students sent their paragraphs to their pairs (in-person or online) for review, then reviewers returned them to the authors. In the third paragraph writing session, the lecturer asked the students to change their pairs while doing the same task. Finally, all the students' review processes were submitted with reflections for final grades.

Based on the syllabus, the teacher brainstormed the week's topic or learning session and then presented relevant grammar to achieve the exact purposes. The creation of the outline was left to the student's efforts. This aligns with previous recommendations in which teachers are recommended not to present instruction using topic sentences and outlines until students have begun exploring their ideas (Zamel, 1983).

3.2 Instruments

A format for evaluation was used to assess or grade students' writing. The scoring system adopted from Jacobs (1981) consists of five indicators: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics.

The use of Jacob's ESL composition in this study is based on its popularity, as cited in Setyowati (2020), who claimed that this profile was an analytical type developed by Jacobs (1981). In their rubrics, essays are rated on five different rating dimensions of writing quality with an a100-point scale, each having a different weight: content (30 points), organization (20 points), vocabulary (20 points), language use (25 points), and mechanics (5 points). Each set of criteria changes a four-level subjective judgment scale into interval scores. This profile is one of the most commonly used and dependable profiles for ESL composition rating (Lee et al., 2008), and its traits were designed by writing researchers working for a testing organization and are probably one of the most recognizable rubrics in the field of second language writing (Brooks, 2012). Furthermore, Ghanbari et al. (2012) stated that Jacob's ESL Composition profile had gained popularity among second language teachers and researchers since its introduction in 1981.

To assess students' performance during peer review, we employed a set of questionnaires in the form of a Likert Scale, which reveals the frequency of ideal activities ranging, i.e., (1) never, (2) rarely, (3) sometimes, (4) often, and (5) always. The indicators revealed activities in the post reviews, roles of reviewers, and attitudes toward reviewers.

3.3 Data Analysis

Two independent raters (R1 and R2) who had been trained before the assessment rated each of the students' paragraphs. The scoring system was adopted from Jacobs (1981) because other models have been debatable in some writing research journals. The respondents' scores were the average scores given by R1 and R2. Thus, the average scores of the three products (Illustration, Comparison, and Categorization) were counted to see the average achievement during the practices of pair-reviews. The latest scores were compared to the scores in the post-activity to see or prove the previous hypothesis that 'students had better achievement in writing after the implementation of pair-reviews'. Meanwhile, percentages of students' responses to the questionnaires were counted and considered significant at .05.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Students' Paragraph Writing Skills During Pair-Reviews

During pair-reviews, two students collaborated to produce good and qualified paragraphs. Based on the instruction, fourteen students acted as authors, and fourteen others worked as reviewers in three types of paragraph development: illustration, comparison, and categorization. Raters finally scored these products of writing and gave average scores of 73.5 (in illustration), 78.28 (in comparison), and 71.96 (in categorization). Putting together, the average of the three types was 74.58. Complete details of these skills are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Average scores of students' writing (during class/pair-reviews).

Type of Prg. Dev	Content	Organization	Vocabulary	Language Use	Mechanics	Total
	(13-30)	(7-20)	(7-20)	(5-25)	(2-5)	100
Illustration	17.21	14.82	17.71	19.82	3.93	73.5
Comparison	23.68	16.71	13.25	16.57	3.68	78.28
Categorization	19.54	14.57	15	19.07	3.82	71.96
Average	20.14	15.36	15.32	18.49	3.81	74.58

Students' writing competence as the results of pair-reviews varied as the assigned type of paragraphs were also varied. Students' average scores were 73.5 for illustration, 78.28 for comparison, and 71.96 for categorization. Students' average score of these types during the pair-reviews was 74.58. Based on a normal distribution of scores on each indicator, the average score for content (20.14) was still below normal achievement (the ideal score is 21.5). This suggests that students' knowledge of the assigned topics was slightly below the requirement. However, students successfully achieved the indicators of organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. It can be concluded that students' competence in paragraph writing was satisfied through collaborating with their pairs. Although students' language was consistent in the illustration and categorization types of paragraph development, the comparison type contradicted the case. Thus, this phenomenon leads to the conclusion that students had difficulty stating or showing two different ideas in English. This is probably due to the more complex grammar they used for this type of paragraph than in the types of illustration and categorization.

4.2 Impact of Pair-Reviews on Students' Achievement

The impact of pair-reviews in this study was explored from two sets of tests: pre or during pair practices and post-test, in which students worked individually to finish the products. The comparison of the two scores is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison between pre- and post-tests.

	Content	Organization	Vocabulary	Language Use	Mechanics	Total
	(13-30)	(7-20)	(7-20)	(5-25)	(2-5)	100
Pre	20.14	15.36	15.32	18.49	3.81	74.58
Post	21.23	17.16	17.4	19.87	3.7	79.3
Differences	1.09	1.9	2.08	1.38	-0.11	4.72

As the course continued, the classification type of the students' paragraph development showed better results. The average score of 79.3 overrides the previous training (74.58), indicating that such pair-reviews significantly affected their writing competence. The overall indicators (except the indicator of mechanics) showed the trend that each indicator reached the expected score. It can be concluded that students had better writing achievement after training or working in pairs.

Students' previous training in pair-reviews provides them with the habits of corrections. Thus, it improved their self-awareness of correct grammar and the decision to use more appropriate words in writing. Their weak paragraph organization, previously found in training, turned out to be better and more precise, as seen in their flow of sentences, such as conjunctions, particles, and prepositions. As a result,

underachievers could equalize with their classmates, but more talented students earned more appreciation and enhanced their self-confidence.

4.3 Students' Performance in Pair-Reviews

Students' review process took place in and out of the classroom for each assigned type. Data on their activities are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Students' performance in pair-reviews.

No	Activities in pair-reviews	Frequency (in percentage)				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Reformulating the title	0	14.3	32.1	42.9	10.7
2	Making or revising the Topic Sentence	0	0	36.7	34.3	25
3	Revising the Supporting Points/ Details*	0	3.6	21.4	46.4	23.6
4	Revising the Concluding Sentence*	0	3.6	17.4	57.1	21.4
5	Revising the Grammar*	0	3.6	7.1	39.3	50
6	Revising the vocabulary*	0	0	10.7	42.9	46.4
7	Revising the Spelling and Punctuation*	0	3.6	7.1	28.6	60.7
8	As Reviewer: Suggesting pair to change the topic and use of grammar, as well as vocabulary *	8	10.7	28.6	46.4	14.3
9	Showing the pair the mistakes and propose correction*	0	7.1	14.3	50	23.6
10	Encouraging the pair to be more careful and serious in writing*	0	7.1	32.1	42.9	17.9
11	Giving comments and scoring the paragraph*	0	3.6	21.4	39.3	35.7
12	Revising all that has been told conveniently*	0	7.1	10.7	35.7	46.4
13	Arguing with the pair *	0	7.1	32.1	50	10.7
14	I do not have enough time to revise what the pair have given*	35.7	21.4	21.4	21.4	0
15	I know exactly what my Writing Lecturer wanted from the collaboration activity	3.6	3.6	35.7	39.3	17.9
16	I collaborated with the same pairs*	3.6	7.1	25	39.3	25

Note: 1 (never); 2 (rarely); 3 (sometimes); 4 (often); 5 (always).

* Significance at .05

Three main parts are revealed in the questionnaires: what the students did after the review, the roles of reviewers, and attitudes toward the review process. In the first part, the purpose dealt with the impact of the review activity on the students' writers. It is evident that, although none of the items was valid, the trend showed that the student writers reformulated the topic or title (53.6%). The student writers also revised the topic sentence (59.3%).

In addition to the development of their language, the student writers made significant revisions in terms of supporting points (70%), concluding sentences (78.5 %), grammar (89.3%), vocabulary (89.3%), and spelling or mechanics (89.3%). All the activities were done under the pressing situation because they had to do other tasks assigned by other lecturers. Conversely, they also had to manage and conduct extra jobs for their expenditures or daily needs.

Most student reviewers gave comments and scored their pairs (75%). They also showed mistakes and proposed corrections (73.6%), while others suggested changing topic sentences, grammar, and vocabulary (60.9%). Reviewers also encouraged their pairs to be more serious (60.8%). This situation encouraged students to balance their

energy or investments and care for their classmates. Thus, deep care and respect motivated by an intention to help others were critical to implementing pair works in this context.

After working in pairs, most original authors or writers made the revisions as suggested by pairs (82.1%). Although students tended to collaborate with the same pairs (64.3%), they argued with pairs (60.7%). Nonetheless, most were willing to make the revisions (57%). These findings suggest that pair-reviews allow the students to think critically and innovate based on their current perceptions and knowledge of the topic.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Students' Paragraph Writing

Since the practice of paragraph writing in this course was directed to develop students' feelings, imagination, and relevant knowledge, they seemed to enjoy turning the ideas presented in the pre-writing activity (planning) into their paragraphs. This finding confirms the previous research that [Alwaleedi et al. \(2019\)](#) pointed out: collaborative writing allows students to produce ideas while jointly producing text, discussing language, acquiring L2 information, and engaging in meaningful conversation. This is further backed by the notion that a pair-review at the university level was "a non-threatening method for students, resulting in purposeful employment of the target language across abilities and verifiable writing advances" ([Mulligan & Garofalo, 2011, p. 5](#)).

Students' adequate achievement during the pair-reviews in three types of paragraph development (illustration, comparison, and categorization) was caused by two significant factors: the instructional procedures in the pre-writing stage and the benefits of pair-reviews. Discussing the roles of writers and readers, which [Reid \(1988\)](#) called 'audience' in the formation of text and functions and purposes of certain texts as students experienced prior to their writing activity, has significantly added to their prior knowledge of writing. In addition, exposing the students to the purpose and target readers has positively encouraged them to think and develop ideas by considering relevant grammar. Topic enrichment as the center or focus of the activity was in line with [Zamel \(1983\)](#), who recommended teachers not to 'present instruction in the use of topic sentences and outlines until students have begun to explore their ideas'. As evidenced in brainstorming, students tended to pour their whole ideas into their outlines. At this point, however, they were not allowed to write because they had to complete their outlines, which consisted of a title, purpose, topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentences. The pedagogical practice of the above instruction is relevant to [Reid \(1988\)](#), that students in general, and ESL students in particular, need to spend more time practicing writing than reading about theories of writing.

Students' low competence in categorization type (71.96), as evidenced in Table 1, indicates that they did not have adequate knowledge of grammar and the topics being exposed. Referring to [Anderson and Krathwohl \(2001\)](#), factual knowledge is the fundamental skill students need to understand or use to solve problems. It includes knowledge of language and expertise in specific components, such as vocabulary. It then directs to conceptual knowledge, which is the relationship between the

fundamental components of a more significant structure that allows them to work as a unit. It contains informational classification and categorization systems. Instructions must be upgraded because both issues are related to insufficient higher-order critical thinking skills. The higher the text level, the more complex the structure or grammar is required. To make a good categorization, one needs to understand, apply, analyze, and synthesize ideas (Erdiana & Panjaitan, 2023).

5.2 Impact of Pair-Reviews

We hold pedagogical principles in teaching grammar through writing activities. As communicative language teaching (CLT) suggests, grammar is taught when necessary to support the students (Zhou, 2020). So, in our current practice, grammar is given or presented while introducing the types of paragraph development. The principle is that because social co-constructions of knowledge are not guaranteed in all collaborative learning activities, ESL grammar instructors and ESL program administrators must balance collaborative and individual learning to promote student learning.

Students' improvement in language accuracy and vocabulary development confirms Boesley (1989, p. 19) that "the practice of collaborative writing helps learners focus on grammatical accuracy, lexis, and discourse as well as pooling knowledge about the language". Several ways in how students developed grammar in the study were in line with Zhou (2020, p. 46) that ESL learners construct grammatical knowledge, including, but not limited to, "explaining grammar structure, telling differences and similarities between grammar structures, and illustrating grammar by example sentences".

The implementation of pair-reviews might serve as a stepping stone for the students to continue the writing profession for some purposes. As the first experience in actual writing in English, they wanted to demonstrate to the class or pair that they could produce a piece of good work, and therefore, they needed to know the pair's response to such work. Some other students were not confident enough to hand over their assignment to the pair, being anxious about their mistakes or undesirable responses. However, after some review process, such 'bad mood' turned out to be positive because their pairs showed them their mistakes, gave the choice of words, and revised their topic sentence. The finding confirms previous studies such as Swain (2000) that pair-reviews 'push learners to reflect on their language use and work together to solve their language-related problems'.

5.3 Cultural View of Pair-Reviews

Working together in a group is one of the main features of Malay or Minangkabau culture. The principles of togetherness in Minangkabau cultures are very strong, as found in the proverb: '*barek samo dipikua, ringan samo dijinjang*', meaning that whatever big a problem can be solved if it is done collectively. Everyone, regardless of their position and welfare, should contribute to the development of society. In addition, the fundamental values of Minangkabau culture belong to a commonality in which individual life depends on a group - the smallest group is called '*paruik*', referring to the mother. Next is '*kaum*', referring to grandmother, then '*suku*' (tribe) to at least four Nagari (area) and five clans. A clan or tribe also sits together to

discuss an issue using their specific idiosyncrasies, practicing and embracing the old tradition. The principles of handing on the tradition to the younger generation are relevant to the language learning and acquisition theory. Pichler and Koulidobrova (2015) contended that the capacity to use language successfully requires acquiring various tools, including phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and an extensive vocabulary. Language can be vocalized as in speech or manual as in sign.

Unlike Hussen (2015), who found serious errors in students' paragraph writings, in this study, however, students' actual use of language during the pair-reviews (although not recorded) is thought to be friendly and communicative or acceptable, since they were willing to share in a non-threatening way. Such a phenomenon is in line with Mirzaei and Eslami (2015) that 'collaborative dialogic in writing' provided students with the opportunities to solve misunderstandings, upgrade their English language skills, and enhance their meta-discourse, grammar, and vocabulary knowledge.

Directing students to the purpose based on topic and audiences in prewriting activity, as we implemented during the training of peer review, was in line with Iskandar (2020), who contended that the process approach was expected to 'provide positive and collaborative workshop atmosphere in which students can work through their writing process'. It could be possible if students had enough time and minimal intervention. Helping students develop practical strategies for starting, drafting, revising, and editing their writing proved effective, as Mangelsdorf (1992) experienced. Spack (1988) categorized 'starting' as finding ideas, focusing, and planning the writing structure. In our current drafting practice, students were allowed to employ multiple drafts instead of one. Thus, this also adds to our knowledge that 'revising' is an act of adding, deleting, or modifying certain parts of the writing, and 'editing' concerns word choice, sentence structure, and grammatical accuracy.

6. CONCLUSION

The improvement in students' competencies in the pair-reviews sessions, either in types of paragraphs (e.g., illustration, comparison, and categorization) or indicators of writing such as content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics, suggests that students were encountered with transitions from lower thinking skills to higher or more critical thinking skills in line with the development of (English) language. Thus, relying on pairs to share, negotiate, ask, or confirm ideas and grammar is effective in developing their language. Based on this analysis, pair-reviews have sufficient impacts on students' writing.

EFL learning to write in the 21st-century education era constitutes many life skills for communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking. These higher-order thinking skills align with teaching and educating EFL learners to be taught honest, patient, and highly motivated to innovate. To do this heavy task, every teacher, regardless of their subjects, must implement process writing in revealing final tasks in the form of problem-solving and projects. The teachers must carefully help students plan, write, and edit for final revisions.

Among all the poor or average students, there must be the best one who can direct and motivate his/her classmates. Although they have similar knowledge of grammar, it is always possible for them to correct their mistakes, provided they are

given adequate opportunities to do so. Therefore, teachers need to balance their attention as to whether provide individual or classical treatment on grammar. The principles of pair-reviews align with ‘*gotong royong*’ (togetherness) and have long been handed down through generations in Minangkabau.

The findings of this study generate some implications for ESL/EFL learning, especially in the higher education setting that (1) students should constantly be reminded of the importance of the genuine or novelty of every idea they sound to classmates or pairs, (2) to appreciate one’s idea, teachers should encourage students to think globally and explore and relate it to surrounding areas so that they have and maintain critical thinking skills, and (3) it is high time for the lecturer involved in grammar instruction to teach grammar effectively based on context or purposes instead of emphasizing understanding or rote learning.

Within the width of range in EFL writing, there remains much to be upgraded as to the limitations of this study. First, the presentation of language aspects through a short and straightforward explanation of each type of paragraph, as we experienced in the study, provided fewer benefits. Therefore, future researchers are suggested to find or create more challenging ways in which grammar and types of text organization are presented at the exact moment. More importantly, as dealing with students who suffer from low communication skills in terms of grammar and vocabulary and yet have high access to mobile or smartphones, the shortcoming studies should be directed to implement models or methods of teaching such as problem-based learning, problem-solving, and task-based instruction for which ideas and language development are sustained in the entire program.

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The Possibilities of Implementing Pragmatic Instruction with Mental Grounding Techniques in EFL College Students' Context

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Abstract

The use of psychological techniques to deal with language problems is a well-known strategy in the process of teaching foreign languages as learners can sometimes suffer from anxiety and stress, so it is essential to help students overcome the psychological barriers they face to cope with the process of learning. This study attempts to deal with pragmatic problems by using a mix of mental grounding techniques and pragmatic activities (awareness-raising activities). The sample of the study comprised participants from Iraq and the Czech Republic. They were first-year college students. The researchers depended on learning zones to determine the suitable time for the experiment (fear zone). The researchers applied self-report surveys in addition to interviews to determine the students with pragmatic problems. Then, at the end of the experiment, the participants were interviewed again to evaluate the experiment in addition to the same self-report survey. Results showed that the two samples responded positively to the mix of techniques used. Moreover, the division of learning zones seems ideal to be dependent in the present study as it specifies the time of challenge the students experienced. The results also clarified that the mix of the two types of activities (pragmatic and

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grounding activities) demonstrates a kind of remedy that could enhance students' level of pragmatics. In the end, no sharp differences were mentioned in the two contexts of the study (Iraq and the Czech Republic); both gained approximate positive results.

Keywords: Awareness-raising activities, grounding, pragmatic activities, pragmatics, psychology.

1. INTRODUCTION

There can be quite a large amount of stress and anxiety among students when studying English as a foreign language (EFL) that may be imposed during the educational process (Krashen, 1982; Sahin & Tuna, 2022); in addition to that, the circumstances of various measures related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic can create a stressful learning environment for all the participants of the learning process, both the teachers and the students. One of the main problems that EFL students suffer from is speaking and communication, and this is manifested even more at the time of the pandemic as it seems that it is not sufficient to improve these communication skills and competencies due to the shortage of time devoted to each student and due to the loss of direct contact between the teachers and the students.

The communicative aim, rules, and social components of a language are all referred to as pragmatic language. It can be defined as “the ability to control the complex interplay of language, language users, and language use contexts” (Taguchi, 2011, p. 204). It is the manner where there is a focus on a language, and how it is used to communicate in a variety of settings, rather than on the structure of a language. Being able to understand the cues of the communication with partners and adhering to various conversational rules are crucial aspects of pragmatic language. Another essential point is clarified by Griffiths (2006), who mentioned that if you are dealing with meaning and there is no specific context to depend on, you are dealing with semantics, yet if there is a context to consider, you are dealing with pragmatics. Pragmatics is the study of how to communicate effectively, following particular communication trajectories and strategies, while semantics is the study of the meaning of the symbols used in a language and also their clusters, i.e., words and sentences, as they create utterance and discourse. Depending on that, the communication that occurs in virtual language learning environments is mostly related to pragmatics since it occurs in a specific context, and the difficulties that students face must be dealt with pragmatically. A distinction is made between learning the pragmatic language in the two contexts, i.e., foreign or second language learning. In a foreign-language setting, EFL (English as a foreign language) learners may not use and be provided enough target language material, and they usually lack opportunities to use and communicate in the second language outside the class to train to use second-language pragmatic skills (Eslami et al., 2015).

By contrast, in a developed and advanced learning ESL (English as a second language) context (e.g., by using immersion methodology), learners are surrounded by the target language as much as possible, so this context may very well improve their second language pragmatic ability (e.g., Polat, 2011). As a result, it is plausible to conclude that understanding pragmatics is necessary for foreign language learners to

assist them in recognizing that communicating a message from the speaker to the listener is a complex process that can result in numerous interpretations. However, proper communication with the transfer of correct information and messages is feasible.

Despite all these communication issues in EFL, the present study suggests that using learning zones as a road map may help teachers determine the areas of difficulty and diagnose well the potential times of anxiety and stress that can lead to real difficulties in communication. At the beginning of each grade of college study, the students are forced to leave their comfort zone where they have lived peacefully. It is a place where they know and trust everything around them, but at the same time, they cannot extend this comfort zone as they need to move on. The students begin their journey of the new academic year by feeling rather lost, or at least they are not feeling comfortable in the new environment and with the new situation. They look at classes as something strange and unfamiliar, and the whole college as a new experience that puts them in a stressful environment. They are forced to get out of their comfort zone; thus, their anxiety increases and a stress reaction happens, which could sometimes, however, lead to an improved focus. They may experience various levels of discomfort or anxiety when they leave their comfort zones of what they already know and have experienced for many years, both figuratively and literally, finding themselves within geographical and imaginative boundaries (Breen, 2012). Due to the heightened functioning skills that occur in this zone, it is referred to as the Optimal Performance Zone (White, 2008). Thus, it would be easier to determine the areas of weaknesses the students may suffer through the transition from the comfort one to the learning one and then to the growth zone.

The current study focuses on students' failures in pragmatic competence and spoken communication as they occur in the context of the EFL environment. Though many writers wonder whether EFL learners need to be taught pragmatics, LoCastro (2012) recommends that the development of pragmatic competence in L2 learners must generally take place in instructional settings. Kasper (1997) went beyond and stated that the pragmatic capacity of adult foreign and second language learners has been extensively investigated and it has been proven that learners' pragmatics differs greatly from native speakers. In the same vein, Blum-Kulka et al. (1989, p. 10) assure that "even fairly advanced language learners' communicative acts regularly contain pragmatic errors, or deficits, in that they fail to convey or comprehend the intended illocutionary force of politeness value". Thus, there is a requirement for L2 instruction to focus on the pragmatics of the language, and most academics believe that instruction aimed at improving learners' pragmatic awareness has a positive impact (Derakhshan & Eslami, 2015; Kasper, 1997; Zangoei & Derakhshan, 2014).

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the reasons for advanced EFL learners' pragmatic failure when they attempt to communicate orally as judged by their tutors in two culturally different contexts: Iraq and the Czech Republic. Among the important aspects that have evolved as a result of psychological growth, conditions are the expansion of knowledge of humanistic learning elements (Al-Obaydi, 2021), the empowerment of instructors toward ethical considerations in teaching in addition to the scholars' trials to break the psychological barriers of students in EFL classes. As a result, the goal of this study is to shed light on the cross-cultural disparities in using a mix of mental grounding and pragmatic techniques in EFL classrooms between Iraqi and Czech higher education environments. There is one essential factor that should be

taken into consideration to help the students pass through these steps and to create a highly positive class environment is the teacher (teacher support and the techniques he/she uses in classes) who imposes relaxation and creates a positive atmosphere (Al-Obaydi, 2020; Pishghadam et al., 2021). In this concern, providing a mix of pragmatics and grounding techniques is suggested to be the proper tool that can be used by language teachers in their language classes.

Despite the possibilities and potential importance of the aforementioned aspects, little research has attempted to examine the philosophical and educational underpinnings of self-discovery and self-development of students' pragmatic language depending on their comfort zones and how this matter could be implemented in a foreign language learning context. There is virtually no research dealing with the topic of comfort zones in the context of second language acquisition, therefore, this research attempts to cover this gap.

To cover the gap, the following research questions were formulated to obtain the results to be later analyzed:

1. Can the use of learning zones as a road map help teachers determine the areas of difficulty and diagnose the EFL college students' pragmatic problems?
2. Can the use of mental grounding techniques help EFL college students overcome their pragmatic problems?
3. Can the use of pragmatic activities help EFL college students overcome their pragmatic problems?
4. Is there any difference between the results of using mental grounding and pragmatic activities in the EFL foreign language context in Iraq and the Czech Republic?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Pragmatic Competence

Pragmatic competence, according to Thomas (1983) and Mao (2021), entails both pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic knowledge. The former is concerned with the linguistic resources available to fulfill language tasks (Taguchi, 2011), whereas the latter is concerned with the language user's judgment of the context in which such resources are used (Taguchi, 2011). Because L2 learners must know how to change their socio-pragmatic knowledge into pragma-linguistic forms under the contextual limits of the situation (Roever, 2004, as cited in Mirzaei et al., 2012), the former two types of pragmatic competence appear to be challenging for EFL/ESL learners to acquire (O'Keeffe et al., 2011). One of the main reasons for EFL students' pragmatic problems is mentioned by LoCastro (2012) who states that around the world, classroom environments are often teacher-centered, planned to complete the curriculum with little time during sessions to encourage language practice where learners are involved in comprehension and creation of pragmatic meaning. Furthermore, there are few opportunities to utilize the target language in contexts that resemble real-world communication. Cook (2001) adds another reason for EFL students' pragmatic problems which is the kind of language used. Language is regarded as an object rather than a medium of interaction and communication in EFL classrooms, with few opportunities for socialization among students. Lastly, the EFL teacher is also considered a problem in some contexts as he/she is the only source of

the students' language, unlike the native teacher who can provide students with many language strategies. All these reasons can show the main resources for EFL students' pragmatic failure that can be dealt with in this study by utilizing the learning comfort zone first then testing the students to diagnose their problems, and last suggesting the possible program as remedial work.

2.2 Comfort Zone

The term 'comfort zone' is most commonly associated with studies of outdoor education (Brown, 2008), and pedagogy (Boler & Zembylas, 2003). Bardwick (1991), a management thinker, developed the term "comfort zone" in her book *Danger in the Comfort Zone*. White (2008) stated that a person operates in the comfort zone when they are in an anxiety-free environment and only use a small number of behaviors to produce a consistent level of performance, typically without feeling at danger. It is a form of mental conditioning in which people learn to set and maintain mental limits. Based on different techniques of processing uncertainty, these boundaries range from person to person. Making a decision based on confusing or limited information can be nerve-racking for some, but thrilling for others. In a broad sense, higher tolerance for ambiguity in decision-making can be associated with the trait of having a 'growth mindset', which is defined as a willingness to learn in areas that are outside of one's comfort zone (Dweck, 2006). However, the concept may also be traced all the way back to behavioral psychology where Yerkes and Dodson (1907) conducted their experiments that show a link between anxiety and performance as in Figure 1. The law of Yerkes and Dodson (Yerkes & Dodson, 1907) seems true not only for more tangible performance such as being assigned a difficult new task at work, but also for many other aspects of life such as understanding ourselves, relating to others, and so on.

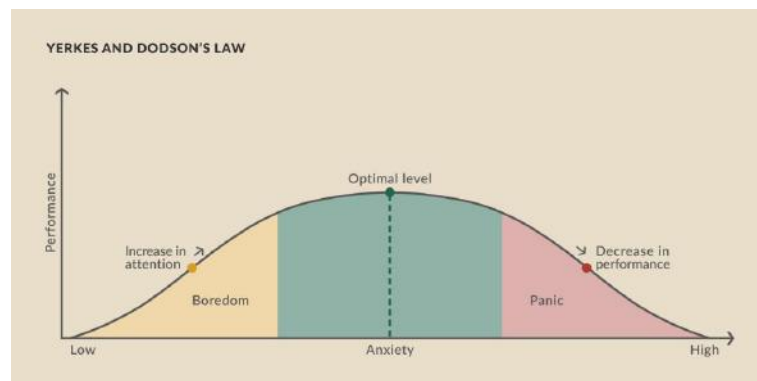


Figure 1. Yerkes and Dodson's law (Yerkes & Dodson, 1907, p. 460).

The students move from their comfort zone in the stage before entering college; for example, see Figure 2. Then, they enter the fear zone which represents the first step of learning where they begin to know the environment around them. It is a period of challenge in learning. In this stage, the students show a lack of self-confidence and fear, and they are affected by others' opinions due to peer pressure to a large extent. In the second stage, the learning zone, the students deal with the new material, the new classroom, and the new peers. They begin to learn new skills and realize how to face challenges and obstacles more systematically or even professionally. The last zone is

the growth zone where the students show their maturation and growth. All these four zones can be applied to one academic year by applying them horizontally.

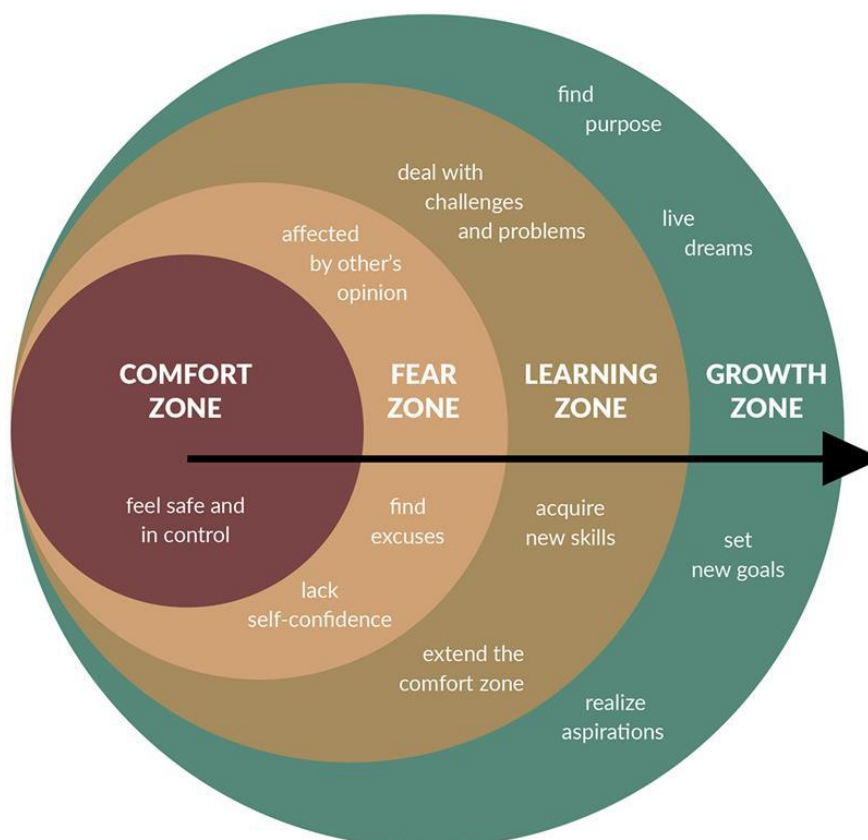


Figure 2. The circle from comfort to the growth zone (Maxwell, 2020, p. 65).

Figure 2 above shows clearly how these four zones can represent consecutive steps toward learning and how the teacher can determine students' failure by mapping the fear zone of the students. The students begin to live their dreams and set their new goals. The circle of learning zones repeats each new academic year attitudinally. It may also apply longitudinally to the four academic years of college study.

2.3 Grounding

Using grounding as remedial work, in addition to pragmatic activities, for pragmatic failure seems ideal as most of the problems that cause language failure are related to psychological sources. Grounding originally is a form of coping method that can be utilized to aid in the healing process after a traumatic event (Eddins, 2020). It is a strategy for keeping oneself in the present moment. Grounding activities assist a person to realign to the present moment. They are enjoyable and calming activities that help to reduce tension and anxiety. A person is out of touch with the current moment when he/she is nervous. Anxious thoughts are focused on the past and the future. These activities help reconnect to the present moment and feel calmer and more secure in it. Grounding skills might help a person cope with overwhelming emotions or worry. They assist someone in regaining mental focus after being in a highly emotional state.

The person can increase his or her awareness of the moment they are now living in by increasing their awareness of their surroundings and body.

Although grounding does not address the problem that is causing the unpleasant emotions, it does provide a temporary solution for gaining control of the feelings and preventing them from worsening. Grounding allows a person to calm down, anchors him/her, and allows him/her to return to the problem that is causing the negative emotions in the first place. Grounding, on the other hand, can be done at any time, in any place, with no one knowing (Eddins, 2020).

Three types of grounding are mentioned: soothing (talking with self in a very kind way), physical (focusing on senses), and mental (focusing on mind) (Eddins, 2020). The latter is the one used in the present study. The goal of mental grounding is to focus a person's thoughts and bring them back to the present moment. Examples are forming self-affirmations, creating a mental space to feel safe, focusing and observing the details, counting up and back down again, singing a song you know well, and playing concentration games.

It is worth mentioning that no study has been found to deal with applying learning zones as a road map to determine the area of difficulty for the students. The use of grounding techniques to solve language problems is also a new idea to exploit psychology in facilitating language learning. The use of mental grounding techniques and learning zones in the context of second language acquisition can bridge the gap that exists in the domain of applied linguistics and can help suggest possible solutions for teachers to deal with pragmatic problems easily (Mao, 2021).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Participants

This study deals specifically with first-grade students from two countries with very different cultural backgrounds, i.e., Iraq and the Czech Republic. The students were recruited from the English Department in the College of Education at the University of Diyala in Iraq, and the students of the Department of Applied Linguistics at the Faculty of Informatics and Management at the University of Hradec Kralove, the Czech Republic, as these two groups could represent an ideal representative sample. The choice of the population of the study occurred depending on two things: being first-year students studying English as a foreign language. The students agreed with their participation in the research and their written consent was obtained from them prior to the research. The research was approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Hradec Kralove no. 2/2021. No personal data about the students were collected.

The researchers applied self-report surveys with first-grade students from the two contexts (Iraqi n=30, Czech n=30) at the beginning of the second semester of their first year in January and February 2022. Before that, the researchers interviewed the students and asked them some questions to check their viewpoints on their new life in college and to check whether they were entering the fear zone or not (see Table 1). Results showed that most students agreed on the existence of difficulties at this time of year specifically as it represented entirely a new life for them. The researchers used students' subjective evaluation of their first year with a particular focus on their

transition from a high school to a university environment. This subjective reflection could bring important insight into the topic of transition and even if it was very subjective, it provided important data to be analyzed. The research was qualitative as it was based on the subjective opinions of the students.

Table 1. Results of students' first interview.

No.	Questions	Iraq			Czech Republic		
		Yes	Somehow	No	Yes	Somehow	No
1.	Do you like the new life in college?	20	8	2	17	13	0
2.	Is it difficult to be a college student?	15	6	9	19	11	0
3.	Does the studying in English department differ from your previous experience of studying in schools?	25	2	3	21	9	0
4.	Do you face difficulties in communication in English in this specific period of the first year?	18	6	6	15	7	8
5.	Does studying in college, specifically in the English department, represent a psychological load to you specifically in this period?	8	18	4	12	13	5

3.2 Instruments

This study collected data and determined the target sample using the subjective evaluation by the students themselves as they are usually aware of their pragmatic language impairments. Their evaluation of the situation is important as it could be analyzed and brought together to see the possibilities for improvement. Thus, all the students in the two contexts were exposed to a yes/no self-report survey that contained many pragmatic problems and allowed them to determine their specific cases. The use of this technique yielded valuable diagnostic information as it was gained directly from the students in a specific area (in the middle of the year where the fear zone begins). The items of the survey were adapted from the literature on repeated cases of pragmatic problems. The survey was initially exposed to specialists in English language teaching and psychology to confirm its validity in the two contexts. Once they all confirmed its suitability to the aim and context of the study, the survey was piloted on seven students to check its suitability and applicability to the students and the contexts of study. As a result, some items were modified and the time allotted was extended.

After determining the sample, the teachers became the facilitator of the improvement process by applying for the suggested program and be a guide to help students in the process of realizing their problems to be better communicators. The major language competence is communication; therefore, all pragmatic language impairments should be eradicated as they pose a threat to proper communication processes.

The students who mentioned more than six items would be included in the sample. Thus, out of 30 students in the class (in Iraq), 12 were mentioned as suffering from pragmatic problems. In the Czech sample, 15 students had pragmatic problems. The diagnosis of the students is based on several symptoms mentioned in the following self-report as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of students' self-report before the experiment.

No.	Items	Iraq		Czech Republic	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1.	I have difficulty sharing and making proper eye contact.	5	25	12	18
2.	I have difficulty initiating and maintaining discussions	12	18	18	12
3.	I have difficulty participating in structured activities with peers	10	20	10	20
4.	I face difficulties while participating in communication games	11	19	9	21
5.	I have a restricted vocabulary.	7	23	22	8
6.	I have poor narrative skills.	8	22	19	11
7.	I prefer to stay alone rather than with other students to avoid communication.	7	23	4	26
8.	I have difficulty understanding emotions and sentiments.	5	25	9	21
9.	I have a negative impression of social interactions.	4	26	6	24
10.	I have unrelated and inappropriate comments during a conversation.	8	22	2	28
11.	I have difficulty taking turns during dialogues.	8	22	6	24
12.	I have an inability to make inferences or understand the meaning of jokes.	11	19	3	27

At the end of the experiment, the students were also interviewed on some questions to evaluate the experiment in addition to using the same self-report survey. The questions were as follows:

1. Do you benefit from this experience?
2. Do you think that there are psychological barriers that may hinder communication abilities in class?
3. Is the use of grounding effective in helping oral communication?
4. Rate the whole experience, please: good, very good, excellent, or not good.

3.3 The Application of the Experiment

After determining the students with pragmatic problems based on the results of the self-report, the training program was conducted with students at the beginning of the second semester (fear zone) of their studies in January and February 2022. The researchers designed a program that mixed between pragmatic and grounding activities. The researchers chose not to isolate the target students from their classes and colleagues, so the experiment was conducted in their classes with a focus on the sample of the study. The details of the program are described below.

The lessons of the program occurred in the last 30 minutes of their lectures or seminars. In each lesson, the researchers in the two contexts divided the students into groups of four or fewer to ensure that the students would interact and socialize with peers. Then, it began with grounding activities, mental grounding specifically, to guarantee that the students were relaxed and able to reduce tension and anxiety. It is worth mentioning that the researchers tried to present a kind of lifelong training that could help the student utilize it in future times. Below is a list of the mental grounding activities used by the researchers at the beginning of each lesson with the students. Ask yourself some of these questions:

1. Where am I?
2. What is today?
3. What is the date?
4. What is the month?
5. What is the year?
6. How old am I?
7. What season is it?
- Notice your breath
Take a deep breath and visualize exhaling forcefully through the soles of your feet as you exhale. Feel your feet firmly planted on the ground. Make three repetitions of this.
- Naming categories
Choose a category (for example, colors, shapes, or textures), then look about the room and list anything that fits into that category.
- Counting
Count to 20 or say the alphabet, very s...l...o...w...l...y.

These were the activities that the researchers chose among many others. They were simple and easy to be used by the students in the class. The researchers trained the students to do one of these activities during each interview before beginning the pragmatic activities. In addition, they were trained to use them when feeling hesitant or confused during communication. They were used as preliminary activities to increase students' pace on one hand and to prepare and motivate them for the upcoming pragmatic activities.

It is essential to mention that the goal of using such activities was to introduce learners to the pragmatic components of language by breaking their fears of using language orally and helping them to make their own generalizations about how to utilize language in different situations. Such pragmatic activities (awareness-raising activities) are important as they are intended to help students become more aware of the variations between native and target language speech acts.

When teaching pragmatic topics to the sample for the first time, familiar examples of speech acts such as apologizing and requesting were given a suitable emphasis. When students were more comfortable with the method, they were given the option of selecting a speech act that they were interested in and observing it in naturalistic or rehearsed contexts. Then, when the students showed more development, the researchers used the literal translation of pragmatic aspects from their first language into English in the two contexts of study. Encouraging the sample to translate pragmatic sentences and phrases from and into their first language would help them understand more and remember each detail of the pragmatic structure used. The researchers used mental grounding techniques again when students showed confusion or fear. After six weeks of training, the researchers tried to collect data by applying the same self-report, in addition, to a set of questions to evaluate the students' experiences.

4. RESULTS

After six weeks of the experiment, the researchers applied the self-report survey again to see if there was any difference in the result. In the second application of the

survey, it was applied only to the samples that were diagnosed with pragmatic problems (Iraq n=12, Czech n=15). The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of participants' self-report after the experiment.

No.	Items	Iraq		Czech Republic	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1.	I have difficulty sharing and making proper eye contact.	5	7	3	12
2.	I have difficulty initiating and maintaining discussions.	3	9	4	11
3.	I have difficulty participating in structured activities with peers.	5	7	2	13
4.	I face difficulties while participating in communication games.	4	8	3	12
5.	I have a restricted vocabulary.	4	8	5	10
6.	I have poor narrative skills.	4	8	5	10
7.	I prefer to stay alone rather than with other participants to avoid communication.	2	10	3	12
8.	I have difficulty understanding emotions and sentiments.	2	10	4	11
9.	I have a negative impression of social interactions.	0	12	2	13
10.	I have unrelated and inappropriate comments during a conversation.	6	6	1	14
11.	I have difficulty taking turns during dialogues.	3	9	2	13
12.	I have an inability to make inferences or understand the meaning of jokes.	4	8	1	14

The results of the Iraqi participants proved that there was a kind of improvement according to the participants' replies. The number of participants with pragmatic problems decreased notably. Item number 9 which reads 'I have a negative impression about social interactions' got zero, which means no one had negative feelings towards social interaction anymore, which was a very good result. Other pragmatic problems decreased to a large extent in the performance of the participants. In addition, six participants still suffered from the problem mentioned in item number 10 which reads 'I have unrelated and inappropriate comments during conversation', which is related to the overall knowledge of language more than to speaking style. The results of the Czech participants showed that it seems that they subjectively evaluated their progress in a very good way as many of their answers tend to be in the spectrum of 'no' answers which indicates that they were aware of some kind of improvement. It seems that their self-reflection could be biased, but it is important to note that subjectively evaluated they felt some kind of improvement after the intervention.

The researchers interviewed the participants after the experiment individually to see their evaluation of the process and the activities used. The results of the two contexts were as follows.

4.1 Benefits from The Experience

Table 4 shows the results of the interviews from the first question: Do you benefit from this experience?

Table 4. Results of the first question of the interviews.

Item	Iraq			Czech Republic		
	Yes	No	Other	Yes	No	Other
Do you benefit from this experience?	7	3	I do not like such activities I feel shy to take part in this kind of program.	11	4	0

Out of 12 Iraqi participants, seven said yes to getting benefits from the experiment, three said no, meaning they did not get any benefits from it, and two others also did not agree for different reasons. The Czech participants' results showed that the majority of them were satisfied with the intervention, and they felt that it was beneficial for them as 11 participants agreed with the statement that they benefited from this experience, while only four participants who did not.

4.2 Psychological Barriers that Hinder Communication Abilities in Class

Table 5 shows the results based on the interviews from the second question: Do you think that there are psychological barriers that may hinder communication abilities in class?

Table 5. Results of the second question of the interviews.

Item	Iraq			Czech Republic		
	Yes	No	Other	Yes	No	Other
Do you think that there are psychological barriers that may hinder communication abilities in class?	10	2	0	14	0	1 (probably yes)

All Iraqi participants agreed on the existence of psychological barriers that prevented them from becoming good speakers of a language. The Czech participants' results showed that almost all of them were aware that some other barriers may hinder communication abilities, and one of the participants expressed that there was probably some barrier but was not able to identify it, while none of the participants expressed there was a barrier at all.

4.3 The Effective Use of Grounding in Helping with Oral Communication

Table 6 shows the results of the interviews based on the third question: Do you think that the use of grounding is effective in helping with oral communication?

Table 6. Results of the third question of the interviews.

Item	Iraq			Czech Republic		
	Yes	No	Other	Yes	No	Other
Do you think that the use of grounding is effective in helping oral communication?	6	5	It enhances my psychological acceptance of communication but does not improve it.	11	0	4 (not sure, maybe, probably yes)

Only six Iraqi participants agreed on the positive role of grounding in enhancing communication abilities; five participants said no; and one other participant

commented saying “It enhances my psychological acceptance of communication but not improve it”. Czech results on the other hand showed that again the majority of the participants (11) believed that grounding techniques can be efficient; none of them said no, but four stated that they were not sure.

4.4 Rating the Experience

Table 7 shows the results from the participants rating the whole experience.

Table 7. Results of the fourth question of the interview.

	Good	Very good	Excellent	Not good
Iraq	8	3	1	0
Czech Republic	10	1	0	0

The results of the last question of the interview demonstrated that only one Iraqi participant felt it was an excellent experience, eight participants were good, three participants very good, and no participant expressed not good. The Czech participants’ results, on the other hand, demonstrated that they were all satisfied, but they did not overrate their experience with this technique. It was not excellent for anyone, not good for anyone, and very good only for one participant. On the other hand, 10 participants expressed their satisfaction by stating that it was good.

5. DISCUSSION

The results of the present qualitative study showed that there is a certain level of success when implementing a mix of mental grounding techniques with the use of pragmatic activities to deal with the pragmatic problems of EFL college students. The experiment generally proves very good results with the Czech students and good results with the Iraqi students. The results obtained can be discussed concerning each question of the study as follows. The first research question dealt with the analysis of the use of learning zones as a road map to help teachers determine the areas of difficulty and diagnose the EFL college students’ pragmatic problems. The results showed that the use of the mentioned learning zones as a road map and a guide for teachers and researchers proved to be helpful as it allowed the participants to be more accurate in choosing a suitable time for dealing with class challenges and to be aware of the existence of psychological barriers that need to be dealt with. This aspect is crucial as it could help the participants with their time management, which can be a serious issue in the first year of university studies.

The researchers asked the participants several questions to identify whether they suffer from the transition of their high schools first, and then from the accumulation of new study material in their new academic life. This information was important to set a solid ground upon which further research could be conducted. Results showed that most students suffer in the fear zone of the academic year which leads to encouraging teachers and researchers to do their investigations during this specific period. The transition of the student’s academic life, in addition to the accumulation of study materials during their first year at a university, exerts significant psychological pressure on students which could potentially lead to the existence of more anxiety and

stress in conversation classes as it was specified and confirmed by [White \(2008\)](#). Therefore, the division of learning zones seems ideal to be used in the present study.

The second research question focused on the idea of whether the use of mental grounding techniques can help EFL college students overcome their pragmatic problems. As the results of the present study show, the use of grounding as a technique to treat confusion and anxiety leads to a lack of fluency and in turn affects the pragmatic ability of the students; most participants in the two contexts responded positively to using it, where Czech students were again slightly more positive towards it than Iraqi students. But all in all, both groups of participants agreed on the effectiveness of using grounding exercises in the development of oral communication skills, which is a very good result because the participants subjectively agreed with the potential benefits of the technique. As is supported by vast research, the use of psychological techniques to deal with pragmatic and speaking problems seems essential ([Qureshi et al., 2020](#)), as many EFL students experience such a kind of problems due to various cognitive and psychological factors that form a kind of serious pressure on their academic and language performance. This issue is also supported by [Thornbury \(2005\)](#). Among these factors could be making mistakes ([Ariyanti, 2016](#)), shyness ([Al Nakhalah, 2016](#)), anxiety ([Gopang et al., 2018](#)), lack of confidence ([Al-Hebaish, 2012](#)), lack of self-esteem ([Braine, 2018](#)), and lack of motivation ([Harmer, 2007](#)). As a result, using psychological techniques to solve students' problems seems acceptable and successful due to the positive results that were gained in the two culturally different learning contexts, Iraq, and the Czech Republic, which can show a shred of evidence that the psychological treatment of the students' problems can give positive or even very positive results despite the fact where the students are based.

The use of mental grounding specifically, among other kinds of grounding, works on focusing the participants on their thoughts and bringing them back to the present moment, which is also supported by research into mindfulness, mediation, and mindfulness cognitive-based therapy. Nowadays, the technique of mindfulness is also implemented in management studies and other professions that have to make decisions under pressure; therefore, it is already considered a very powerful tool to improve decision processes and subjective well-being. Moreover, this procedure seems effective with most students specifically those who face psychological barriers that prevent them from speaking fluently. Other students who were not responding positively to these techniques suffered from language problems other than psychological ones such as stammering, dyslexia, or others. Thus, the use of mental grounding to deal with pragmatic problems seems rather successful and very justifiable as these techniques can bring enormous benefits for students, but further research is still needed.

The third research question evaluated if the use of pragmatic activities helps EFL college students overcome their pragmatic problems. The use of instructional strategies in teaching pragmatics is not a new idea in EFL contexts ([Derakhshan et al., 2021](#); [Malmir & Derakhshan, 2020](#); [Tajeddin & Malmir, 2015](#)), and most strategies used were successful and gained very good results which are in agreement with the results of the present study. What is new and not usually dealt with in pragmatic studies is the use of psychological techniques, such as grounding, in addition to pragmatic strategies inside the class to deal with pragmatic problems. The mix of these two types of activities demonstrates a kind of remedy that could be developed and used for a widespread segment of students who suffer from pragmatic and language problems as

supported by Hilari et al. (2010, 2012) and Feeney et al. (2012). The positive results of the present study show that mixing psychological treatment with language activities can potentially yield long or even lifelong training that can be used by students almost anytime during their professional lives.

The findings of using explicit pragmatic activities with students positively related to previous studies on the positive influence of instruction on learners' pragmatic development (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Kasper & Roeper, 2005; Martínez-Flor, 2016; Zangoei et al., 2014). The use of awareness-raising activities with students indicated that multiple teaching modalities were effective in dealing with students.

An important issue to be mentioned is what is reported by the researchers of the healthy students (those who did not suffer from any pragmatic problems and who also took part in the experiment) who showed very good performance, and their pragmatic competence enhanced notably as well. After some questions with them about the experiment and how they can evaluate it, they stated that it was benefiting them to a large extent and they rated it as excellent. This result may lead to an important fact that such a kind of experiment could be used with whole classes and it is recommended not to isolate the target students only as both groups viewed it positively, and it probably brought certain psychological benefits to both groups. Such kind of activities can help to promote engagement in class by using instant feedback (Al-Obaydi et al., 2023).

Finally, the last research question enquired is whether there is any difference between the results of using mental grounding and pragmatic activities in the EFL foreign language context in Iraq and the Czech Republic. Students' responses to this kind of training were very good in the two contexts (Iraq and the Czech Republic) as they showed positive interaction and engagement with their teachers in both groups. Though these two contexts may culturally differ, both deal with English as a foreign language. Thus, the approximate positive results in the two contexts may be justifiable. However, it was not the aim of this research to prove and explain the differences between these two culturally very different contexts.

Students' rate of the experiments in the two contexts varied between good and very good which is a high rating degree. This refers to the overall acceptance of students of such kinds of activities that are interspersed with psychological treatment. Therefore, it is recommended to use positive psychology in addition to mindfulness techniques when needed. In addition, teachers' knowledge and professionalism in this aspect need to be increased and sharpened to solve such urgent cases in class.

6. CONCLUSION

The use of psychological techniques in addition to language activities proved to be a very good mix that helps EFL college students overcome their challenges in learning. The atmosphere of relaxation and stability that was created by using grounding is worth studying by other researchers in different pivots in relation to English language teaching contexts as it affects students' psychological state decreasing their language anxiety and stress to a large extent. Generally, implementing various techniques, such as mindfulness, motivational strategies, anxiety reduction methods, etc., can dramatically help students improve their concentration, reduce stress, and thus improve their learning experience.

This research is a pilot study and it has several limitations, namely, the research sample was not large enough to allow coming to generalizations about the whole population. However, as a pilot study, it provides some important findings that could be further verified on a much larger scale. This research is just an attempt and impetus to focus on a topic that seems relevant and that could bring certain positive aspects into the learning process in the EFL context.

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Contextualizing Corrective Feedback in Scientific Writing through Online Learning Platforms

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Abstract

Providing corrective feedback by teachers is one of the most crucial and central activities to improve the quality of student scientific writing. Although there has been much previous research on corrective feedback, few focused on lecturers' viewpoints, techniques, and assessments to guide students to write scientific papers. The objectives of this study are to describe lecturers' perceptions, practices, and self-evaluation when providing written corrective feedback in the context of scientific writing in the field of English research at multiple Indonesian teacher education institutes. The researchers employed a qualitative descriptive research method with a survey design to meet research objectives. A total of 53 lecturers were selected as respondents using purposive sampling criteria. This study used a survey questionnaire with ten questions of three categories (perception, activity, and evaluations) which were distributed to the research participants. The results of this study revealed that teachers prefer written corrective feedback, use various media and applications, emphasize the content of writing in providing feedback, and feel confident in doing this activity, even though sometimes they do not have enough time and continue to try to improve the quality of feedback provision to their students in writing scientific works. The results of this study can contribute

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as a reflection to improve teacher performance in the implementation of corrective feedback, especially in an online learning platform.

Keywords: Contextualizing, corrective feedback, online learning, scientific writing.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teachers spend a significant amount of time reacting to and correcting faults in the second language (L2) learners' writing while examining their work (Kang & Han, 2015). Many educators believe that providing such corrective feedback is essential for improving L2 learners' writing skills (Simard et al., 2015). Considering widespread belief in its effectiveness, written corrective criticism remains a divisive topic (Atmaca, 2016). Various feedback systems have already been discovered to be effective to various degrees even though there has been some information that might help with writing quality in text improvements. Recently, interest in second language learning appears to be shifting to written corrective feedback's potential to aid learners' interlingual growth, with researchers studying whether L2 learning is possible where written corrective feedback is offered and engaged (Choi, 2016).

Providing corrective feedback in scientific writing is related to the theory of second-language acquisition arguing that a learner cannot continue advancing their language abilities or grasp linguistic features unless they consciously notice the input (Banaruee et al., 2018). The theory was proposed by Schmidt (1990). The theory is one of the conceptual assertions of corrective feedback in improving language learning. The theory claims that language acquisition requires cognitive attention and consideration of linguistic characteristics. Corrective feedback provides a gateway, causing students to recognize the disparity between their discourse output and target language input (Zhu & Wang, 2019). As a result, such recognizing practices may promote instability, help students to adjust, and reconstruct their linguistic knowledge later on.

Students, who learn to write scientifically for the first time, may encounter some difficulties (Korstjens & Moser, 2018) because they have to adjust to following certain scientific norms and rules (Wilkes et al., 2015). Even if they have taken numerous series of writing classes, they still have problems conveying ideas, opinions, and arguments in scientific writing logically and systematically. When students have problems with their writing, their thesis supervisors are required to offer advice and recommendations to help the students improve their writing (Sadler, 2010). The supervisors usually communicate inputs, ideas, and improvements, which are referred to as corrective feedback in both oral and written communication (Liu & Brown, 2015). However, in light of the current online learning as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, both supervisors and students prefer to communicate via written media to avoid physical contact and maintain social distancing (Saud et al., 2020).

Almost all academic activities, including the learning process, learning assessment, and student-guided writing activities, were conducted online during the Covid-19 pandemic (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Jones et al., 2020), including in Indonesia. Online academic activities were performed to minimize the spread of Covid-19. Therefore, almost all activities were performed online to avoid face-to-face

interaction. As a consequence, educational institutions were urged by the government to enact several new educational practice laws to aid the government's attempts to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the context of education in Indonesia, writing a scientific paper is a mandatory activity for students to complete their studies. The student writing activity requires guidance, corrections, and suggestions from their supervisor. However, in line with the Covid-19 pandemic, this academic activity had to be carried out online to replace the conventional way of writing guidance. Therefore, for the activities to function well, teachers and students had to be able to modify these circumstances by utilizing some computer programs and applications. They also need to improve their ability to operate the programs and applications for student-guiding activities. Research on this topic revealed that using such programs and applications made it simpler for teachers and students to communicate while mentoring their students to write scientific papers (Lin et al., 2022; Spezi et al., 2017).

Different prior studies have looked into the teachers' practices of mentoring students to write their thesis (Druschke et al., 2018; Odena & Burgess, 2017) and journal article manuscripts (Clarke et al., 2013). In Indonesia, several studies also discussed the practice of supervising scientific writing in the form of theses and scientific publication articles. Generally, the studies discussed the influence of environmental learning on student writing quality (Iswandari et al., 2017; Rosyada & Sundari, 2021; Yu et al., 2020), students' perceptions of scientific writing skills (Prihandoko et al., 2021), and the practice of plagiarism in students' scientific writing (Novawan & Aisyiyah, 2020), whereas studies on the practice of mentoring students' scientific articles through online learning are still lacking. This study is expected to fill a gap in the literature in terms of delivering corrective feedback to students to improve their scientific writing in Indonesian educational institutions.

This study aims to uncover lecturer perceptions, practices, and assessments of the process of guiding students' scientific papers in English through the mentoring of their thesis via online tutoring. The findings of this study are expected to characterize the pattern of lecturers guiding the production of student scientific papers and to discuss lecturers' experiences with these activities. The findings of this study are projected to contribute to the development of a pattern of providing effective corrective feedback and the addition of related literature on written corrective feedback in Indonesian education.

Briefly, the study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How is the lecturers' perception of providing corrective feedback on students' scientific writing?
2. How are the lecturers' practices of providing corrective feedback on their students' scientific writing?
3. How do the lecturers make their self-evaluation of their corrective feedback provision on their scientific writing?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review discusses the latest theories, issues, and findings regarding the implementation of scientific writing guidance through writing feedback conducted by lecturers in Indonesia. This literature is expected to provide a description, summary,

and critical evaluation of the topic on the implementation of corrective feedback in guiding student scientific writing, especially in the implementation of coaching practices using online learning platforms.

2.1 Theories of Corrective Feedback

Feedback is defined as a negotiated engagement between teachers and students that encourages them to detect the difference between the target form and the incorrect utterance and to make changes to their standard scientific writing (Hyland, 2013). The practice can help people pay attention to and become more knowledgeable of the linguistic properties that are important for language learning. Corrective feedback acts as a stimulant, causing learners to bridge the gap between their interlanguage output and the target language's input (Zhu et al., 2020). As a result, these recognizing procedures may inspire accurate writing structures and aid learners in eventually modifying and reorganizing their language abilities.

From a sociocultural standpoint, Vygotsky (1978, in Shabani, 2016) in his Social-cultural Model postulates that language acquisition can be facilitated when learners engage in academic activities with a higher level of language competence. Corrective feedback might be used as a solution. Such an evaluation must correspond with the learners' domain of proximal growth to provide value to second language learning. This is the area between where they are now and where they may be mentoring aids in the progression of the learner's comprehension and conceptual independence.

Corrective feedback develops learners' declarative knowledge by changing it into procedural knowledge. According to the Skill Acquisition Theory, various feedback can be filled through coaching, rehabilitation, and recovery (DeKeyser, 2020). The theory covers a practical approach to understanding the connection between the brain and behaviours. The matter is that students must pass through the three stages of the skill acquisition model to become expert writers. Ultimately, the learner moves from awareness to unconscious processing, which requires less concentration, a faster speed, and higher accuracy. It also provides explicit learning and avoids inaccurate data from entering procedurals and being automatically processed. While emphasizing the importance of sufficient and meaningful practices to acquire automaticity, Ha (2022) also suggests that further research is conducted to determine the amount and type of feedback that is effective during practice.

Furthermore, Erlam et al. (2013) and Wei and Cao (2020) posited a conceptual structure for corrective feedback, which attempts to enlighten how students' differences in learning (such as age, encouragement, style of learning, and perceptions) link directly to contextual variables (such as learning to set) to act as a mediator between the oral and written corrective feedback learners acquire and their engagement with it. Learner participation is explored from three perspectives: a cognitive perspective (how learners pay attention to corrective feedback), a behavioural perspective (learners' reception or adjustment as a result of corrective feedback), and an attitude perspective (learners' views toward corrective input, including avoidance or anxiety). The framework aims to identify the variables that have been studied in corrective feedback research so far, as well as topics that future research should look into such as the impacts of individual differences.

2.1.1 Oral corrective feedback

Considering the universal agreement on the pedagogical potential of corrective feedback (CF) for language learning, there is much debate about which kind of feedback would be the most beneficial. Even if some researchers (Faturrochman et al., 2021; Irawan & Saliya, 2017) believed that students' involvement with feedback processes such as peer feedback (PF) can promote L2 learning and change their role from passive dependent learners to active autonomous participants, others question PF's pedagogic potential due to factors such as learners' scepticisms of their own or peers' linguistic knowledge, time constraints in class, and face-saving concerns. In recent years, CF has spawned a large body of study as one of the most prominent issues in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). A study on the evaluation of 18 meta-analysis studies that combined empirical investigations on various components of this instructional device provides one piece of evidence supporting the attractiveness of CF research (Plonsky & Brown, 2015).

Oral corrective feedback (CF) is described as the propriety or accuracy of a second language learner's output or understanding by which lecturers and learners perform an interaction orally through both direct face-to-face interaction and face-to-face interaction via media, such as utilizing some applications (e.g. Zoom, WhatsApp, etc.) (Erlam et al., 2013).

2.1.2 Written corrective feedback

Written corrective feedback (WCF) is a common strategy used by second language (L2) teachers to assist learners in improving their writing accuracy by responding to syntactic and semantic faults in their written materials. Syntactic faults are those relating to the use of the incorrect arrangement of words, phrases, clauses, or sentences to produce intended meanings, whereas semantic faults refer to the correct use of linguistic units; however, they fail to communicate the intended meanings. This sort of feedback has provoked discussions and analyses because it is such an important part of L2 writing education (Mao & Lee, 2020). The literature uses several terminologies to describe the written corrective feedback (WCF) scope, including complete, focused, and unfocused WCF (Lee, 2014). Comprehensive WCF refers to the comprehensive correction of any mistake in learners' writing, which is a scattershot technique of error detection. Focused WCF, on the other hand, takes a more selective approach and only provides WCF for a limited number of error kinds.

2.2 Empirical Evidence on Corrective Feedback in SLA

Several scholars from several disciplines conducted studies on the adoption of corrective feedback on student scientific writing in higher education in Indonesia (Kuswando, 2014; Nurkamto, 2018). All studies strived to improve the quality of student scientific writing, both in the form of thesis and journal articles for scientific publishing and writing that serves as the major prerequisite for completion of their studies.

In response to the global Covid-19 pandemic, practically, all academic activities in Indonesian higher education institutions were conducted via online platforms (Syahputra & Saragih, 2021), including both applications and online communication

mediums. The activity of supporting students in producing scientific papers is one of the academic activities that influence this condition. Students and lecturers who were previously able to undertake academic interactions through face-to-face engagement have been forced to use online writing mentorship activities in this activity (Kleinbort et al., 2020).

The first year of this activity was fraught with difficulties for both teachers and students (Ezra et al., 2021). However, with the intense level of instruction and socialization by universities, this activity can be successful. Starting from this point, the goal of this study was to compile a thorough account of lecturers' attitudes, practices, and assessments of corrective feedback on student scientific writing. The instructors of the English Education Study Program from several universities in Indonesia were the subject of this study.

2.3 Perception, Practice, and Evaluation of Corrective Feedback

The focus of this research was on teachers' self-evaluation of perceptions, practices, and evaluation of activities that had been carried out in providing corrective feedback to students' scientific papers. Firstly, perception refers to the activities of organizing, identifying, and interpreting sensory information to understand information or process activities (Castelló et al., 2017) to provide feedback on the improvement of student scientific writing. Exploration of teacher perceptions in this study was expected to be able to provide comprehensive views, thoughts, and considerations on the activities of supervising scientific writing. Secondly, the practice of providing feedback refers to the actual activities that had been carried out by the teacher during the mentoring process of providing corrective feedback on the student's scientific papers. These activities consisted of ideas, beliefs, habits, methods, and processes that were applied during the mentoring process to achieve the desired goals and to produce high-quality scientific work. It is necessary to investigate this feedback-giving practice to confirm and guide if the pedagogical requirements of this activity have been met (Pon-Barry et al., 2017). Thirdly, evaluation refers to judging the value or condition carefully and thoughtfully to determine the fixed value or to determine the significance worth of the practice of providing corrective feedback.

The steps and procedures of this activity were carried out by the teachers using online platforms in the context of directing students' scientific work. Educators and students employed a variety of media and apps to carry out the process of overseeing this scientific activity (Khalili, 2020; Wong, 2020). The availability of facilities and infrastructure, accessibility, access granted by educational institutions, and the convenience of instructors and students were all factors that influenced media use.

Internal factors such as perception, practice, and evaluation of written corrective feedback, in addition to the external procedures and factors that affect the implementation of scientific work guidance mentioned above (Li et al., 2015), must also be considered because these factors have a direct impact on the quality of online student guidance of scientific work. Receiving, gathering, taking ownership, and apprehension with the mind or senses about a particular thing or activity are all examples of the word "perception". In this perception, teachers choose, arrange, and evaluate inputs to create a meaningful and coherent image of the written corrective feedback provision (Lee et al., 2021). In this sense, perception includes a mental process in which teachers pay attention to incoming stimuli, organize them, and

translate them into activity. This study looked at how instructors saw and perceived themselves in providing written corrective feedback to students in scientific writing guide activities.

Practice and assessment, in addition to perception, are significant and intriguing variables to consider when offering corrective feedback in online learning (Ranalli, 2018). Teachers will discuss their efforts in terms of delivering feedback on online learning in this practice theme. This exercise should represent teachers' activities and provide feedback for self-improvement. Meanwhile, teachers do a self-evaluation of the mentoring activities (Ozdemir & Papi, 2021) that they have done earlier in the evaluation theme. They examine their talents as well as the abilities of their students and provide recommendations to improve the quality of student scientific writing tutoring.

3. METHOD

This qualitative descriptive research uses a survey research design. The respondents of this study were 53 English lecturers (28 females and 25 males) from ten universities in five cities throughout Indonesia. The respondents were selected using a purposive sampling technique applying inclusion criteria. Meanwhile, the demographic description of the participants in this study based on the duration of work is as follows: under 5 years, 6 lecturers (9.4%); 5-10 years, 23 lecturers (43.4%); 11 to 15 years, 8 lecturers (16%); 15-20 years, 6 lecturers (11.3%); and more than 20 years, 10 lecturers (18.9%).

A total of 75 survey questionnaires, each of which consisted of 10 close questions, were distributed; however, there were only 55 respondents who returned the questionnaire results with complete responses and met the predetermined criteria. Following the code of ethics for research involving humans, the research team first explained the research objectives and asked for the respondents' willingness and approval to participate in this research. This research was carried out for three months from January to March 2022. Although the respondents for this research were not evenly distributed across all lecturers in Indonesia, each region completed and had its representative. The research instrument was delivered using *Google Form* which contained 10 closed-ended and open-ended questions with the following distributions: perception (2 open-ended and 1 closed-ended question), practice (2 open-ended and 2 closed-ended questions), and evaluation (2 open-ended questions and 1 closed-ended question) on the use of written corrective feedback on students' scientific writing during online learning.

By using the thematic analysis, the research instrument could identify and analyse patterns (themes) using the previously defined ones. Furthermore, the data that had been collected were analysed by adopting a qualitative research pattern, organizing the collected data, identifying the data framework, sorting the data into the framework, describing the data into the framework, and drawing a conclusion.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

Based on the research objectives and the data analysis based on the themes set and discussed in this research topic, the results of this study describe lecturers' perception, practice, and evaluation of the provision of written corrective feedback on students' scientific writing during online platforms.

4.1.1 Lecturers' perception of providing written feedback

This section describes the lecturers' perception of the practice of providing feedback to their students in online learning. It covers topics such as feedback mode (oral or written), the medium lecturers use to offer feedback during online learning, consistency in providing feedback on student writing, and affirmation or affirmation of ideas for writing improvement.

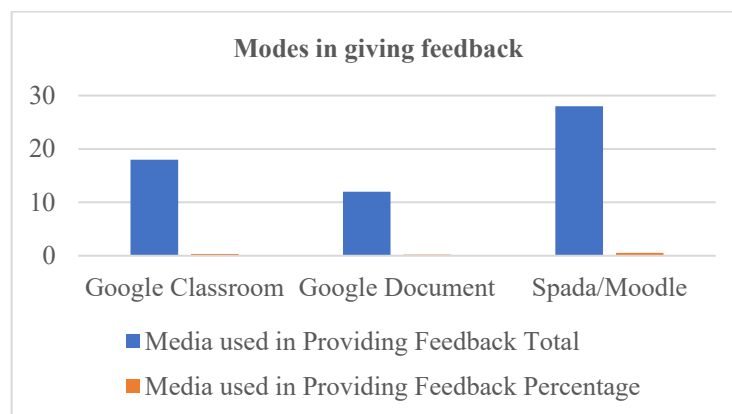


Figure 1. Lecturers' preference modes in giving feedback.

There are three options provided in the survey questionnaire for providing feedback on student writing: oral feedback, written feedback, and oral-written feedback. Most of the teachers provided both oral and written feedback in checking student writing (83%), followed by written feedback (9.43%), and oral feedback (7.54%).

In terms of the applications or media they used in providing writing feedback during the online learning period, the respondents gave the following answers as shown in Figure 2. It shows that the teachers gave various answers related to the media/applications they used in providing written feedback. Most teachers generally used more than one application to make it easier for them to provide a detailed explanation of their practices of giving feedback. The types and percentages of applications are presented in Figure 2. The most widely used media were WhatsApp (100%), Microsoft Word Review feature (98.11%), Telegram (66.03%), Spada/Moodle (52.83%), Google Classroom (33.90%), Google Docs (22.06%), Trello (15.09%), and Short Message Service or SMS (11.32%).

Meanwhile, Figure 3 depicts the rationale for using applications or media given by teachers to provide corrective textual feedback during online learning. Figure 3 shows the teachers' reasons for using media/applications to provide written corrective

feedback. The teachers responded with seven reasons when they were asked about the use of media/applications in the online learning period, i.e. media availability by 45 students (84.90%), student media choices by 35 students (66.03%), student media accessibility by 32 students (60.37%), response accuracy by 26 students (49.05%), response speed by 22 students (41.50%), and ease of monitoring results by 16 students (30.18).

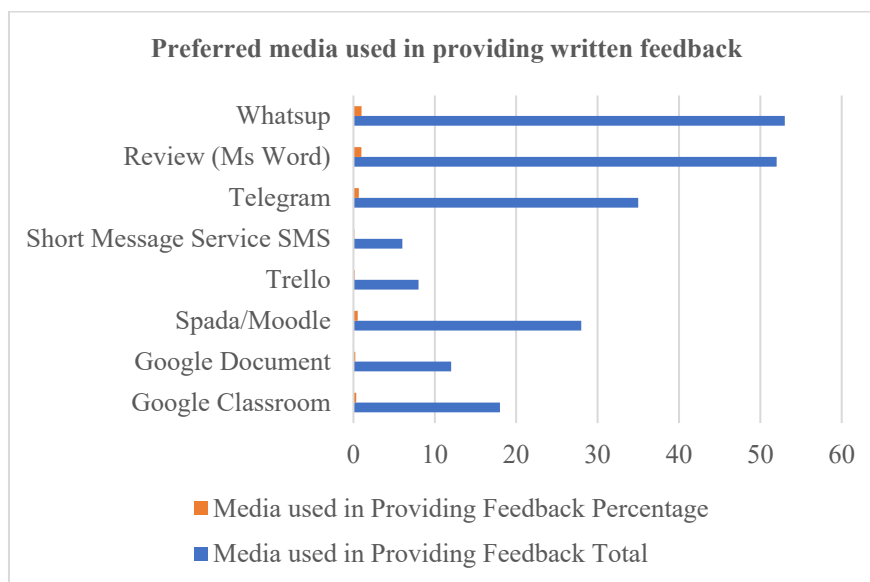


Figure 2. Preferred media used in providing written feedback.

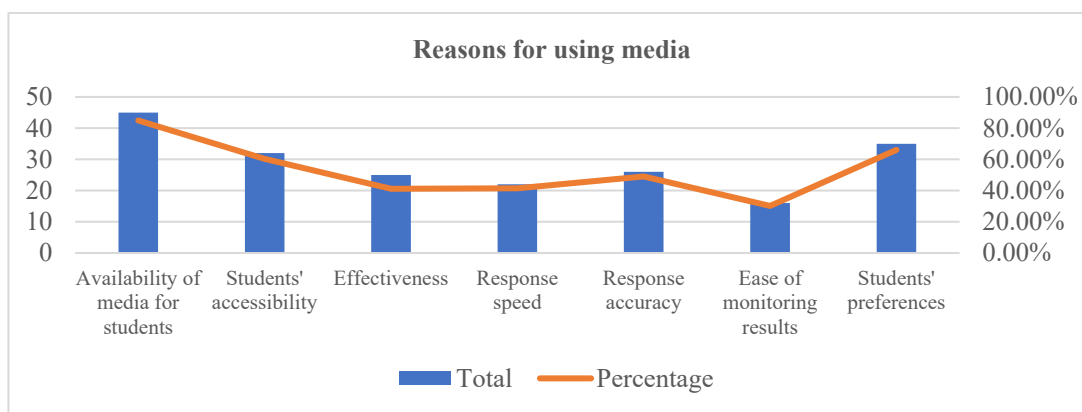


Figure 3. Reasons for using media/applications.

Regarding the frequency of completing or student writing in the process of improving scientific writing, the teachers' responses are shown in Figure 4. It describes the frequency of lecturers providing corrective feedback to improve the quality of students' scientific writing. 58% of the respondents stated that they always give corrective feedback; 38% of them often give corrective feedback; and only 2% of the respondents each seldom and never give corrective feedback to students' writing.

Furthermore, when the teacher has confirmed the affirmation of students' writing errors in the process of correcting scientific writing, the teachers' responses are shown in Figure 5. It describes the percentages of activities of giving affirmations to errors that occur in students' scientific papers. Most lecturers (58.5%) stated that they always

provided affirmations; 19 lecturers (38.8%) usually gave affirmations; 2 lecturers (3.8%) stated that they sometimes provided affirmations; and 1 lecturer (1.9%) did not provide affirmations at all.

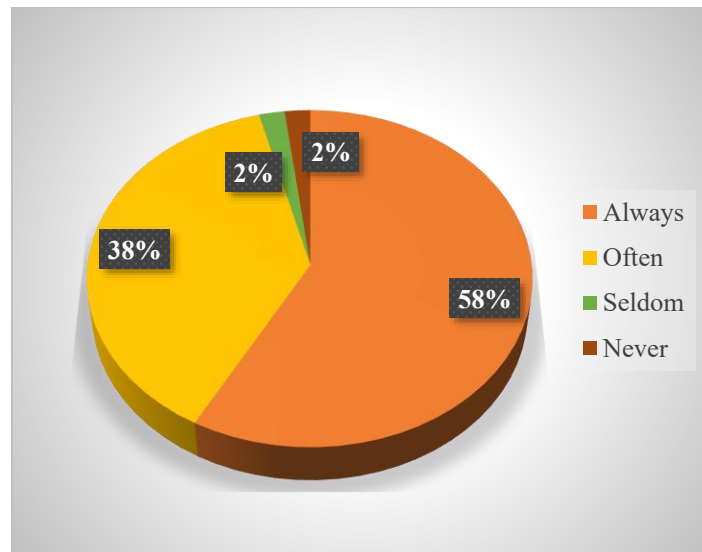


Figure 4. The frequency of providing feedback.

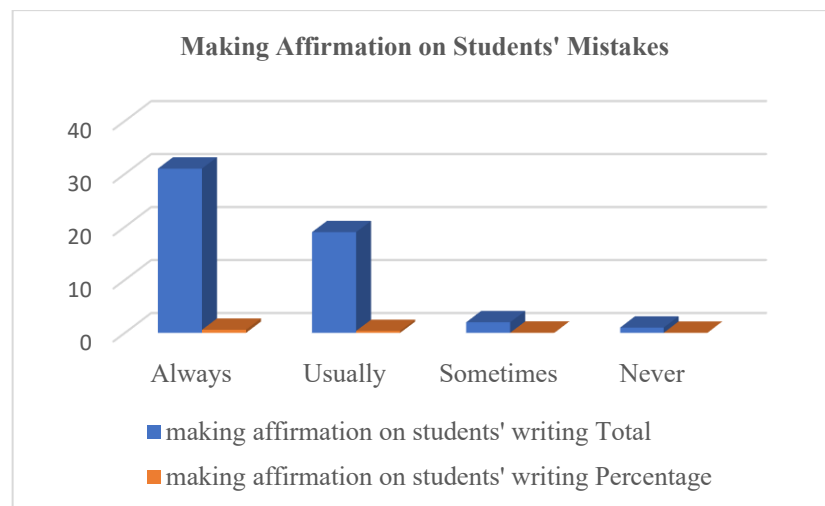


Figure 5. The Frequency of making affirmations on students' mistakes.

4.1.2 Lecturers' practice of providing written feedback

The theme of the reasons for making arguments in feedback, delivering feedback activities, the issue of scientific writing improvement, and the topic of requests for student writing development were among the data collected related to the practice of scientific writing supervision. The reasons for making arguments in feedback are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The reasons for making arguments in feedback.

Reasons	Total	Percentage (%)
Lead to logical arguments	27	50.9
Justify logical arguments	5	9.4

Table 1 continued...

Ask about the relevance of the citation	20	37.7
Provide personal justification	1	1.8
Total	53	100

Concerning reasons for providing written feedback in the form of an argument to improve student writing, the lecturers' responses/reasons are described as the following: to direct the writing to a logical argument (50.9%), to justify, to show or to prove to be right or reasonable arguments (9.4%), to ask the relevance of the topic to the citation (37.7%), and to give personal opinions on an idea in writing (1.8%).

In giving an opinion about an idea in one article, the lecturers gave their opinions as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Feedback delivery topic.

Activities in providing feedback	Total	Percentage (%)
Fix wrong ideas	39	73.6
Adding ideas to a content	10	19%
Write an interpretation of one idea	3	5.7%
Write personal opinions	1	1.9%
Total	53	100

When asked about the types of activity in providing feedback, the respondents provided the following reasons: to correct incorrect ideas in writing (73.6%), to write down their interpretation of one particular idea (5.7%), to add evidence to one main idea (19%), and to share personal opinions (1.9%).

Table 3 shows their comments on the issue of improving written corrective feedback typically performed by lecturers on students' works.

Table 3. Topics on written feedback.

Topics in providing feedback	Total	Percentage (%)
Writing content	25	47.1
Logics of writing	13	24.5
Writing quality/grammar/structure	7	13.2
Thesis guideline obedience	8	15.9
Total	53	100

Comments written by lecturers regarding the implementation of corrections and improvements to student writing obtained from the results of research data analysis include writing content (47.1%), the logic of writing (24.5%), quality of writing (grammar and structure) (13.2%) and thesis guideline obedience (15.9%).

The following comments and directives are associated with proposals for improvement that were requested by lecturers to students in corrective feedback material, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Instructions/suggestions by lecturers.

Instructions/suggestion	Total	Percentage (%)
Improve writing quality	22	41.5
Adding new related references	9	17.0

Table 4 continued...

Asking to follow writing guidance	13	24.5
Asking for clarification upon statements	6	11.3
Total	53	100

Table 4 describes the topics of instruction or suggestions given by the teachers regarding the improvement of students' scientific writing. There are four main themes that teachers practiced in this theme, namely in order of frequency: improving the quality of writing (41.5%), asking students to comply with the guidelines for writing scientific papers that have been set by each institution (24.5%), adding new references (17%), and asking for clarification/explanation on a statement (11.3%).

4.1.3 Lecturers' self-evaluation on written feedback provision

When teachers were asked to score an assessment of their performance in providing feedback to students, the scores they gave are shown in Figure 6.

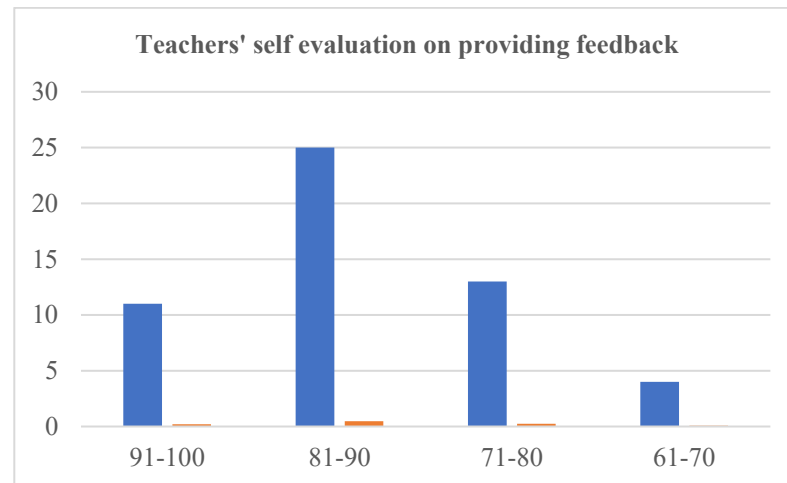


Figure 6. Teacher's self-evaluation on providing feedback.

Figure 6 shows the description of the teachers' self-evaluation of providing corrective feedback for students' scientific writing. Teachers' assessment of their practice of giving corrective feedback is as follows: a total of 11 (20.7%) teachers rated their work in the "excellent" category; 25 (47.2%) teachers considered that they had given corrective feedback in the "very good" category; 13 (24.5%) teachers rated their practice in the "good" category; and four (7.5%) teachers rated their work in the "moderate" category.

When teachers were asked to write down the topic of suggestions and corrections to the part of their students' scientific work, they most frequently corrected, detailed in Table 5.

Table 5. Parts of paper as the objects of corrective feedback.

Parts of Paper	Total	Percentage
Abstracts	36	67.92%
Introduction	46	86.79%
Method	42	79.24%

Table 5 continued...

Results	39	73.58%
Discussion	51	96.22%
Conclusion	41	77.35%
References	24	45.28%

Table 5 describes the parts of students' scientific writing that are the object of corrections by the teachers. From Table 5, almost all components of the student's papers are objects of corrective feedback by teachers. Even though the numbers and percentages are almost even, the three components with the most number and percentages as displayed in Table 5 are the Discussion section (96.2%), Introduction (86.7%), and Results (73.5%). Meanwhile, the part of writing that received the least correction was the References section (45.3%).

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Teachers' perception of written corrective feedback

To address the first question about the teachers' perception of written corrective feedback, the study first investigated based on the preferred modes used by lecturers in providing feedback. When compared to oral corrective feedback, most teachers prefer written corrective feedback (Chu, 2017; Han & Hyland, 2015). However, this finding strongly contradicts the results of the study by Tian and Li (2018) and Ha et al. (2021) investigating students' perceptions stating that most students prefer oral corrective feedback to written corrective feedback. This finding specifically reported the teachers' reflections on giving preferred techniques of corrective feedback on their students' scientific writing. The results also reveal that teachers always offered corrective feedback on their students' scientific writing. Even if students' writing followed the rules, they frequently provided written corrective criticism to help them develop their writing. Furthermore, lecturers consistently reinforced their students' scientific works through corrections, enhancements, and even praise. These assertions must be included to stimulate students. Concerning the use of media or applications in facilitating the provision of written corrective feedback, the results of this study found that WhatsApp, Microsoft Word, and Telegram are the most popular media/applications used by teachers in online learning in student scientific writing assistance activities. The results of this study are in line with the results of research by Han (2019) and Shang (2019). Accessibility, ease, and availability are among the reasons provided by respondents for using this application and medium (Stefanou, 2015).

4.2.2 The practice of giving feedback

The second research question addressed the teachers' practice of correction by providing corrective feedback. The results of this study indicate that the teacher's most dominant reason in providing feedback was to help students organize their ideas in a more logical direction, the most dominant feedback topic was to correct erroneous ideas, the part of writing that was most often corrected was written content, while suggestions were the most dominant feedback given to students to improve the quality of their writing. The findings of the study confirm several results related to this topic

(Liu & Brown, 2015). First, the main reason the teachers wrote arguments in written corrective feedback was to improve the flow of students' ideas according to scientific writing standards. The second point concerns the subjects that are mentioned while providing written corrective feedback. The majority of teachers reported that corrective feedback was used to rectify incorrect ideas in students' writing (Kang, 2020). This result is expected because students had little experience communicating their ideas in scientific writing and required supervision to communicate their thoughts. This finding also clarifies the findings of previous studies regarding the reasons for making arguments against students' scientific writings (Lyster et al., 2013; Wei & Cao, 2020). Most teachers responded that they always concentrated on the content of the writing when asked about the emphasis and material for enhancing scientific writing (Shang, 2019). Although other topics were emphasized, such as writing logic, grammatical faults, and conformity to thesis rules, the written substance remained a primary emphasis in corrective comments.

The findings of this study demonstrated that the sections of discussion, introduction, and technique were the three portions of writing that frequently received corrective feedback. This conclusion is consistent with Sarré et al. (2019) and Shang (2019) who claim that the three sub-sections of scientific writing needed strong logical reasoning and tended to require focused arguments that had not been mastered by students.

4.2.3 The Teachers' self-evaluation on giving feedback

The third research question addressed the teachers' self-evaluation on providing written corrective feedback. This self-assessment includes a score that they set themselves based on their practice and experience in implementing corrective feedback on student scientific writing, the shortcomings they had in the practice of providing corrective feedback, as well as the efforts they would make to improve the quality of their corrective feedback service. The findings of this study revealed that the majority of teachers gave an 'excellent' assessment of their performance in providing corrective feedback services. This finding implies that they mastered this activity well and had high self-confidence to carry it out, as stated by Li et al. (2015) and Ion et al. (2016). Most teachers revealed that the limited time in reading student scientific writings was the most dominant constraint and weakness. They reported that teaching assignments were so time-consuming that they had little time left for reading and providing corrective feedback. When asked how they planned to improve the quality of corrective feedback they would provide to students, the majority of lecturers said they should set aside adequate time to read and edit student scientific writing and grasp the university's scientific writing rules.

In general, the findings of this study confirmed what has been studied by previous scholars, especially regarding the importance of corrective feedback to improve the quality of student scientific writing (Lim & Renandya, 2020); however, several new research dimensions were added in this study related to perception, practice, and evaluation, which have never been conducted earlier by previous researchers. In addition, the involvement of many participants from various universities in Indonesia, in particular, strengthens the foundation of this research. The findings of this study are expected to represent the guiding of student scientific articles in the setting of Indonesian higher education. The teachers should rectify the flaws and

inadequacies in the practice of offering feedback revealed in this study and utilize the feedback as a foundation for strengthening their perception and motivation to increase the quality of providing feedback for their students.

5. CONCLUSION

This study aims to describe the implementation of corrective feedback by teachers on student scientific writings in universities. The focus of this research was on the perception, practice, and evaluation of providing feedback on student scientific writing. This study reveals teachers' perceptions, practices, and evaluations of providing corrective feedback to students' scientific writings systematically. Teachers' perception was described by stating the themes of preferred modes of corrective feedback and the reasons for providing corrective feedback. Teachers' practices in providing corrective feedback were explored by the themes of argumentation topics in corrective feedback, topics that are vulnerable to correction, focus on providing corrective feedback, and the most frequently corrected sections of writing. Teachers' evaluation of the implementation of corrective feedback was assessed by asking the teachers to rate their performance in the implementation of corrective feedback. In addition, they were also asked to reveal the obstacles, limitations, and weaknesses they experienced during the process of mentoring students' scientific work. One interesting fact obtained from this research is that this can explore the phenomenon of giving written corrective feedback to the guidance of writing student scientific papers more fully and more deeply.

The results of this study are expected to contribute to improving the quality of student scientific writing assistance, specifically in the Indonesian context. The limitations of this study which include the number of participants, the sharpness of research instruments, and the use of limited literature that needs to be addressed by future researchers.

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The Validity and Reliability of Writing Attitude Scale for EFL Learners in the Indonesian Context

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Abstract

Having a positive attitude in writing is very important since the positive attitude will make the students approach writing in a good way and will enable them to finish the writing task well. Thus, an appropriate instrument to measure the writing attitude is needed. Yet, scarce research is dedicated to investigating the validity and reliability of the writing attitude scale. This research is intended to investigate the validity and reliability of the writing attitude scale adapted from Podsén (1997) which was originally developed from the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test (Daly & Miller, 1975b). The design of this study was an observational, non-experimental study with a cross-sectional design, in which the researchers focused on analyzing Podsén's (1997) Writing Attitude Scale (WAS). The population of the study was 96 students who took the Essay Writing course in the English Department, at a public university in East Java. The data were in the form of numbers on an ordinal scale. The researchers used the Content Validity Ratio (CVR) to analyze the validity and Cronbach alpha to check the inter-item correlation coefficient in SPSS 25. The result of the study shows that the CVR analysis was 1, and all items in the questionnaire were

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valid ($p=.000\leq .000$) as shown in the Pearson product-moment analysis. Secondly, the internal consistency of Podsén's (1997) Writing Attitude Scale was high ($r>.877$). This implies that the instrument is applicable because it possesses validity and is highly reliable in measuring students' writing attitudes.

Keywords: Reliability, scale, validity, writing attitude.

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is an activity that requires a high-level thinking skill that goes beyond sentence production and is often seen as a complex activity. Knowing writing strategies may not be sufficient to write well. Pajares and Valiante (2006) believe that the complexity of writing lies not only in the thinking process that underlies the students' composition but also in the way the students work on the text or how they engage with the text. Since writing is widely known as a difficult skill (Setyowati et al., 2018), students who excel in other skills might find difficulties when having to produce a piece of good writing because of their fear of making mistakes (Jabali, 2018). In addition, as stated by Erkan and Saban (2011), sometimes students who are excellent in other language skills, such as reading, listening, or speaking, struggle with writing because they are fearful of making mistakes and have a lack of self-efficacy. In other words, students feel that expressing themselves in written English is beyond their competence.

Therefore, if the students' writing confidence is not as high as it may be, they need to adjust their attitude toward writing. Writing attitude is an affective component of motivation (Graham, 2006; Graham et al., 2007). In other words, it is an emotional variable that influences learning. Graham et al. (2007) investigated three models of writing attitude. They were (1) a unidirectional relationship between writing attitude and achievement, (2) a unidirectional relationship between writing achievement and attitude, and (3) a bidirectional and reciprocal relationship between writing attitude and achievement. The result of their study showed that, among others, writing attitude and writing achievement were significantly correlated. Their model also showed that writing attitude and writing performance had a reciprocal influence, which means that writing attitude influences writing achievement, and the result of the writing achievement may well influence the writing attitude. They viewed the model to have 'bi-directional' influences (Graham et al., 2007, p. 519). Their study result, in fact, yields similar findings to other researchers who are interested in investigating the relationship between writing attitude and writing achievement. Hashemian and Heidari (2012) as well as Ni'mah et al. (2016) show that there is a positive correlation between students' writing attitude and their writing performance. Furthermore, Bulut (2017) and Dhadhodara and Joshi (2017) argue that one of the key factors in the success of writing achievement is writing attitude. Newer studies also confirmed that writing attitude and writing performance (Agesty et al., 2021; Wagiyo, 2021) are positively correlated.

Knowing the students' attitudes toward language, including writing, will help the teacher select suitable teaching methodologies and strategies (Jabali, 2018; Singh et al., 2021) as well as activities and tasks that can engage learners in the learning

process. To find out the students' writing attitudes, teachers, writing instructors, and researchers need to use a reliable instrument in order to measure them effectively. Additionally, having a valid and reliable writing attitude scale will also help pre-service teachers evaluate their future students' attitudes toward writing (Hall et al., 2016). Pre-service teachers can plan tasks and strategies to help their future students with low writing attitudes and strengthen those who have moderate and high levels of writing attitudes.

In the Indonesian context, there are a number of studies on writing attitude, yet the researchers used different kinds of writing attitude questionnaires. Setyowati and Sukmawan (2016) used Podsen's (1997) writing attitude questionnaire in their descriptive research and reported that the instrument had high internal reliability ($r=.737$). Ni'mah et al. (2016) used a questionnaire developed by Rose (1984) and Gardner (1985) and adapted their items for the research. However, no reliability of the instrument was reported in their study. Similarly, Wagiyo's (2021) research did not give an adequate explanation of what questionnaire was used for the data collection even though she reported its reliability of it. On the other hand, the study by Agesty et al. (2021) also used Podsen's (1997) writing attitude questionnaire, yet they did not report the direction and degree of its reliability.

Therefore, this study was carried out to investigate the validity and reliability of the adapted version of Podsen's (1997) Writing Attitude Scale (WAS). Even though Setyowati and Sukmawan (2016) have reported the internal reliability of Podsen's (1997) WAS, the reliability test was done more than five years ago. As Kimberlin and Winterstein (2009) point out reliability refers to the ability to replicate consistent outcomes over time and space, or between other observers. Thus, there is a possibility that the instrument either remains reliable or less reliable over time. Furthermore, more evidence is needed to verify that Podsen's (1997) WAS remains reliable.

The result of this current study is considered meaningful because it has two significances, both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the development of this study will support the relationship between attitude in writing and writing achievement. The influence of the students' attitude toward writing might give positive development on the students' writing achievement, and vice versa. When the students have a positive attitude toward writing, they might have more confidence in themselves to write more and to write well. In the long run, there is a possible chance that they will have better writing achievement as their attitude in writing increases. As stated by Graham et al. (2007), writing attitude and writing achievement has a reciprocal or two-way beneficial relationship. The result of this current study will further support the use of Podsen's (1997) Writing Attitude Scale for pedagogical and research purposes. For pedagogical purposes, writing teachers and writing lecturers can use the results of this study to map their students' writing attitudes. Having information on the students' writing attitude can help the writing teacher and writing lecturer to select appropriate strategies to improve and strengthen those who are in need. Moreover, writing teachers and writing lecturers can do classroom-based research to solve problems that may arise in their classes as a result of the students' negative and low writing attitude. Practically, the result of this study is beneficial for future researchers and teachers who intend to use this scale to collect data concerning writing attitudes. Collecting data for research purposes without having clear information on the validity and reliability of the instrument may give a misleading

result. In light of the aforementioned considerations, it is crucial to examine the validity and reliability of [Podsen's \(1997\)](#) WAS.

To guide this study, the following research questions are formulated.

1. What is the face validity dan content validity of the adapted version of [Podsen's \(1997\)](#) Writing Attitude Scale (WAS)?
2. What is the reliability of the adapted version of [Podsen's \(1997\)](#) Writing Attitude Scale (WAS)?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Writing Apprehension Test

The writing composition processes, which the student-writers engage in, become the subject of many research (e.g., [Badrasawi et al., 2016](#); [Daly, 1978](#); [Daly & Miller, 1975a, 1975b](#), [Erkan & Saban, 2011](#); [Graham et al., 2007](#); [Pratama & Astuti, 2021](#)). In order to produce a good piece of composition, the students should have low writing apprehension ([Pratama & Astuti, 2021](#)). Writing apprehension is a term given by [Daly and Miller \(1975b\)](#) referring to one's tendency to avoid the process of writing because of the fear of being evaluated in some ways. Students feeling the fear of writing might find it hard to express themselves in writing, keep away from writing as much as they can, and find the writing classes undesirable. [Badrasawi et al. \(2016\)](#) argue that anxiety frequently inhibits and degrades performance; thus, people with low levels of writing anxiety should do better on writing skill tests compared to anxious writers. Their argument is confirmed by newer studies which state that there is a negative significant correlation between writing apprehension and writing performance ([Ni'mah et al., 2016](#); [Pratama & Astuti, 2021](#)). This implies that the students with low writing apprehension will write better than those with high writing apprehension.

Back then, [Daly and Miller \(1975a\)](#) believed that there should be an empirical-based and standardized instrument that measures the students' writing apprehension. [Daly and Miller \(1975a\)](#) claim that the Writing Apprehension Test, known as WAT (henceforth DM-WAT), has a predictive validity for language intensity. They used WAT to find out ninety-eight undergraduate students taking Basic Educational Psychology at West Virginia University in the summer term of 1974. They found out that individuals with high writing anxiety produce less writing as compared to those with low writing anxiety. Since then, many other researchers who were interested in writing apprehension studies used WAT to collect the data. To get more evidence, [Richmond and Dickson-Markman \(1985\)](#) investigated the writing apprehension test created by Daly and Miller for its predictive validity. [Richmond and Dickson-Markman's \(1985\)](#) study shows two important findings. Firstly, the Daly-Miller Apprehension Test is a useful predictor of the students' overall American College Test scores, specifically their English scores. Secondly, their finding also reveals that writing anxiety strongly predicted the writing quality, although exam anxiety did not, and students who received high scores in writing apprehension were predicted to have more writing anxiety than those who received moderate or low scores. [Richmond and Dickson-Markman's \(1985\)](#) research further confirms the predictive validity of DM-WAT, but they raise doubts about the test construct validity.

DM-WAT was quite popular and many researchers in the L2 field used it to measure the students' apprehension level in writing. However, reports on its validity remain unpopular (Cornwell & McKay, 2000). Cornwell and McKay (2000) investigated the validity of DM-WAT when it was translated into Japanese. They found out that DM-WAT was valid to measure Japanese college students' English writing apprehension. Furthermore, Cheng (2004) claimed that DM-WAT has a satisfactory internal consistency reliability with concurrent and predictive validity, yet it has to be modified to be used to examine writing in a second language context. Furthermore, Erkan and Saban (2011) who investigated the validity-reliability of DM-WAT state that their analysis was similar to the one conducted by Daly and Miller (1975b). Despite the limited research on the validity of DM-WAT in recent years, the original DM-WAT, which was then modified by Podsen (1997), has evidence of predictive validity aside from the lack of evidence in its construct validity.

2.2 Writing Attitude Scale

Until today, DM-WAT is still widely used by researchers to measure students' apprehensiveness in writing. Daly and Miller's (1975b) Writing Apprehension Test had 26 items in its scale consisting of 13 positive items and 13 negative items. However, in 1997, Podsen modified the DM-WAT and presented it in her book entitled *Written Expression: Principal's Survival Guide*, using only 20 items under the name of Writing Attitude Scale (henceforth WAS). Podsen's (1997) WAS is not the only writing attitude scale in the literature. Dhadhodara and Joshi (2017) investigated the writing attitude of postgraduate students in Gujarat Vidyapith by using the writing attitude they developed themselves. The questionnaire had 10 items for measuring four factors. Unfortunately, they did not explain further the factors and the items in the questionnaire to measure the writing attitude. Within these items, five questions were positive, and the other five were negative. The options in each item ranged from 'strongly agree to strongly disagree'. The result of the reliability coefficient by using Cronbach's alpha value was .68 indicating a sufficient unidimensionality. In the Indonesian context, many researchers are also interested in investigating EFL writing attitudes, for example, Ni'mah et al. (2016) investigated the students' writing attitudes, writing apprehension, and writing performance. In their research, they adapted the attitude questionnaires developed by Rose (1984) and Gardner (1985). Unfortunately, Ni'mah et al. (2016) did not report the reliability coefficient of the writing questionnaire they used in the research.

Podsen's (1997) WAS is widely used thus far by many researchers (Agesty et al., 2021; Setyowati & Qibtiyah, 2017; Setyowati & Sukmawan, 2016). Even though Podsen's (1997) WAS is quite popular in measuring the students' writing attitude, not many researchers report the reliability of the instrument. Two of the few researchers are Setyowati and Sukmawan (2016). They reported that the coefficient reliability of this questionnaire was .737 which indicates a high internal consistency.

3. METHODS

This study was an observational, non-experimental study with a cross-sectional design in which its main attempt was to investigate the validity and reliability of an

instrument to measure the writing attitude. Creswell (2012) as well as Wang and Cheng (2020) state that this design examines a cross-section (or a sample) of a population at one particular time. In a cross-sectional study, participants are simply taken from an accessible population that may be relevant to the research question (Wang & Cheng, 2020). In a cross-sectional study, the researcher simultaneously assesses the participants' exposures and outcomes (Setia, 2016; Wang & Cheng, 2020). Since they are measured at the same time, drawing causal relationships is relatively impossible to establish (Wang & Cheng, 2020). This cross-sectional design could be carried out either as a planning step for a randomized trial or as a baseline. Setia (2016) further states that researchers can use this design to learn more about the prevalence of outcomes or exposures, which will help them conduct longitudinal research (Setia, 2016). The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researchers to answer the research questions in terms of the face validity of the questionnaire, the content validity, as well as the reliability of the instrument. Furthermore, the design helped the researchers to get a 'general picture' of the population in which they are potentially relevant to the research question. This current study was part of a larger study to investigate the reliability of Podsen's (1997) WAS. The scale will be used to collect the survey data for 2022 batch students in an English Department at one of the public universities in East Java, Indonesia.

3.1 Population and Sample

The study was conducted at an English Department of a public university in East Java, Indonesia. The targeted population for the instrument tried out in the present study was all batch 2021 students who took an Essay Writing course, in the academic year 2021/2022. There were four parallel classes in the English Education study program and two parallel classes in the English Language Literature study program. The total number of the targeted population was 150 students. The researchers used all the available populations to test the instrument. However, the total number of students who filled out the WAS questionnaire was only 96 students, which was equal to 65% of the total population of the 2021 batch students. The participants consisted of 13 male and 83 female students whose ages varied from 18 to 19 years old.

3.2 The Writing Attitude Scale

The researchers did a large-scale pilot test of the Writing Attitude Scale (WAS) questionnaire developed by Dally and Miller (1975b) which was then adapted by Podsen (1997). The questionnaire was written in the Google Form and distributed in the WhatsApp group of Essay Writing classes. As stated previously, there were 26 items in the Daly-Miller questionnaire. Yet, in 1997, Podsen adapted the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Scale and used only 20 items which had five points scale ranging from (A) Strongly Agree with 5 points, (B) Agree with 4 points, (C) Neutral with 3 points, (D) Disagree with 2 points, and (E) Strongly Disagree with 1 point. The highest score on this scale is 100, and the lowest score is 20.

Dally-Miller Writing Apprehension Test (DM-WAT), as reported in their research paper, only has one factor analysis (Dally & Miller, 1975b). Later, Cornwell and McKay (2000) arranged the items into four factor analysis. Taken into this study,

the researchers adapted Cornwell and McKay's (2000) factor analysis into the adapted version of Podsén's (1997) WAS.

Table 1. Questions arranged according to factors (cited from Cornwell and McKay, 2000).

Q no.	Likert scale items	Purpose
	<i>Factor One: Enjoyment in Writing</i>	To find out students' enjoyment in writing.
13.	I enjoy writing.	
20.	Writing is a lot of fun.	
3.	I look forward to writing down my ideas.	
8.	I like to write my ideas down.	
1.	I avoid writing whenever possible.	
6.	Expressing my ideas through writing is a waste of time.	
	<i>Factor Two: Fear of Evaluation</i>	To find out students' fear of writing evaluation.
2.	I have no fear of my writing being evaluated.	
4.	I am afraid of writing when I know it might be evaluated.	
	<i>Factor Three: Negative Perceptions about Writing Ability</i>	To find out students' negative perceptions about their writing ability.
15.	I am not a good writer.	
9.	I feel confident in my ability to express my ideas in writing.	
5.	My mind seems to go blank when I start writing.	
11.	I am nervous about my writing.	
14.	I never seem to be able to write down my ideas clearly.	
18.	It is easy for me to write good letters.	
19.	I do not think I write as well as most people.	
	<i>Factor Four: Showing My Writing to Others</i>	To find out students' feelings about showing writing to other people.
10.	I like to have my friends read what I have written.	
12.	People seem to enjoy what I write.	
16.	I like seeing my thoughts on paper.	
17.	Discussing my writing with others is an enjoyable experience.	

3.3 Research Procedure

The research procedure comprised several steps. The first step was instrument validation. The researchers sent the instrument to three experts who were known for their experience in teaching writing in a foreign language context and for their writing research and publication. The validation was for the face validity and the content validity. The validators were asked to give comments on the cover or the 'face' of the Google Form. After the instrument was confirmed for its face validity, the researchers then asked the validators to give comments on the scale's content validity. After the content was confirmed for its validity, the researchers wrote all items of the questionnaire in the Google Form and conducted a small-scale tryout for 10 students in the English Department in the university to find out whether there were problems in the wording, numbering, and meaning. After having the information that there were no issues with the face and content validity in the small-scale tryout, the researchers

distributed the questionnaire to larger scale tryout to students in the 2021 batch to find out the internal reliability. The researchers asked the help of the Essay Writing lecturers to distribute the WAS to their classes. The Essay Writing lecturers and the students were informed that the writing attitude survey was for a research project, and it would not affect the students' grades. As reported previously, there were 96 students willingly filled out the questionnaire for the second tryout.

3.4 Data Analysis

To analyze the face validity, the validators examined the front page of the Google Form which was about the title, the respondent's identity, the instruction, the descriptions, and the layout of the questions. The validators relied on the judgment of the appropriateness of the 'face' of the WAS. Expert judgments provide valid and qualified analysis of the instrument (Escobar-Pérez & Cuervo-Martínez, 2008). Meanwhile, to analyze the content validity, the researchers used the content validity ratio proposed by Lawshe (1975). Content Validity Ratio (CVR) refers to a technique for validating the content of an instrument (a checklist, questionnaire, or scale) which seeks to guarantee that the instrument evaluates the specific topic area it is intended to measure (Frank-Stromberg & Olsen, 2004 as cited in Ayre & Scally, 2014). To achieve content validity, a panel of subject matter experts was invited to evaluate the significance of each specific item within an instrument. They would classify the instrument items into one of three categories: 'essential', 'useful, but not essential', or 'not necessary' using a panel of subject matter 'experts', and the final instrument only contained items judged as 'essential' by the panel members; those that fall short of this requirement were eliminated (Ayre & Scally, 2014). Lawshe (1975) further states that CVR is a linear transformation of a proportional degree of agreement on how many 'experts' inside a panel agree on an item as 'essential', and a level of 50% (and above) agreement suggests that the content is valid (Ayre & Scally, 2014).

The formula of CVR is $CVR = (N_e - N/2) / (N/2)$. N_e is the number of panelists that marked an item as 'essential', and N is the total number of panelists. CVR computation above zero indicates that more than half of panel members consider an item to be essential, and CVR values range from -1 (complete disagreement) to +1 (perfect agreement) (Ayre & Scally, 2014). For example, if the number of panelists is 5, and the CVR score is $\geq .50$, it means that the items in the instruments are within the acceptable level. In this research, three experts were invited to judge whether the items of the WAS were valid or not. All experts were majoring in English from two private universities. Two of them were writing lecturers majoring in English Language Teaching, and the other one was an associate professor whose dissertation project was on writing style.

To obtain the questionnaire's validity, the researchers used Pearson's product moment correlational analysis. According to Taherdoost (2016), correlational analysis is one method for obtaining proof of a scale's validity. The researchers correlated each item score with the overall score derived from the respondents' responses in order to determine the validity. Furthermore, to analyze the internal consistency, the researchers used the Cronbach alpha statistical tool of SPSS 25. Cronbach alpha is an internal consistency measurement that shows how closely the set of items are related as a group (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Some questions in the questionnaire, somehow, did not go in a positive direction. Therefore, to analyze the data, the researchers did

reverse coding. According to [Sujarweni \(2014\)](#), the scale instrument is said to have internal reliability if the Cronbach alpha value is $>.60$. However, [Taber \(2018\)](#) states that the alpha value of $.70$ is more acceptable to show the instrument's reliability or internal consistency. In this current study, to determine the internal consistency scale, the researchers used [Taber's \(2018\)](#) criteria for the Cronbach alpha value.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The Validity of Writing Attitude Scale (WAS)

Validity is a criterion for selecting techniques for collecting data sources through testing. The researchers used face validity and content validity to validate the Writing Attitude Scale (WAS). Three lecturers from private universities have verified the Writing Attitude Scale (WAS). For the face validity, the three experts agreed that the questions were simple and easy to understand. The result of the small-scale tryout with ten students also confirmed the face validity of the Writing Attitude Scale (WAS). The result of the face validity indicates that issues in wording, numbering, and meaning were not found. The experts also confirmed the result of the face validity when the questionnaire was written for a Google Form. They said that the face validity of the WAS written in the Google form was sufficient and good.

Table 2 shows the summary of the Content Validity Ratio. The Content Validity Ratio (CVR) by [Lawshe \(1975\)](#) model was applied and yielded a value of 1.0 . It is quite evident from this that all items were required and valid. The content was validated, and every item was positive.

Table 2. The Content Validity Ratio (CVR).

Q no.	Items	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Ne	CVR
1.	I avoid writing whenever possible.	1	1	1	3	1
2.	I have no fear of my writing being evaluated.	1	1	1	3	1
3.	I look forward to writing down my ideas.	1	1	1	3	1
4.	I am afraid of writing when I know it might be evaluated.	1	1	1	3	1
5.	My mind seems to go blank when I start writing.	1	1	1	3	1
6.	Expressing my ideas through writing is a waste of time.	1	1	1	3	1
7.	I would enjoy submitting my writing to magazines for evaluation and publication.	1	1	1	3	1
8.	I like to write my ideas down.	1	1	1	3	1
9.	I feel confident in my ability to express my ideas in writing.	1	1	1	3	1
10.	I like to have my friends read what I have written	1	1	1	3	1
11.	I am nervous about my writing.	1	1	1	3	1
12.	People seem to enjoy what I write.	1	1	1	3	1

Table 2 continued...

13.	I enjoy writing.	1	1	1	3	1
14.	I never seem to be able to write down my ideas clearly.	1	1	1	3	1
15.	I am not a good writer.	1	1	1	3	1
16.	I like seeing my thoughts on paper.	1	1	1	3	1

17.	Discussing my writing with others is an enjoyable experience.	1	1	1	3	1
18.	It is easy for me to write good letters.	1	1	1	3	1
19.	I do not think I write as well as most people.	1	1	1	3	1
20.	Writing is a lot of fun.	1	1	1	3	1
	Overall	1	1	1	3	1

Furthermore, the researchers also checked the validity of the Writing Attitude Scale (WAS) by using *Pearson* product moment analysis. As stated by [Taherdoost \(2016\)](#), one technique to gain evidence of validity for a questionnaire is by using correlational analysis. In this study, to obtain validity, the researchers correlated each item score with the total score obtained from the respondents' answers by using *Pearson's* product moment analysis. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. The analysis results of *Pearson's* product moment of 20 questionnaire items (n=95).

Item no.	r	p	Item no.	r	P
1	.505	.000	11	.665	.000
2	.509	.000	12	.602	.000
3	.555	.000	13	.593	.000
4	.556	.000	14	.469	.000
5	.697	.000	15	.613	.000
6	.456	.000	16	.610	.000
7	.472	.000	17	.510	.000
8	.579	.000	18	.481	.000
9	.649	.000	19	.483	.000
10	.509	.000	20	.526	.000

The data shows that all items in the WAS were valid items ($p=.000 \leq .000$). The correlation coefficient of all items was positive and moderate. Thus, no changes were needed, and the WAS can be used for the actual data collection.

In short, the result of analysis by using CVR shows that [Podsén's \(1997\)](#) WAS, a modified version of DM-WAT, has a high content validity. All items in the scale yielded a value of 1.0 which showed high and positive validity. The result of the content validity check by using *Pearson's* product-moment also resulted in a similar finding. There is a significant correlation when each item score was correlated to all item scores obtained from the respondents' answer ($p= .000 \leq .000$). The result of this research support [Conrwell and McKay \(2000\)](#) as well as [Erkan and Saban \(2011\)](#) in which they stated that DM-WAT was valid to measure the students' writing apprehension level. In other words, the result of this research supports [Daly and Miller's \(1975a\)](#) argument in relation to the need for empirical-based evidence for the standardized scale to measure the students' writing apprehension level. Even though this research did not investigate its predictive validity, the result of the content validity check by using CVR and *Pearson's* product-moment correlation has shown that the items in the modified version of DM-WAT are valid to use for data collection, either for research or pedagogical purposes.

4.2 The Reliability of Writing Attitude Scale (WAS)

The researchers also checked [Podsén's \(1997\)](#) WAS to find out its reliability by using Cronbach alpha analysis. Cronbach alpha is the measure of internal consistency, or how closely connected a set of items are as a group. It is regarded as an indicator of scale reliability. For a scale, possessing reliability is important because it is one of the crucial traits of a good instrument ([Mohajan, 2017](#)). The researchers found out its reliability through a series of tests.

Table 4. Valid cases.

		N	%
Cases	Valid	95	99.0
	Excluded ^a	1	1.0
	Total	96	100.0

^aListwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

The data shows that there were 95 valid cases and one excluded case from a total of 96 respondents who filled out the questionnaire. The listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure means that there was a missing value for a participant when filling out the questionnaire. This indicates that there was a participant who did not fill the WAS completely and that it made him/her omitted from the Cronbach alpha computation. Table 4 shows that there was only one participant excluded from the Cronbach alpha calculation because of the missing value in the scale. Therefore, the valid case was only from 95 participants.

Table 5. The reliability statistics.

Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items	N of items
.877	.880	20

The reliability statistics showed a high internal consistency. As stated by [Cortina \(1993\)](#), the Cronbach alpha value of more than .8 is considered good. Furthermore, as stated by [Taber \(2018\)](#), the Cronbach alpha value from .84 to .90 shows high reliability. In the current study, the reliability test shows that [Podsén's \(1997\)](#) Writing Attitude Questionnaire was highly reliable. As shown in Table 5, the Cronbach alpha computation result is (<.877) which is closer to 1.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics.

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum /minimum	Variance	N of items
Item means	3.363	2.516	4.295	1.779	1.707	.252	20
Inter-item correlations	.269	-.011	.626	.637	-58.436	.014	20

Table 6 shows the summary of the descriptive statistics. It shows that the mean for all items was 3.363, the minimum mean was 2.516, and the maximum mean was 4.295, with a range of means of 1.779 from the total of 20 items. This shows that many of the participants chose 'unsure/neutral' from items provided in the scale. The mean of the inter-item correlation was quite low because it was below .5. But, [Pallant \(2016\)](#) says that if the Cronbach alpha computation is high, the mean of inter-item correlation should not be taken seriously, especially when the items in the scale are many. With

20 items on the scale, the researchers decided to ignore the mean of inter-item correlation.

Table 7. Inter-item correlation matrix.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
Q1	1	.167	.223	.268	.135	.479	.269	.205	.204	.086	.357	.360	.303	.338	.370	.151	.198	.063	.271	.272
Q2		1	.188	.373	.234	.217	.205	.257	.167	.226	.348	.172	.299	.131	.139	.307	.395	.104	.120	.320
Q3			1	.165	.267	.272	.273	.626	.508	.218	.228	.363	.321	.167	.261	.411	.305	.183	.177	.251
Q4				1	.450	.273	.237	.162	.208	.123	.457	.272	.229	.267	.225	.229	.239	.302	.234	.171
Q5					1	.306	.238	.356	.380	.350	.512	.353	.381	.323	.435	.507	.294	.377	.275	.349
Q6						1	.095	.302	.236	.067	.341	.161	.312	.176	.153	.241	.092	-.011	.074	.386
Q7							1	.235	.259	.244	.165	.417	.167	.077	.176	.324	.165	.236	.269	.177
Q8								1	.496	.227	.188	.244	.413	.163	.322	.412	.237	.292	.167	.302
Q9									1	.433	.374	.389	.338	.262	.385	.383	.342	.511	.216	.236
Q10										1	.234	.323	.288	.189	.190	.345	.424	.291	.201	.147
Q11											1	.369	.264	.349	.494	.247	.245	.196	.450	.332
Q12												1	.400	.278	.331	.354	.323	.354	.135	.274
Q13													1	.052	.201	.451	.357	.281	.082	.595
Q14														1	.510	.130	.040	.170	.425	.017
Q15															1	.337	.065	.321	.584	.186
Q16																1	.311	.240	.096	.381
Q17																	1	.195	.088	.346
Q18																		1	.191	.059
Q19																			1	.096
Q20																				1

Table 7 shows how every item correlated with each other. For example, how item 1 correlated with 2 and how item 2 correlated with item 3. The expected correlation was the positive one in which all the items went in the same direction. The larger the value of the inter-item correlation, the stronger the relationship between the responses because it was closer to 1. The data shows that most of the items had a positive-inter-item correlation. However, item 18 and item 6 did not show a positive correlation (-.011). This means that some respondents answered the questions in reverse. For example, in item 6, the question in the scale was ‘Expressing my ideas to writing is a waste of time’. To go in the positive direction, the participants should answer ‘strongly disagree’ which weighs 5 points. However, many of them answered

‘strongly agree’ which weighs only 1 point. This might be the cause of why the inter-item correlation for these two items was negative. The negatively worded questions in a Likert scale questionnaire sometimes had a weakness (Suárez-Alvarez et al., 2018). They further stated that reversed items could have negative consequences. The consequences among others were a potential misunderstanding on the part of the respondents and the reduced precision of instrument measurement.

Table 8. Cronbach alpha value of each item.

Q no.	Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale means if an item deleted	Scale variance if item deleted	Corrected item-total correlation	Squared multiple correlation	Cronbach's alpha if the item deleted
Q1	63.4211	84.374	.441	.500	.873
Q2	63.8211	81.638	.415	.362	.875
Q3	63.3263	83.946	.498	.519	.871
Q4	64.1263	81.409	.474	.408	.872
Q5	64.3368	77.779	.630	.578	.865
Q6	62.9684	85.456	.392	.447	.874
Q7	63.9789	83.744	.391	.377	.875
Q8	63.3158	83.538	.523	.531	.870
Q9	63.9158	81.738	.595	.566	.868
Q10	63.9474	83.199	.433	.371	.873
Q11	64.7368	80.047	.603	.564	.867
Q12	64.0842	84.355	.557	.485	.870
Q13	63.6211	82.855	.535	.531	.870
Q14	64.1579	83.879	.390	.406	.875
Q15	64.5474	81.016	.544	.609	.869
Q16	63.5895	83.223	.558	.478	.869
Q17	63.4526	83.761	.441	.426	.873
Q18	64.4211	84.629	.413	.444	.873
Q19	64.7474	83.787	.406	.501	.874
Q20	63.4842	83.529	.457	.484	.872

Table 8 shows the correlation of each item with all items combined. The correlation of each item with all other items combined should be above .40 (>.40). Table 8 also shows the value if the item is deleted from the computation. If one of the items in the scale had a low Cronbach alpha (<.70), it was suggested that the item was removed or deleted. The removal of the item with a low Cronbach alpha value can improve the overall alpha computation significantly. But none of the values in the column of Cronbach's alpha if the item deleted was below .70. Therefore, no item in the scale needed to be revised or deleted. The deletion of any item in the questionnaire will result in a lower Cronbach alpha value. The current study has similar results to the study conducted by Setyowati and Sukmawan (2016) who explored the university students' writing attitude in STKIP PGRI Pasuruan. They reported that the Coefficient reliability of this questionnaire is .737 indicating a high degree of internal consistency.

5. CONCLUSION

Having sufficient information about the students' writing attitudes is needed to help students write better. Research reports that attitude plays a role in the success of

one's writing performance. However, to measure the students' writing attitude, writing instructors/teachers, and writing researchers need a reliable instrument. The result of this current research has shown that Podsén's (1997) Writing Attitude Scale possessed face validity, and content validity, and is highly reliable to collect the data ($r = 0.877$). This implies that Podsén's (1997) WAS is valid and reliable to measure the students' writing attitudes.

This current study, however, has some limitations. First, the study did not address the construct and the predictive validity of the scale. The information about the construct validity and the predictive validity of the scale is also beneficial for the researchers to ensure that the instrument has fulfilled the basic criteria of good measurement. Second, the scale used in the study only applies to the students of the English Department. As a result, the result of this current study cannot be used as a generalization as it was a pilot test of the writing attitude scale.

Regarding the limitation of the current study, some recommendations are addressed for future research. Future researchers may investigate the construct and predictive validity of the adapted version of DM-WAT as in Podsén's (1997) WAS, and they may check the validity of this instrument by using a wider population. This information will ensure the writing lecturers, writing teachers, and EFL writing researchers that the adapted version has the principal criteria of a good instrument. Additionally, future researchers can investigate the validity and reliability of the instrument when applied to non-English major students. Moreover, future researchers can investigate whether the scale remains valid and reliable when translated into other languages. Finally, future researchers may examine the reliability of the adapted version of DM-WAT as in Podsén's (1997) WAS when applied to a lower level of education such as in elementary and secondary school students. Having more information about the validity and reliability of this scale in different levels of education is beneficial for teachers/writing instructors as well as writing researchers in the first, second/or foreign language context.

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Differences in the Effects of Task Repetition Techniques on the Fluency Development of ESL Learners

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Abstract

In an attempt to compare the effects of interleaved and blocked practice on L2 fluency development, 44 adolescent Indian English as L2 learners were given fluency training in English for three months. The participants in the blocked group engaged in task repetition practice of speaking English sentences in a predictable sequence of task repetition, i.e., aaaa, bbbb, cccc, and dddd, in the first 16 sessions. The sequence of the task repetition practice in the interleaved group was arranged using the technique of spacing and mixing, i.e., abcd, abbd, aacc, and bdcd, in the first 16 sessions. The mean values of the English fluency scores of the interleaved and blocked group in the two intermediate fluency tests in the middle of the training and one achievement test at the end showed no statistically significant difference in fluency development as the p -value of the comparison in a repeated measures ANOVA test was .29 representing low F value of 1.16 and effect size of .05. The participants in the blocked group, however, demonstrated a minor growth in fluency development from slow and hesitant speech behavior to occasional self-correction or repetition in a long speech in the later stages of the fluency training in English. The systematic manipulation of the sequence of the tasks to be practiced incorporating high similarity or stimuli retrieval in blocked practice might be more effective in fluency development in L2 than interleaving. As interleaving causes anxiety among beginners, it might not be an appropriate method of task repetition in the initial stage of fluency practice in L2.

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Keywords: Blocked practice, interleaving, L2 fluency, speaking, task repetition.

1. INTRODUCTION

Fluency in L2 refers to the objective features of speed, breakdown, and repetition activities in the oral speech of L2 learners (Skehan, 2003). It has become a significant subject of research in recent years (e.g., Freed et al., 2004; Lambert et al., 2017; Tavakoli et al., 2016) because the underlying cognitive processes or cognitive fluency of L2 speakers can be explored extensively by observing the various features of fluency (Tavakoli & Hunter, 2018). L2 fluency potentially exhibits the L2 speakers' cognitive fluency seen in the efficiency of executing, integrating, planning, and assembling linguistic input (Segalowitz, 2010). It is a window to the L2 learners' procedural knowledge exercised by the rapid and efficient encoding of declarative representations (DeKeyser, 2018; Kahng, 2014). A greater understanding of the functioning of procedural knowledge as it is closely related to speech fluency may be achieved through an analysis of different aspects of fluency in L2 speakers' oral interaction (Suzuki, 2021). Two of the more frequently explored foci of research on L2 fluency development have been short-term interventions either in classrooms or in study-abroad settings (e.g., Freed et al., 2004; Lambert et al., 2017). These studies have more or less elaborately described various speech dimensions of articulation rate, pause phenomena, turn-taking, collocation, or word sequences (e.g., Saito, 2020; Saito et al., 2018; van Os et al., 2020).

One of the many effective ways identified for enhancing L2 fluency in a classroom-based instruction setting is task repetition (Tavakoli & Hunter, 2018). It is the repetition of performing some tasks involving either the similarity of pragmatic purpose or textual content (Bygate, 2018). Several studies in the past have demonstrated the utility of task repetition in L2 fluency development (e.g., Ahmadian, 2011; de Jong & Perfetti, 2011; Thai & Boers, 2016). In doing so, various task repetition procedures like manipulation of task type repetition and variations in the repeated task have been studied to examine the influence of such repetition methods on L2 fluency development (e.g., de Jong & Perfetti, 2011; Kim & Tracy-Ventura, 2013). In a study by Suzuki (2021), the effects of task repetition on fluency development in English on three groups of Japanese university students were explored with some interesting results on the advantages of blocking in terms of articulation rate and mid-clause pause duration. Despite the elaborate linguistic information provided by Suzuki (2021), certain limitations related to the duration of the study and the fluency training sessions as well as the number of tests administered to measure the fluency status of the participants in the three-day training program were observed. Instead of one achievement test taken after the end of the treatment, several formative tests at different stages of the treatment given for a longer duration might yield a more comprehensive and accurate understanding. As a consequence, two groups of English as L2 learners were separately given fluency training in English for three months in the present study. Several English fluency tests at different stages of the fluency training were administered in addition to the pre-test and post-test. We believed that such a longitudinal design might enable us to understand the effect of blocking and interleaving in greater detail. Justifying such a design, some previous studies on task

repetition methods of interleaving and blocking have also observed differences between early-stage and later-stage effects of the treatment (e.g., [Carpenter & Mueller, 2013](#); [Pan et al., 2019](#); [Schneider et al., 1998, 2002](#)).

The principal objective of the study was to measure and compare the difference in the effects of the task repetition methods of interleaving and blocking on the fluency development of the learners after the end of the three-month-long fluency training in English. Since the participants of the study had English learning experience of 14-15 years, giving them discourse-level fluency training in extended periods of practice was considered an appropriate and valid approach to examine the differences in effect instead of short-duration fluency training (e.g., [de Jong & Perfetti, 2011](#); [Suzuki, 2021](#)) involving word and sentence level task repetition exercises (e.g., [Carpenter & Mueller, 2013](#); [Schneider et al., 1998, 2002](#)). Additionally, as specific differences in the effect of interleaving and blocking on L2 learning at various stages of training have been observed in previous studies on the subject (e.g., [Carpenter & Mueller, 2013](#); [Schneider et al., 1998, 2002](#)), the study also aimed to measure and compare the effects of the two methods of task repetition practice on fluency development at the initial and the final stages of the fluency training separately. Following these objectives, three research questions were posed in the study:

1. Is there any significant difference in the effect of interleaving and blocking on the English fluency performance of the interleaving group (IL) and blocking group (BP) in the initial stage of the scheduled fluency practice sessions (SFPSs)?
2. Is there any significant difference in the effect of interleaving and blocking on the English fluency performance of IL and BP in the final stages of the SFPSs?
3. Is there any significant difference in the effect of interleaving and blocking on the progression of English fluency performance of IL and BP in the three rounds of the SFPSs?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Interleaving and Blocking

In traditional academic settings, the skills the learners require to practice are often arranged in the order of difficulty, known as blocked practice, and the learners practice one set of skills over a while and after mastering them, they move to the next set of skills in a predictable order ([Kakoti & Doley, 2021](#); [Suzuki, 2021](#); [Suzuki & Sunada, 2020](#); [Suzuki et al., 2022](#)). Highlighting the efficacy of a mixed and less predictable sequencing of the skill sets to be learned, termed as interleaving, recent studies have, however, demonstrated that mixing of skill sets in an unpredictable sequence may prove to be more effective (e.g., [Brown, 2014](#); [Dunlosky et al., 2013](#); [Kang, 2016](#); [Pan et al., 2019](#); [Soderstrom & Bjork, 2015](#); [Yan et al., 2017](#)). Specific advantages have been observed in the use of both methods of practice. Algebraic rules were learned more effectively through interleaving ([Mayfield & Chase, 2002](#)), whereas blocking was found to be effective in learning to identify variations in line segments ([Goldstone, 1996](#)).

It has been observed that learning and retention of similarities of patterns within and between low-similarity categories of exemplars are easier in blocked practice than in interleaving ([Carvalho & Goldstone, 2014](#)). On the other hand, [Zulkiply and Burt](#)

(2013) found that learning and retention of high-similarity categories of exemplars sharing a high level of similarity both within and between the categories were more effectively done in interleaving than in blocked practice. Specifying the advantages of the two methods, Kang (2016) observed that learning to identify the similarities within a single category might be easier in blocking but interleaving worked more effectively than blocking in learning to make a clear distinction between different categories.

2.2 Effect of Interleaving and Blocking on L2 Learning

Several studies in the past showed interleaving as a more effective method of practice than blocking in L2 learning (e.g., Miles, 2014; Nakata, 2015; Rogers, 2017). Finkbeiner and Nicol (2003) found interleaving more effective than blocking in a translation task involving the learning of L2 vocabulary. They reported that learners practicing to recall 32 pseudo-words using interleaving demonstrated a faster speed of response than the learners using the method of blocked practice. Miles (2014) and Nakata (2015) also observed that interleaving was more effective than blocking in the retention of L2 grammar and vocabulary. Explaining the factors leading to better retention in certain domains of L2 learning, Rogers (2017) concluded that greater opportunities for attentive practice and more varied distribution of practice sessions in interleaving, contrary to the continuous practice without intervals in blocking, provide the element of spacing leading to greater retention in interleaved practice.

Pan et al. (2019), however, did not observe the benefits of interleaving in the initial stage of their study on the learning of L2 grammar rules. In their study, two groups of English-speaking students divided into interleaving and blocking groups learned two Spanish grammar rules of preterit and imperfect past tenses. They did not observe any statistically significant difference in the retention of the L2 grammar rules in the first two tests of their study. The post-test scores of the students in the blocked practice group were higher than the post-test scores of the students in the interleaving group.

Both methods have been reported to be effective in their ways by some studies in the past (e.g., Taylor & Rohrer, 2010). These studies have identified interleaving as an effective method of practice for experienced L2 learners while beginners learned effectively using the method of blocked practice. Bjork (1999) and Porter and Magill (2010) stated the reason for these specific benefits of interleaving and blocking as the effect of a desirable difficulty framework. Since both methods facilitate long-term retention of learning done at the appropriate level of difficulty, both of them have pedagogical relevance in L2 learning. The method of interleaved practice might pose a challenge to beginners or inefficient learners but it offers the appropriate level of difficulty to experienced learners resulting in more effective learning. As both methods have their relevance, blocking has been suggested for L2 learners with a low proficiency level in the early stages of their learning while more proficient learners are advised to practice using interleaving. Proficient learners benefit more from interleaving than from blocking because interleaving paves the way for an appropriate level of difficulty during the L2 learning period that increases contextual interference requiring greater practice (Porter & Magill, 2010). Although interleaving creates stress in the initial period of L2 practice, it might facilitate long-term retention and transfer performance introducing the element of desirable difficulty to the experienced L2 learners (Bjork, 1994). The method of blocked practice, however, has not been

reported to be conducive to long-term retention of L2 learning despite more encouraging signs of effective learning than in interleaving in the initial stages (Soderstrom & Bjork, 2015).

2.3 Interleaving and L2 Fluency Performance

Several studies have identified the technique of task repetition as an effective method to enhance L2 fluency performance (e.g., Ahmadian, 2011; Ahmadian & Tavakoli, 2011; Lambert et al., 2017; Thai & Boers, 2016). Banking on Levelt's (1989) speech production model and Kormos' (2006) bilingual production model involving the components of conceptualizer, formulator, and articulator, it has been reported that task repetition benefits L2 fluency performance by freeing up the attentional resources of the L2 learners (e.g., Fukuta, 2016). Since the attentional resources of the L2 learners are allocated for conceptualization in the working memory when a task is presented to them for the first time, not many attentional resources can be used by the learners for formulation and articulation. When the L2 learners repeat the task, they can free up their attentional resources for linguistic formulation as the concerned task becomes familiar (Fukuta, 2016). In a study conducted by Lambert et al. (2017), Japanese university EFL learners engaged in a classroom-based task repetition practice involving instruction, narration, or opinion tasks in pairs. They observed a steady and significant increase in the fluency performance among the learners in terms of a decrease in mid-clause pauses and the number of self-repairs. The potential proceduralization or automatization of underlying linguistic knowledge propels the development of fluency performance to some extent in the speech production of L2 learners practicing task repetition (Lambert et al., 2017).

Adopting a variation in task repetition technique, de Jong and Perfetti (2011) studied the effects of content similarity and variability in task repetition on L2 fluency performance. Three groups of English L2 learners- one no-repetition group of nine, and two repetition groups of ten- of an American university engaged in nine monologues 4/3/2-minute speech tasks in the study. The post-test scores in the study showed that meaningful fluency development related to proceduralization occurred only in the speech behaviors of the repetition groups. Task repetition triggered the changes in cognitive fluency or proceduralization leading to better or improved L2 fluency (de Jong & Perfetti, 2011). The task repetition study conducted by de Jong and Perfetti (2011) demonstrated that an enhanced level of L2 proceduralization can be achieved by systematically manipulating the sequence of practice tasks. Their study was, however, criticized for the low sample size of 24 participants and the location of the experiment in a place where English was the primary mode of communication outside the classroom (Suzuki, 2021).

An important study by Suzuki (2021) examined the effects of task repetition on fluency development in English. It was carried out at a university in Japan involving 68 students. The students were divided into three groups—one no-repetition group of 18, one blocked practice group of 24, and one interleaved group of 26 participants. The task repetition groups engaged in three oral narrative tasks of six-frame cartoons for three consecutive days under either a blocked or interleaved task repetition schedule. The study observed that participants in the blocked practice group demonstrated greater fluency development in terms of faster articulation rate and shorter mid-clause pause duration than did the participants in the interleaved group

(Suzuki, 2021). It may, however, be stated that Suzuki's (2021) study, despite its elaborate description of the various linguistic dimensions of fluency behavior observed among the participants, had certain limitations. Firstly, the study was carried out only for three days involving a very limited number of tasks for repetition practice. Since the training and observation period in the study was short, the findings may also have been influenced by extraneous factors concerning health, emotional, and familial issues of the participants having an impact on their cognitive state during those three days. Secondly, the duration of each fluency training session in the study was only 30 minutes. As the number of participants in each repetition group was more than 20, it may be assumed that there must have been considerable difficulty in attending to the individual learning styles and explanation needs of the concerned participants. Additionally, the number of tests to measure the fluency development of the participants was only two- a pre-test and a post-test separating a three-day training program. Evaluation of the efficacy of repetition practice may be considered difficult only with the use of one achievement test at the end of the duration of the treatment. There are L2 studies (e.g., Carpenter & Mueller, 2013; Pan et al., 2019; Schneider et al., 1998, 2002) on such repetition tasks that observed a curve of variation in the effect of the methods of interleaving and blocking measured at the initial stage of training and later stages.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

A true experimental research design was applied in the present study. The participants were divided into two groups- IL and BP. The groups were required to practice different fluency tasks separately using interleaving and blocking methods for three months. The participants were selected and distributed into two groups based on their fluency performance in a pre-test (FT 1). Three more tests- the first intermediate fluency test (IFT 1), the second intermediate fluency test (IFT 2), and the post-test in fluency (FT 2) – were administered at different stages of the three rounds of the SFPSs. The SFPSs for both groups were conducted in online mode at Tezpur University, India, as part of an English as L2 learning project in the autumn semester (July-December) of 2021.

3.2 Participants

There were 44 participants, belonging to the age group of 18-19 years studying in various undergraduate sciences programs at different departments of Tezpur University in the present study. There were 68 candidates in the FT 1 administered for the recruitment of the participants. The purposive sampling method was used in the selection of the participants. The outliers in FT 1 were equally distributed between the two groups (see Table 1). Since the majority of the participants scored low in fluency performance in FT 1, the group distribution was relatively seamless and it was possible to keep an equal number of participants (n=22) in both groups at the start of the first round of the SFPSs. There were 10 female participants in each group. Some

participants – two in IL and two in BP– opted out and re-joined at different rounds of the SFPSs.

Table 1. Fluency performance in FT 1.

Speaking skill	Test mode	Sex		Age (in years)	
		Male M (SD)	Female M (SD)	18 M (SD)	19 M (SD)
Fluency	Online Interaction (OI)	2.88 (1.18)	3.17 (.86)	3.30 (.94)	2.83 (1.07)

3.3 Fluency Tests in English

In the three fluency tests – IFT 1, IFT 2, and FT 2– conducted in the present study in addition to FT 1, the participants responded to the instructor’s questions related to their personal academic life using the sentences already practiced during the concerned SFPSs. After transcribing and preparing the oral responses of the participants recorded during the tests, four assessors with a master’s degree in English and some teaching experience in English evaluated the responses using the English fluency assessment criteria designed by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), India. Following the 5-point scale of assessment criteria, the responses of the participants were given scores in the range between points 1 and 5. The scale of assessment (“[Guidelines for assessment](#),” 2012) ranged from noticeably long pauses and frequent repetition or self-correction (1 point), through hesitation and slow speech (2 points), occasional self-correction or repetition in long speech (3 points), and speech without noticeable effort with occasional self-correction (4 points), to fluency in speech with minimal hesitation and without repetition (5 points).

3.4 Materials, Activities, and Their Sequences

Based on a needs analysis of the views expressed by the participants in FT 1, 12 topics for fluency tasks (TFTs) to be practiced in the three rounds of SFPSs were identified in the present study. The 12 TFTs selected for the SFPSs were introducing oneself (a), personal hobby (b), one’s native place (c), speaking about strengths and weaknesses (d), speaking about a favorite subject (e), one’s internship experience (f), skills of a leader (g), management skills (h), introducing the topic in a presentation (i), presenting the content (j), interpreting the analysis (k), and how to conclude a presentation (l).

Table 2. Samples of sentences used in the SFPSs.

TFTs	Sample sentences
a	“I like reading spiritual books that provide truth about God and creation.”
	“I am a good writer, reader, speaker, listener, thinker, communicator, and a table tennis player.”
	“I am hard-working by nature and I like to do things with perfection.”
	“I am an honest and straightforward man.”
	“I do not compromise with any dishonesty in life or work.”

Table 2 continued ...

<i>b</i>	"I am quite active in my spare time."
	"I am developing personally and professionally."
	"I play soccer three times a week."
	"We won the state championship last year."

The participants were required to watch the video clips of the sentences and listen to the audio several times. There were presentation slides of each of the sentences, and they were presented to the participants for practice separately (see Table 2). Once the sentences were practiced several times, at least three times, the participants were required to perform writing and role-playing exercises.

The 12 TFTs were practiced in 48 sessions of the three rounds of SFPSs and the sequences of the TFTs were arranged differently for the two groups (see Table 3). The TFTs in BP were arranged for practice as per the difficulty and relatedness of the topics. The sequence of the TFTs in IL, contrarily, followed the spacing and mixing technique of practice.

Table 3. Sequence of the TFTs.

Weeks	TFTs in SFPS 1		TFTs in SFPS 2		TFTs in SFPS 3	
	IL	BP	IL	BP	IL	BP
Week 1	a	a	e	e	i	i
	c	a	g	e	k	i
	b	a	f	e	j	i
	d	a	h	e	l	i
Week 2	a	b	e	f	i	j
	b	b	f	f	j	j
	b	b	f	f	j	j
	d	b	h	f	l	j
Week 3	a	c	e	g	i	k
	a	c	e	g	i	k
	c	c	g	g	k	k
	c	c	g	g	k	k
Week 4	b	d	f	h	j	l
	d	d	h	h	l	l
	c	d	g	h	k	l
	d	d	h	h	l	l

3.5 Data Collection and Analysis

The data for the comparison of the methods of interleaving and blocking in their effect on fluency development in English in the present study were collected from the four fluency tests of FT 1, IFT 1, IFT 2, and FT 2 administered at various stages of the SFPSs. The fluency scores of the participants of both groups collected in these four tests were analyzed in SPSS 26.0 using descriptive and inferential statistics. One-way repeated measures ANOVA test was performed to compare the differences in the effects of interleaving and blocking on the rate of progress in English fluency development, both at various stages of the SFPSs and during the entire period.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Initial Stage of the SFPSs

Since one of the major objectives of the present study was to measure and compare the mean values of the English fluency scores of IL and BP in the initial stage of the SFPSs, the first research question of the study was: ‘Is there any significant difference in the effect of interleaving and blocking on the English fluency performance of the IL and BP in the initial stage of the SFPSs?’ The differences in the mean values of the English fluency scores obtained by BP and IL in the first two tests—IFT1 and IFT 2—administered after the end of the first two rounds of SFPSs were analyzed to measure the difference in performance between the two groups (see Table 4).

Table 4. Differences in fluency performance during the intermediate tests.

Speaking skill	Test mode	Group	IFT 1 M (SD)	IFT 2 M (SD)	df	F	p	Effect size ^a
Fluency	OI	IL	2.39 (1.13)	1.98 (1.04)	1	1.30	.26	.05
		BP	2.81 (1.64)	2.77 (1.67)				

^aPartial Eta²

In IFT 1, 2.39 and 2.81 were the mean values of the fluency performance scores secured by the IL and BP, respectively. Although the group distribution was done after an analysis of the fluency scores of the participants in the pre-test (FT 1) ensuring recruitment of participants with equal proficiency distribution on average, the BP group demonstrated a better performance in IFT 1 administered after the end of the first round. The participants in the BP group showed similar performance in IFT 2 conducted after the end of the second round. The mean values of the fluency scores secured by the IL and BP in IFT 2 were 1.98 and 2.77, respectively. It is noted here that a slight decline in performance, from 2.39 in IFT 1 to 1.98 in IFT 2 among IL participants and from 2.81 in IFT 1 to 2.77 in IFT 2 among BP participants, was recorded in the initial two rounds of the SFPSs. One of the reasons for this decline in the mean values of the fluency scores might be the influence of the minor variations in assessors’ subjective assessment standards. It might also be because of the presence of an outlier in BP since the *SDs* of 1.64 and 1.67 recorded for BP in IFT 1 and IFT 2 respectively were higher than the *SDs* of 1.13 and 1.04 recorded for IL for the same two tests. Despite the minor differences recorded in the fluency performance of IL and BP, no statistically significant difference was observed between the two groups in IFT 1 and IFT 2. The *p*-value recorded in a repeated measures ANOVA test was .26. The relevant *F* value was a meagre of 1.30 reflecting a similar low effect size of .05.

4.2 Final Stage of the SFPSs

The second research question of the study was: ‘Is there any significant difference in the effect of interleaving and blocking on the English fluency performance of IL and BP in the final stages of the SFPSs?’ The objective of this

question was to measure the difference, if there was any, in the fluency performance of the two groups after the end of the last round of the SFPSs. The mean values of the fluency performance scores secured by the IL and BP in IFT 2 and FT 2 were used to analyze and answer the various aspects of this research question (see Table 5). Since four participants, two from each group, opted out of the SFPSs in the third round, the mean values of the fluency performance scores in the final stage were calculated after excluding their scores. As such, the mean values of the fluency performance by IL and BP in IFT 2 presented in the preceding section (see Table 4) are a little different from the mean values shown here (see Table 5). Considering the equal number of dropouts and the retention of outliers in both groups, it might be assumed that the minor changes in the mean values of the fluency performance scores presented here (see Table 5) did not fail to represent a similar trend observed in the initial stage of the SFPSs (see Table 4).

Table 5. Differences in fluency performance in the final stages.

Speaking skill	Test mode	Group	IFT 2 M (SD)	FT 2 M (SD)	df	F	p	Effect size ^a
Fluency	OI	IL	1.54 (1.24)	2.09 (1.60)	1	1.12	.30	.04
		BP	2.34 (1.88)	2.55 (2.03)				

^aPartial Eta²

The fluency performance of IL and BP in the final phase of the SFPSs was measured by comparing and analyzing the mean values of the fluency scores secured by the participants in IFT 2 and FT 2. After excluding the fluency performance scores of the dropouts in IFT 2, the mean values of the scores secured by IL and BP were 1.54 and 2.34 respectively. Both groups performed slightly better in FT 2 than in IFT 2 as the mean values of fluency performance grew to 2.09 for IL and 2.55 in the case of BP. Contrary to what was observed in the initial stage of the SFPSs, participants in both groups demonstrated an improvement in the mean values of their fluency performance scores in the final stage of the SFPSs. It may be noted here that minor variations in the subjective assessment standards adopted by the assessors might have influenced this small rise in fluency performance as the differences in the mean values calculated for both groups in IFT 2 and FT 2 were not significantly large. The effect of the outliers might be the factor of the higher mean values of the fluency performance scores in BP in both tests because the *SDs* of 1.88 and 2.03 in the case of BP in IFT 2 and FT 2 respectively were higher than the *SDs* of 1.24 and 1.60 calculated for IL for the same two tests. The *p*-value of .30 calculated after a repeated measures ANOVA test of the mean values of the fluency scores in IFT 2 and FT 2 was very low reflecting a statistically insignificant difference in fluency performance between IL and BP. The *F* value of 1.12 was also very low reflecting a similar low effect size of .04.

4.3 Difference in the progression of fluency performance

Another objective of the present study was to measure the difference between IL and BP in fluency performance throughout the three rounds of SFPSs. The third research question of the study was posed to examine this difference in performance

and it was: ‘Is there any significant difference in the effect of interleaving and blocking on the progression of English fluency performance of IL and BP in the three rounds of the SFPSs?’ Since four participants, two in each group, opted out of the SFPSs at different stages, the mean values of the fluency performance scores only of those participants in IL and BP who continuously attended the three rounds of SFPSs were considered for comparison and analysis to measure the difference in the progression of fluency performance (see Table 6). Even though two dropouts in IL after IFT 1 re-joined the SFPSs in the third round, their fluency performance scores were excluded from the final calculation of the mean values of all three tests. As a result, there are differences in the mean values of the fluency scores of IL and BP in IFT 1, IFT 2, and FT 2 presented here (see Table 6) from the mean values of the fluency scores presented in the preceding sections (see Table 4 & Table 5) for the same three tests. Considering the small number of dropouts, the minor difference between the mean values of fluency scores with dropouts and the mean values of fluency scores without the dropouts might not change the difference in the average progression rate observed during the three rounds of the SFPSs.

Table 6. Progression in fluency performance during the period of experimentation.

Speaking skill	Test mode	Group	IFT 1 M (SD)	IFT 2 M (SD)	FT 2 M (SD)	F	p	Effect size ^a
Fluency	OI	IL	2.39 (1.13)	1.98 (1.04)	2.69 (1.27)	1.16	.29	.05
		BP	2.85 (1.55)	2.85 (1.61)	3.17 (1.77)			

^aPartial Eta²

The recalculation of the fluency scores after excluding the scores secured by the dropouts measured the mean values of 2.39, 1.98, and 2.69 in IFT 1, IFT 2, and FT 2 respectively for the participants in the IL group. The recalculation of the fluency performance scores of BP after the exclusion of the dropouts measured the mean values of 2.85, 2.85, and 3.17 in IFT 1, IFT 2, and FT 2, respectively. Since the *SDs* of 1.55, 1.61, and 1.77 in the case of BP were higher than the *SDs* of 1.13, 1.04, and 1.27 recorded for IL in IFT 1, IFT 2, and FT 2 respectively, it may be assumed here that the presence of an outlier in BP might have caused a comparatively higher rise in the mean values of the fluency scores of BP in all the three tests. Moreover, the minor decline in the mean values of fluency performance scores– from 2.39 to 1.98– in IL in IFT 2 might be interpreted as caused by minor differences in the subjective assessment preferences of the four assessors. Otherwise, both groups demonstrated a rise in the mean values of fluency performance scores– from 2.39 to 2.69 in IL and from 2.85 to 3.17 in BP– in IFT 1 and FT 2. All the same, no statistically significant difference in fluency performance between IL and BP was recorded in the comparison of the mean values as the *p*-value after repeated measures ANOVA test was .29. The *F* value was considerably low (1.16) corresponding to a similar low effect size of .05.

5. DISCUSSION

In contrast to several studies confirming the advantages of using the method of interleaving in an L2 task repetition program (e.g., [Brown, 2014](#); [Dunlosky et al., 2013](#); [Soderstrom & Bjork, 2015](#); [Suzuki et al., 2022](#); [Yan et al., 2017](#)), no statistically significant difference in the effect of interleaving and blocking on English fluency performance was observed in the present study. Most of the findings in the present study were in agreement with some studies in the past (e.g., [Brunmair & Richter, 2019](#); [Carpenter & Mueller, 2013](#); [Dunlosky et al., 2013](#); [Pan et al., 2019](#); [Schneider et al., 1998, 2002](#)). Since blocking was observed to enhance a slightly higher fluency performance than interleaving in the present study, it also partially confirmed [Suzuki's \(2021\)](#) findings on the effect of blocking on the fluency development of L2 learners.

In the initial stages of the SFPSs, neither group recorded a statistically significant rise in English fluency performance. The effect of blocking and interleaving on the fluency development of the participants also did not demonstrate any statistically significant difference in the first two intermediate fluency tests administered after the end of the first two rounds of the SFPSs. Both groups recorded a minor downward curve in fluency performance in the second intermediate test. Since the decline in fluency performance was not exponential and it was within the same range for both groups, it might have been influenced more by minor differences in the subjective assessment preferences of the assessors than a realistic decline in the fluency performance of the participants. In partial agreement with [Suzuki's \(2021\)](#) findings about the positive effect of blocking on fluency development, the participants under the blocked condition in the present study performed slightly better, even though not statistically significant, than the participants under the interleaved condition in the initial stages of the SFPSs.

Similar trends were observed in the final stages of the SFPSs. Neither the interleaved nor the blocked group performed significantly differently in the English fluency test administered after the end of the third round of SFPSs. A small hike in fluency performance from the second intermediate test recorded in the final test in English fluency for both groups was not statistically significant. Better fluency performance was recorded for the participants under the blocked condition in the first two intermediate tests, repeated in the third test of the present study. As observed by [Schneider et al., \(1998, 2002\)](#) about the advantages of blocking in the initial stages of L2 learning, the findings of the present study demonstrated that the advantages of blocking in fluency development ([Suzuki, 2021](#)) might extend even till later stages of fluency training. The participants in BP exhibited hesitation in utterance and slow speech speed after the end of the two rounds of fluency training. They, however, started to produce long speeches in English with occasional self-correction and repetition by the end of the third round of training. The participants in IL, on the other hand, remained slightly hesitant, and the speed of their speech in English continued to be on the slower side even after the end of the three rounds of fluency training. But, this difference in fluency performance might not be considered very significant as the participants in both groups continued to demonstrate, more or less, similar speech behavior.

During the three rounds of SFPSs, no statistically significant difference between interleaving and blocking was observed in the rate of fluency development in the present study. Although the advantages recorded for blocking in L2 fluency

development in all three tests administered during the study were not statistically significant, they might indicate that task repetitions involving high similarity or stimuli retrieval (Brunmair & Richter, 2019; Carpenter & Mueller, 2013; Carvalho & Goldstone, 2014; Zulkipli & Burt, 2013) might be benefitted more by the use of blocking than the use of interleaving. The components of conceptualizer, formulator, and articulator presented in the speech production model (Levelt, 1989) and bilingual production model (Kormos, 2006) might also explain this minor advantage for blocking recorded in the present study. Since fluency development tasks require the distribution of attentional resources in the working memory of the L2 learners (Fukuta, 2016) for conceptualization, formulation, and articulation acts, the repetition of similar language tasks or closely related language tasks for a certain number of times, before moving to another language task, performed in blocking might free up the attentional resources for all the components identified in speech production or bilingual production models. As the repetition of the same task several times might make the task familiar to the L2 learner, the attentional resources freed up using the method of blocking make it available for linguistic formulation (Fukuta, 2016). Such task repetitions also propel potential proceduralization or automatization of underlying linguistic knowledge of the L2 learners resulting in a steady and significant increase in L2 fluency in terms of a decrease in mid-clause pauses and the number of clause repairs (de Jong & Perfetti, 2011; Lambert et al., 2017).

Since the use of blocked practice results in a faster articulation rate and shorter mid-clause pause duration than in interleaving practice (Suzuki, 2021), such task repetitions lead to greater fluency development in L2. Additionally, ineffective teaching might have contributed to the absence of significant fluency development observed among the participants of both groups even after three months of L2 fluency practice. A lack of serious pedagogical engagement on the part of both teacher and participants, as the fluency training sessions were conducted on a distant learning mode of online teaching, might have slackened the effect of the whole fluency training exercise. It leaves us with an expectation that the minor increase in fluency performance observed in the blocked group might have grown higher demonstrating a more significant difference in their effect on fluency development if the fluency training sessions were more involved and motivating than they were during the study.

6. CONCLUSION

The present study examined the difference in the pedagogical effect of interleaving and blocked practice on the fluency development of English as L2 learners. The study demonstrated that there was no statistically significant difference between interleaving and blocking in their effect on L2 fluency development. Neither the participants in the interleaved group nor the ones in the blocked practice group showed an exceptionally high rate of fluency development in the initial stage of the fluency training program. One of the most significant conclusions of the present study was the observation that the minor spikes in fluency performance both in the initial and in the later stages of the training program in favor of blocking might have been enhanced had there been more urgency and involvement in the sessions of the training program.

As the method of blocked practice encourages stimuli retrieval in task repetition and propels potential proceduralization or automatization of underlying linguistic knowledge, it provides greater opportunity than interleaving for a steady increase in L2 fluency. So, task repetitions arranged in order of difficulty and relatedness adopted in blocking might be considered more effective than the spacing and mixing technique of task repetition followed in interleaving practice in L2 fluency development training. One caveat might be appropriate in this context. The continuous presence of the participants and the performance of class work with sincerity could not be effectively monitored by the teacher during the online training sessions. It resulted in the breaking of continuity in task repetitions rendering the tasks ineffective and monotonous in this study. We might state here that more comprehensive and convincing observations on the subject may be acquired in an experimental study of similar duration involving a face-to-face mode of fluency training in the future.

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Merdeka Belajar–Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) to Strengthen the Culture and Citizenship Literacy of Pre-Service EFL Teachers

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explain and describe the role of the Merdeka Belajar–Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) or the Independent Learning Program in enhancing the culture and citizenship literacy of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) pre-service teachers at Universitas Almuslim, Indonesia, through the PERMATA-SAKTI Program, a student exchange program. This research employed a mixed method. The respondents of this study were prospective EFL teachers who participated in the program. Five informants were interviewed extensively to collect qualitative data. The interviews were transcribed and the results were analyzed through thematic analysis. A number of 35 pre-service EFL teachers filled in a closed-ended questionnaire to collect quantitative data. These data were analyzed descriptively. The findings of this study indicated that the program could strengthen the cultural and citizenship literacy of EFL pre-service teachers by introducing culture and diversity through the online learning process. The active combined learning process revealed the values of solidarity, tolerance, diversity, and unity. EFL pre-service teachers developed an attitude of mutual respect through a dynamic learning process involving diverse languages, races, ethnicities, religions, and worldviews. This study concluded that the PERMATA-SAKTI

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Program effectively strengthened the EFL pre-service teachers' cultural and citizenship literacy.

Keywords: EFL teachers, citizenship, culture, independent learning, literacy, student exchange.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology in Indonesia has released a number of innovative programs to help mold the next generation of Indonesians into skilled workers to handle the challenges posed by the world's increasing interconnectedness. One of these is the *Merdeka Belajar–Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) or the Independent Learning Program. In order to foster innovations that address real-world issues faced by businesses, the Ministry of Education has launched a new initiative at universities called the 'MBKM policy' (Susilawati et al., 2021). The value of self-directed study has traditionally been more heavily weighted in Western than Asian educational systems (Sakai & Takagi, 2009). Independent Learning was originally implemented in 1993 in Indonesia and was later enhanced by the recent Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, Nadiem Makariem, in 2020. Independent campuses conform to connect and match the concept initiated by Wardiman Djojonegoro, the country's Minister of Education and Culture from 1993 to 1997 (Kodrat, 2021). In this course, students are given the freedom to design their own curricula, and the institution is required to support both online and traditional forms of education. The connect and match model is an educational pedagogical basis for creating graduates who are 'work-ready', as outlined in Government Regulation No. 9 adopted in 1990 regulating secondary education (Soesilowati, 2009).

According to Misnawati and Zuraini (2023), MBKM refers to the presence of a learning process within higher education that is characterized by autonomy and flexibility. This approach fosters an innovative learning culture that is not limited, but rather aligns with the diverse needs of students. MBKM encompasses three key dimensions of competencies, namely attitude, knowledge, and skills. One of the activities through which the instruction of MBKM is facilitated is the independent exchange student (*Program Pertukaran Mahasiswa* or PMM, literally translated as Student Exchange Program) program. The exchange student program encompasses a variety of activities, one of which is the Nusantara Module. The Nusantara module comprises a series of activities aimed at enhancing understanding of variety, fostering inspiration, promoting introspection, and encouraging social contribution. This module has been carefully planned to follow a sequential and sustainable approach. The Nusantara Module comprises a total of sixteen activities, including eight activities focused on variety, two activities centered on inspiration, five activities dedicated to reflection, and one activity aimed at social involvement ("Buku panduan Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka," 2020).

Meanwhile, in other countries, the MBKM program has been in use for some time but with different terminology. In the United States of America for instance, Carl Rogers proposed Freedom to Learn in the 1960s (Joseph et al., 2020). It was implemented to help people learn how to adapt flexibly to new problem situations and

internalize an adaptive mode of problem-solving. Furthermore, the Southern Freedom Schools which were pioneered by SNCC in the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project of 1964 provided Freedom University that emphasized the importance of safe spaces to cultivate education for liberation (Soltis, 2015). Moreover, In Europe, the program was clearly articulated in the 1979 report prepared by Holec for the Council known as Learner Autonomy (Çakici, 2015). The learner autonomy aims at providing language learners with the ability to take on more responsibility for their own learning. Besides, Uzbekistan has implemented the same program called the Independent Learning program to improve the practical and creative training of future artists and teachers (Kholmuratovich, 2020).

In Indonesia, to help students reach their full academic and extracurricular potential, the government funds the program MBKM, which places equal emphasis on developing students' hard and soft abilities (Kodrat, 2021). Sampelolo and Kombong (2022) show that by involving students in real-world activities during the course of their education, MBKM can help them acquire valuable life skills that will serve them well in the future. The growth of the MBKM program contributes to students' increased interest in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields (Mariati, 2021). The program is an opening and a risk for the government; its goal is to equip recent college graduates with the skills and knowledge they will need to thrive in the unpredictable workplace of the future brought on by the industrial revolution. This program can serve as a platform where students can broaden their horizons and learn both the technical and interpersonal skills that best suit their own goals and passions (Rodiyah, 2021).

A component of the MBKM initiative is being carried out at Universitas Almuslim, located in Bireuen, Aceh, Indonesia. University students have the opportunity to pursue their own areas of academic interest, granting them the freedom to broaden their horizons and learn more about topics that particularly pique their interest (Sudaryanto et al., 2020). Universities are held to a higher standard, as students look to them to facilitate a learning experience that is both creative and limitless, adapting to their unique personalities and learning styles. This program further allows all Indonesian students to engage in as many non-classroom learning opportunities as possible (Meke et al., 2022). Students are permitted to take up to three semesters outside of their major, two semesters at other colleges or universities (equal to 40 credits), and one semester in a different major within the same university (20 credits) under the MBKM policy.

The PERMATA-SAKTI PERMATA-SAKTI (*Pertukaran Mahasiswa Tanah Air Nusantara Sistem Alih Kredit dengan Teknologi Informasi* or Students of the Homeland of the Archipelago Exchange Credit Transfer System with Information Technology) Program is a student exchange initiative with a credit transfer mechanism, debuted in 2020 as part of the MBKM's suite of initiatives. The initiative was implemented via an online learning process with the help of student ambassadors from all over Indonesia. This program is an initiative to incorporate cultural studies into the curriculum of all Indonesian universities. In 2020, Universitas Almuslim joined the program. A total of 14 universities worked with Almuslim as partners. Participants included future educators, such as English as Foreign Language (EFL) pre-service teachers. The program is deemed as one of the ways that the Indonesian government is working to counteract the potentially harmful effects of 'outer' cultures.

As a result, the MBKM program hosts the PERMATA-SAKTI Program in order to increase students' awareness of Indonesia's cultural variety and citizenship literacy.

The student exchange program for pre-service EFL teachers is one policy that is traced in the research conducted by [Sampelolo and Kombong \(2022\)](#). They found that pre-service EFL teachers greatly benefited from the MBKM program because it provided them with opportunities to participate in different academic tracks. In addition to the on-campus instruction, pre-service EFL teachers had the option of participating in off-campus classes where they could improve their English language abilities and fluency by interacting with various lecturers and students. In addition, they were exposed to the unique academic practice learning culture. Participating in a student exchange program was a great way to broaden their horizons, expose them to new cultures, and develop important interpersonal skills.

[Krishnapatria \(2021\)](#) said that this program is designed to enable prospective pre-service English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers to study at various universities across Indonesia. The primary goal of this student exchange program is to assist students in exploring various academic disciplines at different universities, thereby broadening their understanding of *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* (Indonesia's national motto, which means 'Unity in Diversity') as well as the cultural diversity among Indonesian students, including those studying English teaching. The PERMATA-SAKTI program is also structured to enhance undergraduate students' learning experiences and provide them with opportunities for self-directed knowledge and interest development, ultimately better preparing them for graduation.

This study not only emphasizes academic aspects but also explores ways to enhance the engagement of pre-service teachers in understanding and appreciating culture as well as their responsibilities as citizens. Within this context, the research will focus on efforts to cultivate a sense of patriotism and strengthen unity among pre-service EFL teachers through the PERMATA-SAKTI program. This represents a significant advancement in higher education, as it places special emphasis on instilling citizenship values and promoting cross-cultural understanding among future generations of students. By incorporating these elements into the learning experiences of pre-service EFL teachers, this research has the potential to make a sustainable and positive contribution to fostering understanding, tolerance, and solidarity in an increasingly diverse society. The findings of this study could aid the MBKM program, managed by the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, and educational institutions across Indonesia.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of *Merdeka Belajar–Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) or the Independent Learning Program Policy

Merdeka Belajar–Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) or the Independent Learning Program has emerged to help students acquire the skills of social interaction, collaboration, and management ([Yudhawasthi & Christiani, 2021](#)). Students and grads of higher learning institutions should be able to do more than just learn the material covered in their courses and programs; they should also be able to learn new scientific information on their own ([Akmalovna, 2022](#)). Students who engage in independent

study are better able to retain and expand their knowledge, apply their skills in novel contexts, and broaden their horizons in search of novel solutions to familiar problems (Akmalovna, 2022). It teaches people to determine their own training objectives, create a plan for achieving those objectives, and make necessary adjustments to the implementation of that plan.

The MBKM program leads to changes to the higher education curriculum that provides autonomous freedom for education institutions (Zainudin & Utami, 2021). Since knowledge, skills, abilities, habits, conviction, and spirituality cannot be transferred from a teacher to a student via lectures alone, the importance of independent work is undeniable. They are mastered by each student through their own cognitive effort in a state of intellectual tension (Akmalovna, 2022). Such individual effort serves important developmental, instructional, and educational purposes. The MBKM policy issued by educational institutions is for students to choose activities outside their study program or campus as part of an innovative learning system (Arifin & Muslim, 2020). As a result, Indonesian students have the opportunity to make some of the quickest shifts in the development of high-quality resources that contribute to the civilizational development and national interests of their country. The Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia has introduced four policies: (1) automatic re-accreditation for study programs, (2) permission for state universities to become Legal Cooperation, (3) independence for qualified universities to establish study programs, and (4) the right of students to study for three semesters outside of study programs (Arifin & Muslim, 2020).

2.2 The Purpose of Developing the MBKM Program

The mission of the MBKM program is to foster in students an innovative learning culture that will enhance their intellectual capacity and creative prowess while simultaneously encouraging them to acquire a breadth of information in preparation for entering the global labor market (Zuhrohtun et al., 2021). In addition, it was explained by Sopiansyah et al. (2022) that the MBKM policy gives students the chance to choose their courses depending on their areas of interest, which makes the learning process more independent and adaptable. It is believed that the MBKM program, which is an invention, is able to help the achievement of graduates to have high quality and competitiveness in facing the competition of the world (Siregar et al., 2020). Graduates of universities can improve their capabilities in both hard and soft skills by participating in this program, which is tailored to meet the requirements of the commercial and industrial sectors (Puspitasari & Nugroho, 2021).

The objective of *Merdeka Belajar* is to examine teaching practices, curriculum content, and creative projects employed at universities. The autonomous approach posits that EFL acquisition is facilitated by creating an inclusive environment, where students can develop relationships and freely express themselves. The setting enables the language acquisition of practical skills within a supportive learning environment (Çakici, 2015).

According to Fitriasisari et al. (2021), student exchange is a form of activity that can increase students' experience and insight to communicate across cultures by interacting and establishing friendships with students throughout Indonesia. This can be accomplished through student exchange programs. Student exchange programs are held as part of the Indonesian government's efforts to minimize the problem of

inequality in facilities and infrastructure for the implementation of the learning process in various educational units in Indonesia. This problem is a result of the fact that facilities and infrastructure for the learning process in Indonesia's various educational units are not uniformly good.

2.3 Culture and Citizenship Literacy

According to [Sari \(2021\)](#), cultural literacy is the capacity possessed by the people who inhabit a country to comprehend the significance of the country's culture in the formation of the nation's identity. Literacy in cultures other than one's own is an essential skill that all members of a community are obligated to acquire so that they can comprehend the traditions of their country of origin ([Ngema & Lange, 2020](#)). Understanding the range of cultural arts, as well as physical and intangible aspects of cultural heritage such as traditions, values, beliefs, and cultures, is an essential component of cultural literacy ([Sakura et al., 2021](#)). Improving both local and national culture as well as building the identity of the Indonesian nation within a global society in order to cherish and protect the culture requires cultural literacy ([Nusantara, 2018](#)).

Frequently, cultural literacy is reduced to intercultural communication skills with the primary focus being on the ability to tolerate and respect the ethnic culture of the other ([Arvizu & Saravia-Shore, 2017](#)). Instead, it should go beyond these universal moral duties and focus on the actual enactment of those competencies through participation in processes of negotiation, care, and understanding. Literacy in the sense of citizenship refers to the degree to which individuals within a community are aware of and able to carry out the duties and rights that come with being a part of that community ([Ahsani & Azizah, 2021](#)). Simultaneously, culture is uncommitted to language learning and teaching as it influences the meaning and context of language activities ([Némethová, 2020](#)). Culture and language are two factors that cannot be separated, and cultural practices influence linguistic ones ([Pennycook, 2017](#)). Some researchers have inspected the benefits of having cultural teaching objectives in ELT ([Mu & Yu, 2023](#)).

According to [Pratiwi and Asyarotin \(2019\)](#), cultural literacy and citizenship are developed in the MBKM program by teaching students about various histories, arts, traditions, and the noble values contained therein, as well as the rights and obligations as Indonesian citizens who can recognize, understand, respect, and actively participate in maintaining culture and values. Literacy in culture and citizenship refers to an individual's or community's capacity to interact appropriately with their social surroundings in the context of being a member of a culture and nation, whether that be at the individual or community level ([Wahyuningsih et al., 2019](#)). Literacy in multiple cultures and a strong sense of civic responsibility are both essential in a nation like Indonesia, which is home to a dizzying array of distinct ethnic groups, linguistic subgroups, customs, traditions, and worldviews ([Lailiyah, 2021](#)). As a result, having an understanding of the culture and obligations, in particular the unique identities and principles upheld by the culture of the people living in Indonesia, is absolutely necessary.

Several previous studies about the importance of culture and citizenship literacy to be integrated into the curriculum have been done by the researchers. [Sampelolo and Kombong \(2022\)](#) found that The MBKM program offers EFL pre-service teachers the chance to engage in learning experiences beyond their primary study program. This

enables them to pursue independent study based on their individual interests, talents, and abilities. This experiential learning process empowers students to explore and assess the influence of programs linked to life experiences within the national and state society. Consequently, ELT students will expand their comprehension of diverse cultural and citizenship facets within the framework of the nation and state, thereby positively contributing to the enhancement of their cultural and citizenship literacy.

A study by [Rapanta et al. \(2021\)](#) presented an innovative citizenship education curriculum based on dialogic, argumentative, and cultural literacy skills by proposing discursive practices of cultural identity construction at a collaborative level, especially within the current European landscape of continuous immigration and change. Furthermore, [Shliakhovchuk \(2021\)](#) reviewed new models of intercultural competency for life and work in a VUCA world. It was concluded that there is a pressing need for an updated model of cultural literacy that can serve as a powerful instrument for living in a VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) world. An analysis and summary are made of common trends for a new set of skills and competencies necessary for success in the twenty-first century, studied by policy-making institutions like UNESCO, by education institutions like the British Council, by multinational corporations like IBM and Google, and by influencer organizations like LinkedIn and the World Economic Forum.

2.4 Student Exchange Program

One of the programs that can be accessed through the MBKM is a student exchange program. This program is managed by the participating universities, and it includes a system for transferring credits. Student exchange is an educational activity that is organized by MBKM with the goal of developing students' interests in expanding their knowledge and providing opportunities for students to study off-campus or overseas in order to broaden students' horizons. This activity's name comes from the fact that its organizers are students themselves ([Mudzakir, 2021](#)). This can boost students' experience and insight into how to connect across cultures, which can boost students' overall experiences ([Fitriasari et al., 2021](#)). In addition, [Fuadi and Aswita \(2021\)](#) argued that participation in a student exchange program can help mold the attitudes and personalities of Indonesian students in a way that makes them more appreciative of the variety of cultures, views, faiths, and beliefs that exist in the world. According to [Fitriasari et al. \(2021\)](#), the procedure of incorporating the student exchange program into the MBKM curriculum can be accomplished through one of four distinct types of learning activities. The following is a list of the educational activities that can be participated in: the student exchange program between study programs within the same university, the student exchange program within the same study program at a different campus, the student exchange program between study programs at various universities, and the student exchange program at multiple universities.

Furthermore, a virtual exchange project in English language learning was held to benefit the pre-service EFL teachers through innovation and collaboration with others to co-construct even better lessons ([Lenkaitis, 2020](#)). In virtual exchange, language and intercultural development are typically the goals for the pre-service EFL teachers while for the lecturers the focus is usually on developing ways to use technological tools for learning and teaching.

3. METHODS

This study aims to describe the reinforcement of cultural and citizenship competencies through a student exchange program. It utilized mixed-method designs.

3.1 Participants

The research subjects are pre-service EFL teachers from Universitas Almuslim, Bireuen, Aceh, Indonesia, who participated in the 2020 PERMATA-SAKTI Program. Five respondents were purposively selected for interviews; they were those who chose universities in two islands, Java and Sulawesi, as the locations of service. They were three eighth-semester students and two sixth-semester students. A number of 35 students were chosen to fill in the questionnaire. They were also students who had completed the program. In the program, these students are called pre-service teachers.

3.2 Instruments

Both the interviews and questionnaires were conducted to explore the pre-service EFL teachers' perceptions of the impact of the PERMATA-SAKTI Program on enhancing their culture and citizenship literacy. The interviews were conducted in an unstructured manner comprising three inquiries, aiming to gather information on the factors contributing to increased cultural and citizenship literacy among participating EFL pre-service teachers involved in the program. The questions asked were:

1. What do you think about the learning process in the PERMATA-SAKTI Program with students from various regions in Indonesia?
2. Do you think the PERMATA-SAKTI Program is effective for implementing cultural and citizenship literacy in the learning process?
3. What benefits did you gain from participating in the student exchange program?

The questionnaire consisted of 20 items. The questions were adapted from the *Survei Kebhinekaan* or 'Diversity' Survey held by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. The diversity survey is an integral component of the independent student exchange selection process, conducted through the CBT-ANAEExamBrowser application. Students who successfully navigate the initial file or administrative selection stage are mandated to participate in this survey. It can be accessed on the official website at <https://pusmenjar.kemdikbud.go.id/sbh/pmm>. However, the survey link can only be accessed from 17 to 18 February 2022 when the participants took the survey and it cannot be accessed by others.

Furthermore, closed-ended items provide participants with a predefined list of possible responses from which they select one. To measure the respondents' responses, the Likert scale was employed. The respondents indicated their level of agreement using the options of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), not sure (NS), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD). It consisted of two parts: the first part focused on perceptions of cultural literacy improvement, while the second part addressed pre-service EFL teachers' perceptions of enhanced citizenship literacy. Table 1 presents the blueprint for each section of the questionnaire.

Table 1. Blueprint of the instrument of the pre-service EFL teachers' perception of cultural and citizenship literacy (adopted from the *Survei Kebhinekaan* or 'Diversity' Survey).

Dimension	Item numbers
Culture Literacy	1, 2, 8, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19
Citizenship literacy	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 18, 20

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

The interviews were conducted one-on-one with the five respondents. Each interview lasted for 20-25 minutes and the session was recorded. The recording was later transcribed. Following Braun and Clarke (2006), the interview data were identified and analyzed for reporting patterns or themes.

Meanwhile, the questionnaire was distributed to the respondents online. It took each respondent about 20-30 minutes to fill in the questionnaire. The results were analyzed statistically. Statistical analysis was also conducted to examine correlations between the variables under study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the instruments used to collect and analyze the data related to the culture and citizenship literacy skills of pre-service EFL teachers participating in the PERMATA-SAKTI Program, this section presents the results based on the interviews and questionnaires from the respondents.

4.1 Interview Results

After analyzing the data, three themes were uncovered: (1) the learning process, (2) culture and citizenship implementation, and (3) the benefits of the program. They are explained in the next sub-sections.

4.1.1 The learning process

From the interviews, pre-service EFL teachers reported that the learning process in the PERMATA-SAKTI Program improved their cultural literacy and citizenship skills, while also broadening their cultural competence. They stated that they increased their knowledge of Indonesian culture and civic insights. These pre-service teachers, when asked about the program's implementation with students from different regions, highlighted the numerous benefits they gained during the program.

- (R1) The learning program outside my field of interest through the Nusantara Module expanded my knowledge and now makes me think flexibly and comprehensively. I can also explore my knowledge of Indonesian culture and broaden my national insight by meeting students from various regions in Indonesia in class.
- (R2) The PERMATA-SAKTI Program is a new experience for me because it brought together friends from outside the province and island with different cultural and religious backgrounds. In addition, this program introduced a different system of lectures and added to my knowledge about Indonesia's cultural diversity.

- (R3) The PERMATA-SAKTI Program is exciting because I met students from various regions in Indonesia. I learned a lot about cultural diversity and values embraced in other regions. In addition, this program expanded my knowledge by choosing courses outside of my field of study.
- (R4) Implementing the PERMATA-SAKTI Program was very effective in enhancing my understanding of various cultures in Indonesia. I highly appreciate the hard work of the teaching team in designing and implementing this program. Students from various regions in Indonesia bring unique experiences and stories, so I am inspired to become more open-minded and tolerant towards differences.
- (R5) The PERMATA-SAKTI Program is considered necessary for strengthening the unity of Indonesian students by connecting students from various regions with different cultural and religious backgrounds. This program helped to increase my understanding and appreciation of Indonesia's cultural diversity. The teaching team that organized the program successfully carried out their task well.

The interview respondents (R1-R5) revealed that the PERMATA-SAKTI Program had expanded their knowledge about Indonesian cultures, improved their national insight, introduced a different academic system, and increased their knowledge about Indonesia's cultural diversity. They also stated that the program helped to enhance their understanding and appreciation of Indonesia's cultural diversity and strengthen the unity of Indonesian students. Overall, the program provided new and beneficial experiences and knowledge for both students and educators. It strengthened the values of unity and togetherness among students with different cultural and religious backgrounds, providing an opportunity to deepen their learning experiences and strengthen their potential.

4.1.2 Culture and citizenship implementation

The participants presented their perspectives on the implementation of culture and citizenship in the PERMATA-SAKTI program and their interest in how practical the implementation is. Regarding prospective EFL teachers' perception of cultural and citizenship literacy, the question is, "Do you think the PERMATA-SAKTI program is effective for implementing cultural and citizenship literacy in the learning process?" The perception of prospective EFL teachers towards this question is as follows:

- (R6) This program enhances students' understanding of various aspects of culture and citizenship. Through this program, students can interact with friends from various regions and islands in Indonesia who come from different cultural and religious backgrounds.
- (R7) The PERMATA-SAKTI Program is effective in introducing cultural diversity to students. During the learning process, lecturers often discuss the participants' culture, providing new insights and an introduction to the multicultural diversity of the Indonesian nation.
- (R8) This program effectively strengthens cultural communication among participants from different regions and helps me learn about customs and cultures from other regions in Indonesia. In addition, this program also improves my ability to speak Indonesian in daily conversations because I am used to speaking in regional languages and English.
- (R9) The PERMATA-SAKTI Program is effective in helping students understand cultural literacy and citizenship through opportunities to meet friends from different cultural backgrounds and learn about the diversity of Indonesian culture.

- (R10) The PERMATA-SAKTI program effectively improves students' understanding of cultural literacy and citizenship. Through this program, students can learn about various Indonesian cultures and expand their knowledge through engaging activities. This program also helps enhance a sense of unity and national solidarity.

Based on the results of interviews conducted by the researchers regarding culture and citizenship literacy through the PERMATA-SAKTI program, it can be concluded that the activities of the program are appropriate to increase the EFL pre-service teacher knowledge about many things related to the culture and citizenship of Indonesians through cross-cultural interactions.

4.1.3 *Benefits of the program*

The learning experiences shared with students from various parts of Indonesia allowed them to explore different cultures and gain insights into new traditions and customs. Embracing new cultures is an opportunity to step out of one's comfort zone and discover something new. Studying at a different university may also mean encountering different teaching styles. The PERMATA-SAKTI program offers an opportunity to experience different teaching methods and determine the type of learning that works best for each student. Below are some excerpts from students' responses to the question, "What benefits did you gain from participating in the student exchange program?"

- (R11) The opportunity I had while studying at three universities (Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, Universitas Muhammadiyah Kendari, and Universitas Kanjuruhan Malang) was extraordinary, even though the program was fully implemented using online learning. I was able to meet new lecturers and make friends from diverse backgrounds. Through this program, I gained a better understanding of the cultural diversity that exists in our country.
- (R12) Participating in this program enhanced my academic skills, including time management and prioritization, while in a competitive learning environment. The program also allowed me to develop my civic literacy, which is crucial to becoming a responsible and active citizen. As a result, I am more prepared to contribute to society after completing my classes during this program.
- (R13) Through my participation in the PERMATA-SAKTI program, I interacted with students from diverse regions of Indonesia and gained insights into each area's unique characteristics and cultural richness. This experience enhanced my interpersonal and communication skills by engaging with individuals from different backgrounds and cultures. Additionally, the program gave me a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by various regions of Indonesia and how they can contribute to social and economic development.
- (R14) This student exchange program provides many benefits for me, such as expanding my social network. I met new friends from various regions in Indonesia and could learn a lot from them. Besides that, I also got to know different cultures and habits, which increased my understanding of Indonesian society.
- (R15) The student exchange program has given me many benefits. Aside from increasing my knowledge about Indonesia's diverse culture, I also have the opportunity to meet friends from different regions with different cultural and religious backgrounds. This has broadened my perspective on the diversity of a nation and enhanced my interpersonal skills.

Based on several opinions expressed by respondents regarding the benefits of implementing the PERMATA-SAKTI program, the program could introduce and

preserve the diversity of customs and culture that Indonesia owns. It could happen by developing an educational curriculum containing cultural education. It contributes to the next generation in maintaining the culture of Indonesia. In short, implementing the PERMATA-SAKTI program has achieved the government's goal, namely to broaden the horizons of Indonesian students in recognizing the diversity of culture, religion, ethnicity, race, religion, and language.

4.2 Questionnaire Results

The results showed that the respondents of the PERMATA-SAKTI program had a positive impact on their cultural literacy and citizenship skills. Furthermore, the EFL pre-service teacher's responses for each item are described and discussed further.

4.2.1 Pre-service EFL teachers' perception of culture literacy

Figure 1 shows the questionnaire results related to the EFL students' perception of cultural literacy in the PERMATA-SAKTI program.

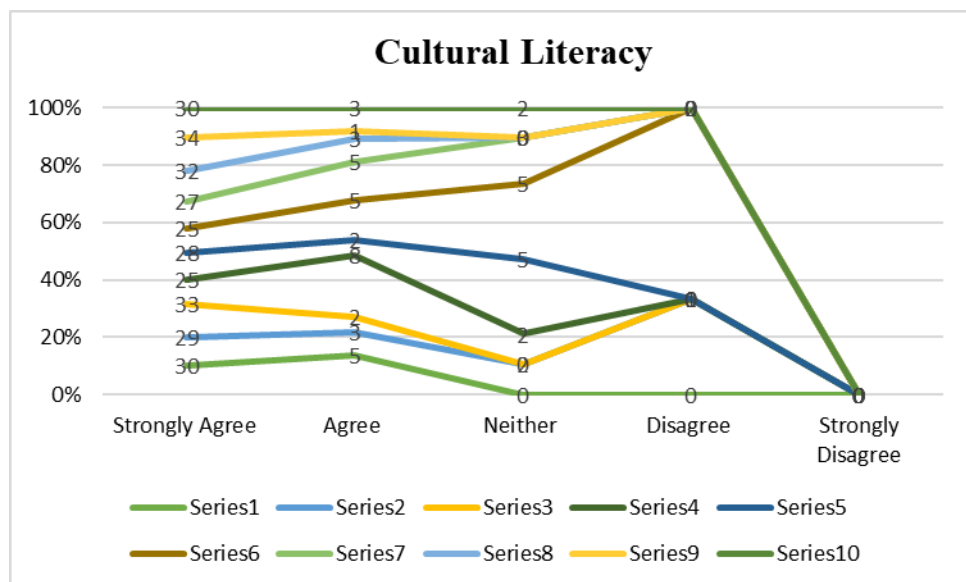


Figure 1. EFL 'students' perception of culture literacy of the PERMATA-SAKTI Program.

The respondents provided positive responses to the 10 questionnaire items given. In this case, the highest response indicates that the PERMATA-SAKTI program helped the pre-service EFL teachers understand and learn about various cultural topics more intensively. Through this program, students are exposed to various cultures and better understand how to interact with others.

The PERMATA-SAKTI program involved cross-campus learning intending to provide new insights and knowledge to address educational disparities. Additionally, the program aimed to foster brotherhood among regions, ethnicities, cultures, and religions to strengthen the spirit of national unity. Participants in the program participated because they could foresee its value and benefits. The program also

enhanced students' cultural skills, helped pre-service EFL teachers learn about students' cultures from various regions in Indonesia, and taught them to respect the nation's diversity. Student exchange programs could strengthen friendships among regions, ethnicities, cultures, and religions. In contrast, the pre-service EFL teachers' innovation, creativity, personality, and independence could develop through experiences in dealing with real-life situations and various dynamic fields such as competency, real-life issues, social interactions, collaboration, self-management, performance demands, targets, and achievements.

4.2.2 Pre-service EFL teachers' perception of citizenship literacy

Figure 2 shows the questionnaire results related to the EFL students' perception of citizenship literacy in the PERMATA-SAKTI program.

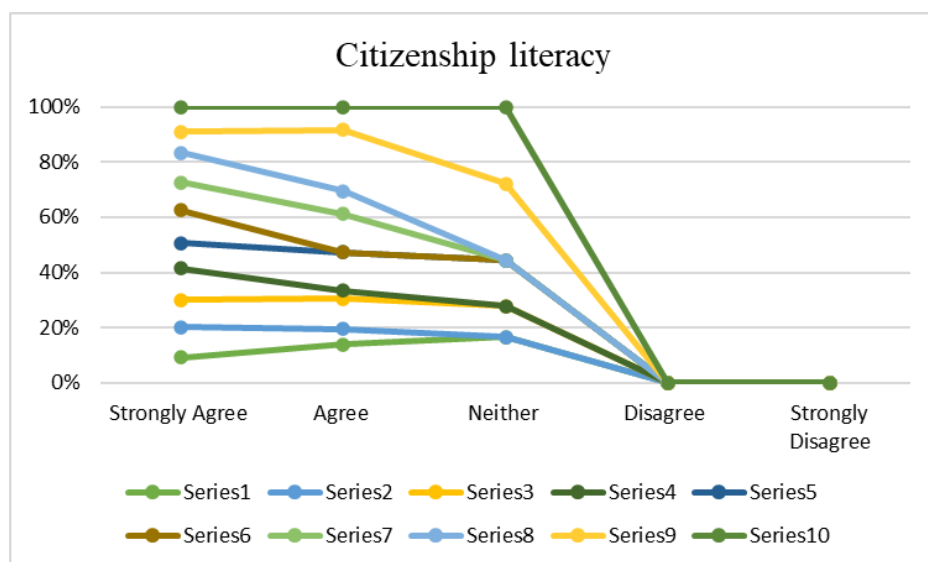


Figure 2. Perception about citizenship literacy of the PERMATA-SAKTI Program.

Based on the items, the respondents also gave positive responses indicating that the PERMATA-SAKTI program could help EFL students understand and learn about their rights and obligations as citizens. From the questionnaire statements, it can be concluded that the PERMATA-SAKTI program shaped their citizenship by forming citizens who understand their rights and obligations and have noble character. Indonesia is known to the world as a friendly nation, which adds value to foreigners and our diversity. Therefore, discipline in social life can strengthen citizenship literacy skills. The implementation of this program could foster a spirit of tolerance and mutual respect and enhance the values of unity and nationalism. This was achieved through interactions between students and lecturers at universities who come from different ethnicities, races, and religions.

The program provided an opportunity for students to establish a foundation of mutual respect regardless of their backgrounds. It trained them to build good communication skills from different perspectives. Hence, it helped them to have excellent teamwork when entering the job market. Furthermore, the PERMATA-SAKTI program trained their abilities to overcome problems and find solutions. This is in line with the concept of the PERMATA-SAKTI program where students are

expected to live independently outside their comfort environment. The pre-service EFL teachers who participated in the PERMATA-SAKTI program had to interact with many students from different universities. Therefore, good communication skills were necessary. Obtaining higher education provided opportunities for them to develop themselves optimally, acquiring the attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed to face global challenges.

In this collaboration, the pre-service EFL teachers practiced realizing their citizenship literacy. The relationship between them allowed each of them to exchange information related to phenomena and issues that occurred in their respective areas. The harmony in their relationship could foster their love for the cultural diversity of their homeland. It encourages them to strengthen and expand their competencies. The harmony also prevented division from occurring in society. This attitude is a must and has become a hereditary culture in Indonesian society. The interaction among these pre-service EFL teachers provided guidelines in the form of customs, norms, values, and rules determined by fellow community members to be adhered to together. Each region has unique traditions that should be respected by everyone.

5. DISCUSSION

This research found that the PERMATA-SAKTI program facilitated the pre-service EFL teachers to gain knowledge from various scientific fields. Based on the findings, the researchers found that the program played a role in developing their cultural literacy and citizenship. Primarily through the inculcation of social values, namely solidarity, unity, diversity, culture, and tolerance in students, especially pre-service EFL teachers. They can exchange ideas, exchange cultures, and respect each other's differences in diversity through this program.

Consequently, the pre-service EFL teachers gain great information to know multiple ethnic groups, nations, cultures, races, and religions. Thereby, it strengthens the essence of the value of national unity and integrity. [Tran and Bui \(2023\)](#) realized that a student exchange program can increase the EFL's awareness of the value of learning a culture of unity in diversity for incorporating the development of regional languages and cultural literacy in other countries. Students who are the target group in the implementation of the independent campus policy are trained to adapt to a multicultural environment, language, and culture ([Mambu, 2016](#)). Hence, this phenomenon indirectly enhances the level of cross-cultural awareness among EFL students who are pursuing a major in English Education. This attribute is considered vital for their academic and professional growth.

The PERMATA-SAKTI program plays a pivotal role in expanding knowledge related to diversity in nation-building ([Krishnapatria, 2021](#)). This program not only allows students to broaden their understanding of diversity in Indonesia but also helps them grasp the essence of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (unity in diversity) through interactions with individuals from various backgrounds. Moreover, it fosters their development in intercultural communication and teaches them to appreciate differences. As a result, the program enables students to develop the skills necessary for critical reading to access useful information from foreign sources given in the English language. The PERMATA-SAKTI initiative is in line with the vision of MBKM, that is to cultivate intelligent and heterogeneous generations in Indonesia.

Moreover, the findings indicate that the independent learning program is catalyzing a significant transformation in the higher education curriculum known as the student-centered curriculum, redefining students as the primary authorities in their own learning processes, as also found by [Joseph et al. \(2020\)](#). This shift empowers them to take greater responsibility for their education. Within this student-centered framework, pre-service EFL teachers can engage in educational objectives that are open to diverse experiences and perspectives, fostering a culture of validation for ideas originating from students of various backgrounds in the program. Consequently, it fosters the development of exceptional writing abilities in individuals, enabling them to effectively showcase the cultural aspects of their own country on a global scale.

Additionally, the PERMATA-SAKTI program meets the needs and promotes self-directed learning in higher education. It enriches pre-service EFL teachers' knowledge in developing a clear mechanism to organize and manage independent learning that can positively influence their teaching and learning activities ([Kholmuratovich, 2020](#)). Furthermore, it equips pre-service EFL teachers with the knowledge and skills to teach their EFL learners about cross-cultural understanding while also protecting their nation from negative foreign cultural influences.

These findings are consistent with the research conducted by [Soltis \(2015\)](#) as well, which highlights the role of universities in offering educational opportunities that promote liberation and foster the growth of leadership skills. These institutions aim to cultivate an understanding of a nation that is influenced by the varied rights, traditions, languages, and faiths practiced by its citizens. Creating an environment that allows students to not only acquire proficiency in the English language but also develop a deeper understanding of the historical and cultural aspects of different societies, is advantageous for pre-service EFL teachers.

In addition, cultural and citizenship literacy is the ability of individuals and communities to behave towards their social environment as part of a culture and nation. The principles of cultural and citizenship literacy consist of (1) culture as a realm of thought through language and behavior, (2) art as a cultural product, (3) multicultural and participatory citizenship, (4) nationalism, (5) inclusivity, and (6) direct experience ([Wahyuningsih et al., 2019](#)). Individuals and communities can behave towards their social environment as part of a culture and nation ([Abdullah et al., 2019](#)).

The learning activities carried out by students while studying across study programs through student exchange activities can develop their insight into *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (unity in diversity) ([Krishnapatria, 2021](#)). Therefore, it can be concluded that this program can expand the students' networking of different ethnic, traditional, religious, and cultural backgrounds. Even though they came from different backgrounds, they can unite as a nation in unity. The student exchange program can shape Indonesian students' attitudes and characters to appreciate the diversity of cultures, views, religions, beliefs, and tolerance for other opinions ([Fuadi & Aswita, 2021](#)). The results of this program can minimize various problems of inequality in facilities and infrastructure at higher education in Indonesia ([Fitriasari et al., 2021](#)).

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the researchers found that the PERMATA-SAKTI program can strengthen pre-service EFL teachers' cultural and citizenship literacy.

The program is essential in developing characters who highly value differences. This can be seen through the cultivation of social values such as solidarity, unity, diversity, culture, and tolerance. Through this program, they demonstrate an attitude of mutual respect for differences in their country.

This literacy skill is important to master in the 21st century. Indonesia has diverse ethnic groups, languages, habits, customs, beliefs, and social layers. Therefore, Indonesia is also involved in global development and change. Therefore, the ability to be tolerant, by accepting, adapting, and behaving wisely to this diversity becomes absolute. The opportunity to interact also trains pre-service EFL teachers to be more compliant in dealing with new environments outside their comfort zone, improving their ability to get along with people from different backgrounds and allowing them to establish friendships and form family bonds with students from various universities in Indonesia. With this program, pre-service EFL teachers are expected to love Indonesia more than their obligation to learn the language and culture of a foreign language.

The present study has provided significant implications in the field of ELT. However, it only emphasizes one specific sort of activity among the nine programs available in MBKM. Regardless of the limitations, it may contribute to the ELT studies, particularly in the area of culture and citizenship literacy for pre-service EFL teachers. Therefore, future studies are suggested to investigate more activities in the program to provide more comprehensive results.

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Challenges in Reading English Academic Texts for Non-English Major Students of an Indonesian University

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Abstract

This study examines the barriers to reading academic texts among university students for whom English is a foreign language. While many previous studies have focused on instructional design for building academic reading skills, this study focuses on the fundamental issues that need consideration before setting up the instructional design for English academic reading. Taking an interpretive phenomenological viewpoint, this study applied a qualitative method through an online survey and interviews. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, online data collection was the most accessible means of approaching the students. Ninety-five students from various non-English study programs (courses) at a private university voluntarily responded to the open-ended online questionnaire, providing survey data. Five students provided further data through individual interviews on their academic reading challenges. A thematic analysis of the survey data revealed four themes and eight subthemes representing the students' challenges, which were explored further in the interviews. These challenges and the relationships among them are discussed. The results suggest that most students depended on single-word meanings as their

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prime strategy for achieving comprehension. However, this strategy also represented the most notable challenge in their effective reading of English academic texts. They failed to comprehend the text effectively because their translation did not make sense. Furthermore, the nature of the reading strategies of the student cohort had an impact on their baseline reading proficiency.

Keywords: Academic reading obstacles, academic reading skills, comprehension, English as a foreign language, translation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The ability to successfully read, comprehend, synthesize, and reproduce the ideas presented in academic texts is central to university students' success in their studies. The currency of academia is represented by peer-reviewed texts, such as journal articles, which capture the development of knowledge and ideas. However, these texts present a considerable challenge to the uninitiated because they employ abstract and technical language, representing abstract 'institutional' rather than 'everyday' knowledge. This challenge is exacerbated for students for whom English is not their first language. According to [Rose \(2018a\)](#), students are generally left to work out the meanings of these complex texts on their own, which may lead them to avoid readings and consequently miss out on critical understandings of course content and the academic language necessary to produce assignments effectively. Thus, students must grasp this language and knowledge to engage profoundly and successfully in their coursework and professional lives ([Rolls & Wignell, 2018](#)).

Studies on reading in academic settings in the Indonesian context report that university students have problems extracting meaning and receive limited reading support. Previous studies on academic reading suggest that students struggle with digesting the meaning of academic reading texts ([Anwar & Sailuddin, 2022](#); [Dardjito, 2019](#); [Erten, 2018](#); [Fitriana, 2018](#)). In this regard, many English classrooms in Indonesian higher education are organized for academic or specific purposes, emphasizing English grammar and reading skills ([Solikhah, 2020](#); [Yulia et al., 2020](#)). This implies that the lecturers focus on the disciplinary content and do not prioritize reading support for the students ([Andrianatos, 2019](#); [Nabhan & Hidayat, 2018](#); [Rahmat et al., 2020](#)). Some studies also explore instructional models to facilitate academic reading, highlighting the need for a reading support system ([Ismail & Edi, 2022](#); [Pustika & Wiedarti, 2019](#)).

Despite this study being based in Indonesia, which represents a specific cultural and linguistic context, similar issues with reading strategies and comprehension have been revealed in various English as a foreign language settings. For example, [Hartshorn et al. \(2017\)](#) and [Singh \(2019\)](#) suggest that students in the US and Malaysian universities faced exacerbated reading challenges because English was not their first language. Similarly, [Owen et al. \(2021\)](#) found that students in Nepal and Sweden struggled with academic reading readiness, primarily due to a lack of English exposure in academic settings. [Hezam et al. \(2022\)](#) identify vocabulary and word recognition as the most significant challenges among male and female Saudi students. A study by [Al-Shboul et al. \(2013\)](#) examining reading anxiety and difficulties faced by students in

Jordan reveals five constructs: unknown vocabulary, unfamiliar topics, unfamiliar culture, worry about reading effects, and fear of making errors. The strong implication of this research is that the introduction of reading scaffolding and metacognitive skills could significantly decrease students' reading anxiety and improve comprehension. While many studies on academic reading focused on the challenges faced by master's level students, research on English academic reading difficulties and students' strategies to understand English academic text within the early year of undergraduate studies is limited. Therefore, this research study aims to address this gap by examining the challenges and strategies of first-year undergraduate students in an English as a foreign language setting when reading English academic texts.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section discusses the literature and findings related to English academic reading and the research methodology used for this study.

2.1 The Complexities of Academic Text

Understanding how meaning is made in academic texts is essential to determine the extent and approach required to help students unpack the texts for meaning. In more abstract forms of written language, there is a disruption in the alignment between the language used and the actual events being described. [Halliday and Matthiessen \(2013\)](#) and [Rolls and Wignell \(2018\)](#) refer to this phenomenon as a grammatical metaphor and technicality. Consequently, academic texts become complex due to the use of abstract language, which may obscure the texts' meanings for students unfamiliar with these terms.

While spoken (everyday) language explicitly states the relationships between processes and participants using concrete terms, written (academic) language bundles these processes into words or clauses, which may be one of many within a sentence. For example, the grammatical metaphor 'deforestation' refers to the concept of 'when humans cut down forests'. Consequently, in an academic text, a single sentence may present a sequence of different (but related) concepts bundled together in several clauses that include grammatical metaphors or technical terms.

Beyond understanding the text at a lexical and clause level, extracting meaning from an academic text also requires recognizing the discourse semantic patterns in which its genre, field, tenor, and mode are realized ([Martin & Rose, 2007](#)). According to [Rose \(2018b\)](#), texts are not strings of un-associated words; rather, meanings are arranged in layers starting at the level of the whole text, then sections, paragraphs, and sentences. Each paragraph represents a phase of meaning, and 'each sentence is made of groups of words that provide a chunk of meaning'. Therefore, the sense of a text can only be found by interpreting these 'chunks of meaning' about the context of the meanings conveyed in each text layer. Interpreting meanings then requires students to be critical and active readers.

Lecturers tend to assume that students will manage the reading requirements of their courses independently. [Rose \(2018b\)](#) advocates for university lecturers to take a more active role by providing explicit scaffolding of course readings to help students

recognize and make meaning at the whole text, paragraph, sentence, and word level and to model reading strategies.

2.2 The Context for Indonesian University Students

Undergraduate university students in Indonesia are required to write a thesis as the final project of their three-year study. Consequently, they must immerse themselves in academic text from the beginning of their university life to enrich their content knowledge, appraise a comprehensive body of literature within their discipline, and prepare themselves for thesis writing. In the context of university studies in countries where English is not the lingua franca, academic texts present a challenge for the students and the teaching staff. Previous studies conducted in the Indonesian context support these observations, revealing that students often lack enthusiasm when reading academic materials in English (Sholah, 2021; Wijayanti, 2020; Yulia et al., 2020). This implies that acquiring comprehension of English academic texts will be a long journey for students and staff.

Since the English language dominates academic publications in the Indonesian context, it becomes the students' principal tension in their studies. They often struggle with general English proficiency and must take an enormous leap in acquiring academic English or English for Academic Purposes (Wilson, 2016). For example, students find their lack of English vocabulary, the complexity of English grammar, pronunciation difficulties, and inadequate speaking and listening skills all create challenges in reading and understanding the academic text in English (Angellia & Listyani, 2019; Nurhayati, 2020; Suryanto & Sari, 2021). This, in turn, affects their ability to improve their academic English.

Furthermore, because the students realize that reading comprehension of academic texts in English is essential to their study, these barriers create anxiety. These tensions then become a barrier for the students to engage with their academic texts (Rafik-Galea, 2010; Wu, 2011), and many students respond by avoiding English academic texts and all English texts altogether (Dardjito, 2019). For instance, Rahmat et al. (2020) and Anwar and Sailuddin (2022) found that university students experienced problems translating and comprehending difficult academic words. Thus, students experienced frustration in comprehending English academic texts and understanding the language (Habibian et al., 2015; Masduqi, 2014). This lack of engagement inhibits students' potential to enhance their ability to critically engage with the discourse in their discipline and actively contribute to advancing knowledge in their discipline.

Because reading English academic texts is largely unavoidable, students attempt to comprehend the texts, albeit not necessarily successfully. In a previous study on reading comprehension, Dardjito (2019) found that the undergraduate students of cross-study programs had been taught reading strategies, including metacognitive reading strategies to read effectively, in their previous level of study. However, they did not appear to apply these strategies effectively, resulting in their reading comprehension ability being in the lowest quartile. These findings contradict the application of metacognitive reading strategies in the Master's Program for English Education students. The strategies significantly correlate to students' reading self-efficacy (Sulistyawati & Mbato, 2022). It indicates that, as a rule of thumb, language maturity and language mastery enable the students of the Master's Program to have some extent of self-efficacy in reading English academic text and the ability to apply

metacognitive reading strategies more than undergraduates from cross-study programs.

Finally, while many studies on reading comprehension have been content to examine approaches to reading instruction and reading problems, this study focuses on the students' challenges when engaging in reading English academic texts. In considering the tensions of reading academic texts and the challenges of reading English in an academic setting, this study seeks to understand these challenges from the student's perspective.

3. METHODS

The following sections present the research method used for this study.

3.1 Research Design

This study aims to uncover the students' difficulties in reading academic English texts, which can be identified from their academic reading experiences. The students' reading experiences can be effectively explored using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). IPA aims to provide insights into how individuals in particular contexts or situations experience and interpret those situations, which, in this study, pertains to reading English academic texts as part of their coursework. IPA seeks to reveal and uncover implicit meanings in lived experiences and, at the same time, recognizes the subjectivity of interpretations. As a vehicle for taking an interpretive phenomenological viewpoint (Smith et al., 1999), this study applied a qualitative method that involved surveys and interviews to delve into the participants' experiences regarding their difficulties in reading English academic texts. This method is suitable for investigating the process of learning English as a foreign language because it provides an in-depth understanding of individual students' learning experiences by collecting naturalistic data (Nassaji, 2015). Offering first-hand information about the experiences and perceptions of the research participants allows the researchers to understand better the various factors that influence each individual's reading, thereby revealing both commonalities confirmed by the literature and distinctive features that may be unique to individuals or groups in this cultural context.

3.2 Research Participants

The research participants were 95 first-year students across non-English study undergraduate programs at a university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. They were from the Faculty of Economics and Psychology with an English proficiency score ranging from 300 to 345 (assumed to be equivalent to a paper-based TOEFL score). These students, aged between 19 and 20, had different English learning backgrounds, having formally studied English ranging from 6 to 12 grades, depending on the school they attended. Due to these differences in English study experiences, it was predicted that they might also have different English proficiency. In the university they were attending, they had an English subject in their first-year study.

These students participated in this research from snowball-random sampling. It was conducted by asking lecturers to invite their classes to participate after describing

and discussing the study with their students. This sampling approach aimed to have varied responses from students in the diverse non-English study program.

3.3 Data Collection

The data were acquired through an online survey collection process because of the Covid-19 outbreak. The survey data aimed to provide information about the students' challenges in reading English academic texts utilizing the following instrument. The students were introduced to the voluntary survey by invitation through their WhatsApp group, moderated by their unit lecturers. They were asked if they would like to participate, emphasizing the voluntary nature of their participation. It was also assured that their identities would remain anonymous, and no institutional or lecturer bias would influence their decision to participate. The research team prepared a Google form for the survey and shared the questionnaire link through the unit lecturers, who forwarded the links to their students in the WhatsApp group. Ninety-five students voluntarily responded to this questionnaire and participated in the research.

The online questionnaire comprised open-ended questions about the students' experience reading English journal articles. This instrument was developed by the researchers and validated by an expert before the data collection. The questionnaire encompassed questions about their experience comprehending academic texts, including journal articles and course reference books, at the vocabulary, sentences, and whole text levels. The four open-ended questions included:

1. *Ketika Anda membaca artikel ilmiah seperti artikel jurnal berbahasa Inggris, apa yang menjadi kesulitan Anda dalam memahami isi artikel?* [When you read scientific articles such as English journal articles, what are your difficulties in understanding the content of the article?]
2. *Dari aspek kosa kata, kesulitan apa yang Anda hadapi?* [In terms of (understanding the) vocabulary, what difficulties do you have?]
3. *Dari aspek kalimat, kesulitan apa yang Anda hadapi?* [In terms of (understanding the) sentences, what difficulties do you have?]
4. *Sebutkan satu hal yang paling menyulitkan Anda dalam memahami artikel berbahasa Inggris?* [Name one aspect that you consider the most difficult for you when trying to understand English articles.]

3.4 Data Analysis

The text data of this research were analyzed using thematic analysis, which offers flexibility to discover unexpected responses to our questions because it emphasizes identifying meaningful patterns in the dataset with no priory assumption. Instead, the themes emerged from the qualitative data as a result of the researchers' reflective analysis. The thematic analysis comprises familiarization with the data, coding, generating initial themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming the emerged themes, and writing up (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In applying thematic analysis, this current research used a semantic approach that explicitly inferred the data content for the theme (Anderson & Clarke, 2019; Braun & Clarke, 2020; Rance et al., 2014). In applying the thematic analysis, three researchers analyzed the text data and conducted online discussions via email and video conference to synchronize their data analysis.

Interviews with five respondents were conducted to confirm and further explore their experience in dealing with English academic articles. The data enriched the online questionnaire distributed in advance and provided a complete understanding of the themes that emerged through thematic analysis.

4. RESULTS

This study aimed to discover the students' reading difficulties in reading English academic texts. The main research question is: 'What are the key problems of first-year undergraduate students in reading English academic text?' The survey of 95 students indicated that students encounter various challenges while reading English journal articles, as illustrated in Figure 1.

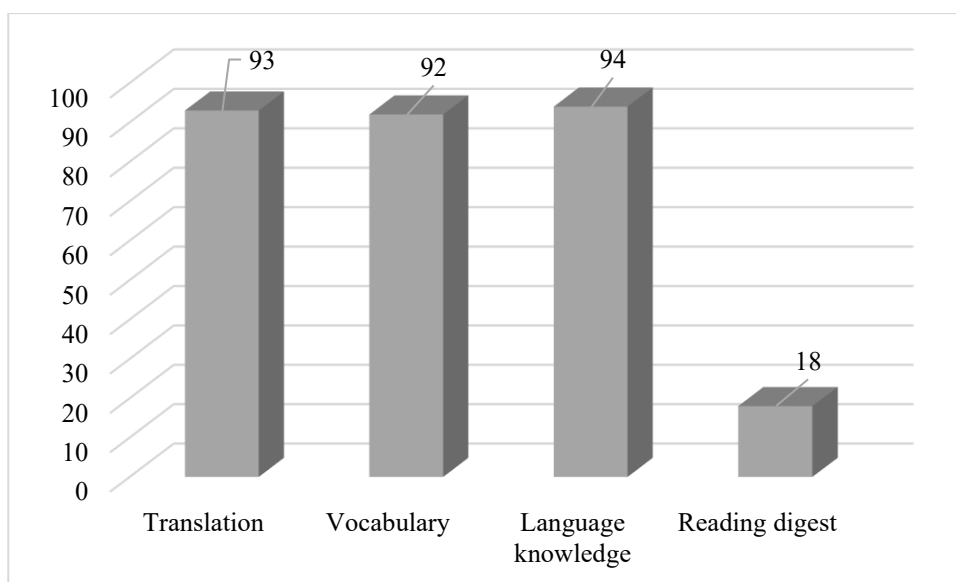


Figure 1. Themes emerging regarding challenges in reading English academic texts and the extent to which they were experienced across the cohort.

Figure 1 illustrates the four main themes and the number of participants (overall $n=95$) who reported the themes as challenging in reading academic texts, such as journal articles in English. The four main themes are vocabulary, translation, language knowledge, and reading digest. Most participants said that it was challenging to comprehend English text because of their low proficiency in English language knowledge. Only 18 of the 95 respondents suggested they were aware of their problem comprehending the academic text after translating it into Bahasa Indonesia.

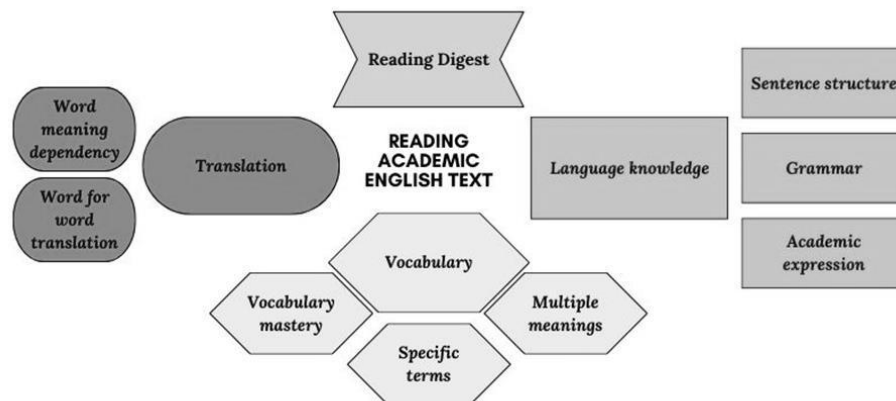


Figure 2. Themes and subthemes of the students' challenges in reading English academic texts.

The following discusses the details of each theme and the subthemes. All themes but Reading Digest comprise sub-themes that provide more nuanced dimensions to the themes.

4.1 Vocabulary

The vocabulary theme has three sub-themes, i.e., vocabulary mastery, specific terms, and multiple meanings. Participants admitted that vocabulary was the main challenge for them. Some participants stated that they often consulted the dictionary to ensure individual word meanings. While multiple-word meanings were sometimes recognized, participants did not usually know which meaning was correct for the context.

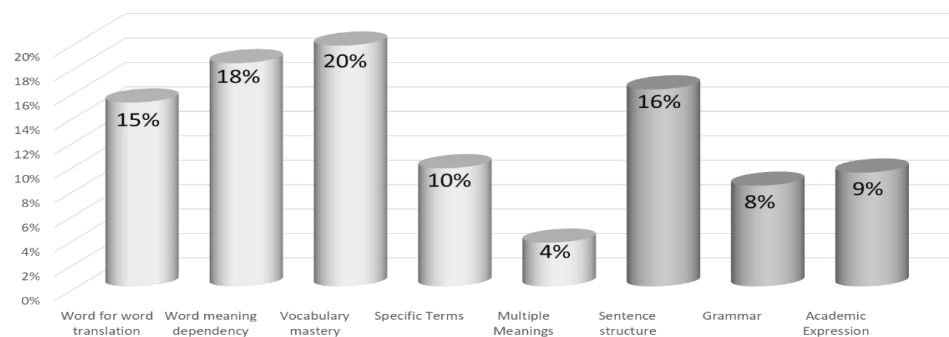


Figure 3. The extent to which participants reported reading comprehension difficulties represented by the sub-themes.

4.2 Translation

The translation is defined by [Hendrawati and Budiarta \(2017\)](#) as the meaning transfer process from the source language into the target language. In the context of this study, it was found that translation encompasses two sub-themes: word-meaning

dependency and word-for-word translation. These two themes were interrelated with regard to how the participants in this study tried to translate English into Indonesian based on the ‘word’ definition as in the vocabulary theme.

The participants’ feedback suggests that their primary focus was understanding the meaning of single words and mistakenly believed that knowing every word’s meaning would guarantee their reading comprehension. For example, the participant coded L11 states:

- (1) “...*Tidak tahu artinya, harus buka kamus. Setelah buka kamus dan diartikan perkata ternyata kalimat tidak nyambung*”. – [I] did not know the meaning [of the words] and needed to consult the dictionary. After consulting the dictionary and understanding the meaning of every single word, [I] found that the sentences still did not convey any relevant meaning.

Thus, the student’s approach was to decode every word to understand the text rather than decoding meanings in the context of the field, tenor, and mode of the text and meanings at the whole text, paragraph, and sentence level. They instantly used online translation, which translated the text word for word.

4.3 Language knowledge

Language knowledge in this study is defined as the student’s ability to comprehend and correctly recognize the language rules, such as word spelling, syntax, and grammatical mechanisms. This theme comprises subthemes of academic expression, grammar, and sentence structure. Students in this study found complex and compound sentences in the texts challenging, and getting the gist of long sentences was hard for them. They reasoned that the way to meet this challenge was to know the meaning of each word.

Additionally, the students indicated that their confusion about the knowledge of English language grammar was another issue. They argued that they did not understand the grammar and vocabulary. The research participants found identifying the subject and verb difficult in a sentence. They considered this error as a failure in identifying word meaning. For example, the participant coded L83 states that:

- (2) “...*kurang menguasai bahasa Inggris, apalagi kurang menguasai kosa katanya, sehingga susah untuk mentranslet ke Bahasa Indonesia.*” – [I] have not mastered English and, moreover, have not mastered English vocabulary, so it is hard [for me] to translate [the text] into Indonesian.

4.4 Reading Digest

The responses of the research participants also helped the researchers understand their attitudes and the strategies utilized to comprehend an English academic article. Participants considered the 5000 to 8000-word English journal article to be lengthy. One of the respondents in the interview stated that she usually summarized the article first, tried to comprehend the article, and translated the summary version when she did not comprehend it. She used a summary online application, Resoomer, and then translated this shorter version to understand the article.

The rest of the respondents in the interview translated the article using Google Translate. They believed knowing each word’s meaning would enable them to understand the text. Consequently, they usually translated any English text using

online translation machines, which mostly approach the translation word for word. After reading the translated version, they realized they did not grasp the text's main idea. Additionally, the word-for-word translation did not provide a solution for them to understand the given text.

5. DISCUSSION

This discussion explores and elaborates on three main areas of students' reported difficulties in academic reading: vocabulary, translation (of words from the source language to the target language), and language knowledge. The study has revealed students' perceptions of what makes English academic texts challenging, with vocabulary and translation approaches being key areas of difficulty. Regarding unfamiliar vocabulary, previous discussions (Rolls & Wignell, 2018) on how academic text provides specialized meanings through abstraction and metaphor predict the challenges that novice students face, particularly those from EFL backgrounds who are simultaneously grappling with the typical challenges of reading and comprehending general English in L2.

5.1 Vocabulary

In this study context, the students identified vocabulary as individual words, which aligns with the definition provided by experts defining vocabulary as the lexicon, the dictionary entry, or the word (Laufer & Ravenhorst-Kalovski, 2010; Nagy & Townsend, 2012). When faced with unfamiliar vocabulary, the student-respondents looked at the word-for-word meaning before attempting to grasp the meaning of the whole sentence unsuccessfully. Vocabulary emerged as one of the biggest obstacles to students' academic reading, consistent with Anwar and Sailuddin (2022), who propose that students frequently encounter difficulties comprehending challenging vocabulary. Similarly, in the Malaysian undergraduate students' context, vocabulary is recognized as a significant factor contributing to students' anxiety (Rahmat et al., 2020). Responding to the findings of vocabulary mastery as a reading problem, this study reveals the strategies (albeit unsuccessful) students employed to overcome this difficulty. Additionally, Liu and Read (2020) found that participants in their research lacked knowledge of both general academic vocabulary and discipline-specific terminology to support more fluent academic reading.

Regarding the strategies employed, the required contextualization of vocabulary knowledge can be overwhelming, and synonym searches are poor compensation for vocabulary knowledge (Lawrence et al., 2019). Hence, students should be encouraged to utilize their relevant background knowledge, including prior knowledge, experiences, interests, goals, and language competency, which are crucial in interpreting a text (Kim, 2017). Furthermore, the students failed to interpret or guess the meanings of individual words by drawing on the context at the sentence and whole-text level. Rose (2018b) suggests that this metacognitive strategy recognizes that meanings are found in "chunks of text," not individual words, underpinning adequate comprehension. Some participants of our research admitted their low vocabulary mastery, leading them to frequently consult dictionaries to identify multiple individual word meanings. It corresponds to the findings of Levine et al. (2000). As reading is an

active cognitive process toward understanding a text's meaning, it involves understanding the meaning of words through reference to the reader's prior knowledge and inferring the meaning from the context (Rutamornchai & Tepsuriwong, 2022; Velásquez, 2020; Wongwiwattana & Watanapokakul, 2021).

Erten (2018) describes the reciprocal interaction between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension as twofold. The first set of implications involves ways to improve vocabulary through reading, while the second set of messages about the need to pay attention to lexical knowledge while improving reading. Meanwhile, Zhang and Koda (2018) claim that for reading acquisition, pre-existing vocabulary knowledge builds semantic foundations for further exploitation of morphological awareness, which subsequently contributes to reading comprehension and boosts the connection between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. This is why students in Zhang and Koda's study tended to gain more vocabulary through immersion in the context of drawing on pre-existing vocabulary, and this led to higher reading comprehension scores. Conversely, students with lower pre-existing vocabulary knowledge were hindered in their reading comprehension growth and made only small gains in vocabulary size (Dong et al., 2020).

5.2 Translation

From the perspective of translation challenges, the participants of this study presented the multiple meanings of words as a major impediment to their ability to translate individual word meanings effectively. These results fit with the findings of previous studies, which reported that their participants had difficulties in translating and understanding academic words (Anwar & Sailuddin, 2022; Nurmalasari & Haryudin, 2021; Nurul et al., 2022). Translating general English words, let alone academic and discipline-specific terms, in discipline-based texts is difficult for many EFL students (Baumann & Graves, 2010). Lawrence et al. (2019) also found that multiple-meaning words posed a significant problem for the students and that vocabulary knowledge varies and affects reading proficiency and comprehension. Therefore, translation must be accompanied by the aforementioned strategies for selecting the correct translation based on the context at the sentence and whole-text level.

Therova (2020) suggests that prior vocabulary knowledge is one of the most paramount factors in comprehending texts. This finding is in line with Brooks et al.'s (2021) study, which examined 31 students in an international school, 25 of whom English was their additional language and 6 for whom English was their first language. Their study found that vocabulary knowledge correlated significantly with the student's reading comprehension. Further, they explain that a deliberate focus on words in context would further augment the vocabulary learning gains that would be beneficial for developing knowledge. However, considering the number of word families presented in an English L2 reading environment and the importance of gaining a nuanced context-specific understanding of the word meanings, the vocabulary learning task is inevitably formidable (Godfroid et al., 2018).

Several strategies focusing on vocabulary knowledge have been suggested. However, the usefulness of vocabulary building as the main strategy for improving reading comprehension is questionable. According to Crosson et al. (2019), fluency might be improved by infusing lexical morphology instruction to enhance the accuracy

aspect of lexical access to academic words. Students in their study were taught derivational morphological awareness in reading comprehension and indirect paths of morphological awareness through vocabulary knowledge, sight words reading efficiency, and passage reading efficiency, and thus their comprehension was improved. However, as [Martin and Rose \(2007\)](#) explain, meanings in texts are found by recognizing the semantic patterns in the text as they relate to the texts' genre, field, tenor, and mode. Thus, comprehension involves a range of sophisticated strategies that go far beyond simply focusing on words at a morphological level.

Despite being aware of metacognitive strategies for effective reading, the students in our study resorted to the most immediate strategy at hand. They tended to apply word-for-word translation to comprehend the reading text. Unsurprisingly, their comprehension test revealed a low level of word recognition and reading comprehension proficiency in keeping with findings in similar studies ([Alderson, 2000](#); [Dardjito, 2019](#)). In his research, [Sakurai \(2015\)](#) found a decrease in word-level translation, where students no longer depend on every word's meaning to comprehend multiple reading texts, resulting in improved reading comprehension. However, it must be acknowledged that L2 readers need to accommodate more reading strategies than L1 readers to comprehend the texts ([Altalhab, 2019](#); [Par, 2020](#); [Rutamornchai & Tepsuriwong, 2022](#)).

5.3 Language Knowledge

The student's knowledge of the grammatical structures of English and comprehension of the whole meaning conveyed through the text was another factor that affected their reading comprehension process. This finding corresponds with the results of [Endley \(2016\)](#), who describes English language knowledge as comprising word recognition, word focus of attention, and grammatical issues as the most common problems among his research participants. Further, as emphasized by [Martin and Rose \(2007\)](#) and [Rose \(2018b\)](#), understanding how texts are structured (grammatically) at the whole text, paragraph, sentence, and clause level and grasping the relationship between the chunks of meaning conveyed at each of these levels is an essential aspect of comprehension. In the academic context, vocabulary and grammatical proficiency play a facilitating role in reading comprehension ([Babayiğit & Shapiro, 2020](#)), contributing to the development of vocabulary and reading comprehension through L2 enhancement and the introduction of new ways of thinking ([Dong et al., 2020](#)). The findings of this study correspond to other studies in the Indonesian context that suggest the understanding of English grammar assists the readers in comprehending their readings and, likewise, reading facilitates learning grammar ([Masduqi, 2014](#); [Masduqi et al., 2021](#); [Nurul et al., 2022](#); [Rochmawati et al., 2022](#); [Suryanto & Sari, 2021](#)). It indicates that in English as a foreign language, the readers need English grammar proficiency to read academic English text. This type of text typically utilizes advanced grammar with extensive use of complex sentence clauses.

5.4 Reading Digest

Importantly, motivation in reading, self-efficacy, and achievement goals are positively related to reading strategy use. However, this study found that motivation for reading was, in turn, affected by proficiency levels. [Lin \(2019\)](#) found that students

with high motivation tended to be more persistent in using various reading strategies. The inherent characteristics of extensive reading, such as reading for enjoyment, and the benefits to language skills of extensive L2 reading affected students' motivation and the number of texts they read (Ro, 2016). Therefore, language interactivity is considered one of the specific-purpose reading abilities defined as the interaction between language proficiency and background knowledge (Vahed & Alavi, 2020). In either case, motivation in reading plays an important role in the reading strategies utilized and reading comprehension.

In terms of overall strategies, regarding the above findings, Kim and Kim (2017) established that by initially providing students with reading strategies to effectively comprehend texts in students' L1, comprehension in reading abilities in L2 will increase. Further, prior L1 language and conceptual understanding of texts are essential 'hooks' to build comprehension of the texts in English. Cai and Kunnan (2019) supported this approach by highlighting the importance of building readers' effectiveness and vocabulary proficiency in L2, which can lead to the acquisition of reading skills in the process. As EFL students reach a threshold gained from these general reading interventions, they will be more equipped with comprehension strategies.

Kim and Godfroid (2019) support Rose's (2018a) suggestions that deploying strategies to deeply engage with studying English academic articles is the key for university students to survive in reading understanding. To achieve this, reading materials could be incorporated into a communicative learning sequence, in which the students are required to extract relevant information from a range of additional meaningful tasks requiring linguistic production. Rolls and Wignell (2018) suggest that text concepts can be fleshed out before reading by relating them to students existing knowledge and experience using various media, activities, and discussions. For scaffolding reading of texts, Rose (2018b) provides a sequence for helping students engage with the text meaningfully. This involves introducing the texts in students' everyday language (in this instance Bahasa Indonesia), previewing key concepts and terms, and talking about how the text is structured and where key ideas can be found. Ideally, students should be supported in summarizing these meanings in their own words in English.

6. CONCLUSION

University students must read academic texts such as journal articles as an essential venue for gaining and sharing knowledge in their respective disciplines. However, students who are non-native English speakers face a significant disadvantage in this regard, as English serves as the dominant language in academia and academic publications. The findings of this current study indicate that reading academic texts in English is a challenging activity and that students did not employ effective strategies for unpacking meanings in texts. The students in this study were weak in their English language proficiency, let alone Academic English. Most participants of this research were struggling to comprehend the articles, potentially becoming a barrier to their successful study at the university level and creating anxiety among the students in reading English academic text. Most participants in this research could not comprehend the text because they did not employ the required strategies for

reading, nor did they have sufficient vocabulary, translation, and language knowledge. These findings confirm that relying on word-for-word translation is not an adequate strategy, especially where students have low vocabulary and grammar knowledge levels. This current study was limited to first-year university students at one Indonesian university. Conducting this research across different years of study in a broader range of disciplines and contexts might provide a more comprehensive picture of university students' academic reading performance. Finally, further study on institution policy and professional development for staff to incorporate academic reading scaffolding into the curriculum might provide a good model for facilitating students to be independent learners.

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Fostering Critical Thinking Using Graphic Organizers in English Language Reading Class

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Abstract

Fostering students' critical thinking (CT) is an increasing concern in EFL classrooms in China as many students struggle to utilize the skill, particularly in EFL reading comprehension classes. This study investigated the effects of graphic organizers (GOs) on 60 Chinese senior high school students' CT skills (analyzing and generalizing) in EFL reading classes. This study adopted a quasi-experimental mixed-method research design involving an experiment and an interview. The findings of this study showed the positive impacts of GOs on students' CT skills. After the intervention, the results of the experimental group improved significantly. The findings showed that GOs could effectively improve the analytical and generalization skills of Chinese high school English reading class students. The students in the experimental group reported that the instructions received were motivating, increased their comprehension, made them more focused on reading and aware of CT skills and how to apply them in real reading contexts. This study implies that teachers may

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consider GOs an alternative teaching tool to improve CT skills in English Language reading classes, particularly in EFL contexts. Guidelines for teachers to use the different types of GOs to promote critical thinking should also be prepared to ensure the effective use of GOs in promoting reading comprehension and critical thinking skills.

Keywords: Analyzing, critical thinking, generalizing, graphic organizer, reading.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the areas that has received the most significant concerns in the education context is the need to equip students with 21st-century skills (Albakri et al., 2021; Ismail et al., 2014). Critical thinking skill (CT) is one of the most important components of 21st-century skills (Geisinger, 2016; Sarudin et al., 2019). The integration of CT in the context of language teaching and learning has been highlighted by numerous researchers, and language teachers are encouraged to infuse them into the activities conducted in class (Bao, 2019; Hazaymeh & Alomery, 2022; Ismail et al., 2010; Salleh & Halim, 2019).

CT has been defined in a variety of ways. Facione (2010) viewed CT as a series of cognitive process that requires students to analyze, evaluate, explain, and self-regulate. It emphasizes goal-oriented tasks as well as judgment. Fitriani et al. (2019) defined CT as the ability to think logically and clearly about one's actions and beliefs. It involves autonomous and reflective thought. Critical thinkers can link concepts logically, evaluate arguments objectively, spot errors in thinking, and consciously consider their judgments and values.

As critical thinking is one of the most significant skills in the 21st century (Ismail et al., 2010; Salleh & Halim, 2019), learning to think critically is one of the most desirable goals of the education system. Educators and researchers have explored the approaches to foster students' CT skills as it is essential for students to solve problems in various situations and communicate effectively and accurately. Many researchers highlighted that the best way to teach CT skills is to infuse them into school subjects (Arase et al., 2016; Bao, 2019; Salleh & Halim, 2019).

In the context of English language teaching in China, several studies have reported that many Chinese high school students lack CT skills like reasoning, judging, generalizing, and analyzing, and they argued that the lack of CT skills among the students is due to the traditional teacher-centered, examination-oriented teaching (Nan, 2018; Yang & Wu, 2012; Zhao et al., 2016). Thereupon, Dong (2018) thought that teachers' role should be changed from a dominant role in knowledge delivery to a guide who cultivates critical thinking among students. She further explained that high school students needed more chances to apply their CT skills rather than rote memorization of fact knowledge. Teachers should also be given training on the skills and knowledge to foster students' CT in their teaching.

Several studies have reported specific strategies to improve CT in English classrooms. One of the strategies used to foster CT is using Graphic organizers (GOs). GOs use visual symbols to convey meaning, similar to thinking maps (Kurniaman & Charlina, 2019). GOs can project material into visual symbols like lines, arrows, and

circles for learners to quickly express their ideas and concepts. Vacek (2009) considered GOs a fundamental tool in developing CT skills in education. Research shows that GOs enhance problem-solving and other CT skills (Omar & Albakri, 2016; Salleh & Halim, 2019; Santiago, 2011).

GOs can be an alternative tool for Chinese high school teachers to foster critical thinking skills among Chinese high school students. English language teachers can integrate thinking skills in their language teaching as a tool to develop students' independent thinking. As for the students, using the GOs will give them the opportunities to analyze various materials logically, reflect on their thinking process, organize their ideas, and express their ideas critically. Using the GOs, teachers can assist students in developing their critical thinking skills while strengthening their pedagogical skills, extending their teaching experience, and increasing their knowledge about the instruments used.

Hence, this research aims to explore the effects of GOs on senior high school students' CT skills, mainly focusing on analyzing and generalizing skills in English reading classes in Ningxia, China. Analyzing and generalizing skills are two critical thinking skills lacking among high school students in China (Zhang & Kim, 2018; Zhou et al., 2015). One of the reasons is that the students did not receive enough practice in using the skills as the common practice is that students prepare for tests; hence, they tend to memorize facts and accept the information without thinking and analyzing.

Besides that, studies about the specific strategies to improve students' CT skills in English classes in China are also limited, particularly the experimental research to test the efficiency of concrete strategies (Guo, 2013). This study also aimed to explore how graphic organizers affect students' critical thinking skills, mainly analyzing and generalizing. The GOs used in this research are two groups of organizers: Hierarchy Diagram and Big Question Map for analyzing practice; Main Idea Detail Map and Topic-Main Concept Map for generalizing exercise. These GOs were chosen because they have their characteristics in assisting specific CT skills development in this study.

This research focuses on answering the following research questions:

1. What are the effects of GOs on students' CT skills in English reading class?
 - a) Is there any significant difference in the pre-test reading comprehension test scores between the control and the experimental groups?
 - b) Is there any significant difference in the scores of the reading comprehension test between the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental group?
 - c) Is there any significant difference in the scores of the reading comprehension test between the pre-test and the post-test of the control group?
 - d) Is there any significant difference in the reading comprehension test scores between the control and the experimental groups in the post-test?
2. How do GOs affect students' CT skills in English reading class?
 - a) Is there any significant difference in the scores of analyzing skills in the experimental group between the pre-test and the post-test?
 - b) Is there any significant difference in the scores of generalizing skills in the experimental group between the pre-test and the post-test?
3. What are the students' perceptions of GOs in promoting CT skills?

As part of the experimental study, the following research hypotheses were tested:

- Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the reading comprehension test scores between the control and the experimental groups in the pre-test.
 - Ho₂: There is no significant difference in reading comprehension scores between the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group.
 - Ho₃: There is no significant difference in the reading comprehension test scores between the pre-test and the post-test of the control group.
 - Ho₄: There is no significant difference in the reading comprehension test scores between the control and experimental groups in the post-test.
- Ho₅ and Ho₆ are generated from research question 2.
- Ho₅: There is no significant difference in the scores of analyzing skills in the experimental group between the pre-test and the post-test.
 - Ho₆: There is no significant difference in the scores of generalization skills in the experimental group between the pre-test and the post-test.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In China, senior high school students refer to students aged 16-18 years old. Senior high school is a critical transition period for Chinese students. In Chinese senior high schools, the score is the only focus. Huang (2019) addressed senior high school students as ‘intimating robots’ who are deemed non-beneficial to the education system in the country.

2.1 Theories Related to the Study

Three main theories underpinned this study. The first one is Schema Theory. A schema is a structure of knowledge that guides learners’ cognitive processes. According to Widdowson (1983), learners can make sense of novel experiences as the schema that they have provided the context to enable them to engage in a particular mental process. When we learn new knowledge, we keep the information first to organize the structure in a scaffolded hierarchy. Using GOs makes it much easier to link new concepts or information with old ones and helps students build schema (Guastello et al., 2000). In this study, the researcher used two groups of maps to promote students’ CT skills in English reading class. These GOs help students to understand the structure of the reading materials and to grasp the interrelationship among the key concepts involved in the material. The second is the Cognitive Load Theory, which upholds that individuals’ memory can deal with limited information. If the information to be stored exceeds the capacity, it is likely to be a failure to store the information (Kirscher, 2002). As a visual learning tool, GOs can reduce the cognitive load to release more working memory for new material learning. Thus, it is necessary to structure and address the learning material using GOs to reduce complexity and increase logic to increase memory capacity (Kirscher, 2002).

2.2 Graphic Organizers

GOs are visual displays that can organize ideas and conceptions to illustrate connections and relationships among information. They are helpful tools for learners to locate useful facts, arrange different information, explore inner relations among

parts, and express their opinions and thoughts. GOs are effective visual displays of key content information (Kurniaman et al., 2018). Boykin et al. (2019) defined GOs as tools or frameworks students can use to visually collect, relate, and present ideas or information. Colliot and Jamet (2021) conceptualized GOs as the instrument of representation, modeling, and illustration of ideas in graphic or visual forms, which teachers utilize to aid students learning.

Pedagogically, GOs are helpful tools because learners can organize content and ideas visually and spatially, facilitating learning and acquiring new information (Odiri, 2015). Brady et al. (2021) claimed that students who use GOs can internalize the content of what is being taught more successfully. Teaching students to use GOs in the classroom is of great value in improving CT skills. Integrating organizers with the teaching content significantly promotes instructions and understanding (Heidarifard, 2014; Samba et al., 2020).

In summary, GOs are of great importance. They are tools for organizing information: they are visual illustrations that resemble networks and allow students to reflect on their prior knowledge by making contradictions between new and old knowledge. GOs provide an optional way of representing knowledge, ideas, and concepts discussed in class, leading to understanding ideas and relationships.

2.3 Studies on the Usage of GOs to Promote CT in English Reading Lessons

Many countries acknowledged the importance of CT skills in the EFL teaching contexts. Therefore, efforts have been made to promote teaching CT skills in language classes, focusing on reading classes. As visual tools for the thinking process, GOs have been proven as an alternative tool that can make some difference in promoting CT for EFL learners. GOs help students to analyze, classify, reflect, and evaluate their thinking and ideas while reading printed and online texts.

Moya and Tobar (2017) analyzed different strategies used in reading comprehension for the teaching of EFL. They highlighted the usage of GOs in reading as they supported the interaction and cooperation among peers and helped them to learn effectively. In addition, students can recall the main concept or ideas easily. They also concluded that visual organizers contributed a lot to developing CT skills and promoting autonomous learning and a higher level of reading performance.

The study by Kurniaman and Zufriady (2019) also reported that GOs could be used to classify information and assist learners in analyzing reading materials critically. Furthermore, Hazaymeh and Alomery (2022) studied using visual mind mapping as a reading strategy to develop CT skills among students enrolled in general English courses. Findings in this experimental study showed that visual mind maps strongly impact the students' CT with significant improvements on the CT items. This proved that visual mind mapping effectively inculcates CT and improves reading comprehension.

Based on the substantial research about GOs in EFL reading, it can be concluded that using a tool to promote thinking skills is crucial in reading. Students had to acquire the skills of reading critically. However, it was difficult for students to comprehend the text, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate ideas if they were not taught the skills to be critical in reading.

3. METHODS

This study investigated the effects of GOs in fostering high school students' CT skills in English reading classes.

3.1 Research Design

The design of the present study is quasi-experimental mixed methods. [Creswell \(1994\)](#) suggests that in a study that seeks to identify the effects of an intervention, conducting an experiment that involves pre and post-tests is the best choice, as data from the tests will enable the researchers to answer their research questions. Similarly, this study conducted pre and post-tests to collect quantitative data to answer research questions one and two. For the qualitative phase, interviews with some guided questions involved ten students. The qualitative data was obtained to answer the third research question, which aims to gather the students' perceptions on the employment of GOs in their reading lessons to inculcate CT.

3.2 Participants

Students from Ningxia Senior High School were selected as the study participants. The school has 69 teaching classes: 22 classes in first grade (1.205 students), 24 classes in grade two (1.278 students), and 23 classes in grade three (1.215 students). Of the 23 grade three classes, twelve consist of students with intermediate-level proficiency. From the 12 classes, two grade three classes were chosen to be involved in the study. One class was assigned as the experimental group, while another was the control group. This research adopted convenience sampling involving subjects who are available to the researcher. The study involved 60 students, aged between 17 and 19 years, who were divided into two intact classes with 30 students in each class. According to the recommended minimum sample size proposed by [Cohen et al. \(2007\)](#), 30 is deemed adequate for statistical analysis. As for the interview, ten students were interviewed, taking into consideration the adequate minimum sample size recommended by [Creswell \(2009\)](#).

3.3 Data Collection Methods

One of the classes was assigned as the experimental group and the other as the control group. These two groups were given a pre-test first. The pre-test allowed the researcher to assess whether the two groups were equivalent before the treatment was given to the experimental group. The pre-test of this study was a designed reading test used to determine their performance in the two CT skills (analyzing and generalization) in English reading and to see if they have equivalent performance. The test consists of two parts. The first part focuses on analyzing skills and contains three passages with eight multiple-choice questions testing the students' analyzing skills. As for the second part of the test, six passages were presented, and eight multiple-choice questions were posed to test generalizing skills. The pre and post-test passages were adapted from English test papers used for Chinese College entrance examinations under the Chinese Educational Department. The post-test consists of similar passages and questions as in the pre-test. However, changes in the passages' arrangements were

made to prevent learners from giving memorized answers from the pre-test. Experts validated the pre and post-tests before being used in the study to ensure the content validity of the constructed tests measure the constructs to be tested (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988).

Afterward, the treatment was given to the experimental group only. The treatment in this study was two pairs of designed GOs (Hierarchy Diagram and Big Question Map; Main Idea - Detail Map and Topic- Main Concept Map). These maps were utilized to promote CT skills in the reading class instruction. Twelve lessons were conducted with the experimental group, each for about 45 minutes. For the 12 lessons, six lessons focused on analyzing skills, and another six lessons on generalizing skills.

For the analyzing instruction, several steps were conducted. First, students need to get familiar with the structure and functions of each graphic organizer with their teacher's explanation. They need to know the meaning of 'analyzing', which normally means breaking down something into parts and trying to understand each part's function and relationship. They must analyze the keywords from the title, first, and last paragraph and try to get the passage's main idea. They can also grasp key information from the passage and put them together for a general outline of the whole story. They need to divide the passage into different parts according to the functions. Then, they can analyze the language features and sentence structures. Based on their understanding, they can draw maps, showing their performance in identifying the key elements and the inner relationship and function of each part, paragraph, or sentence.

As for the generalizing lessons, students will get to know the structure and function of each map. They also need to comprehend the term 'generalizing' to get the points of view, arguments, and conclusions based on parts of the given information. In the lesson, they need to identify the topic according to the clues shown in the passage. They also need to get the sub-topic and find the details supporting it. In addition, they need to judge the source of the passage based on the writing style and other information. Then, they need to practice drawing maps in pairs or groups and then discuss together and present their maps to other groups.

The texts used for the lessons are based on the texts chosen from the New Senior English for Chinese Students textbook for senior high school students. Some of the titles of the texts are 'Ann's Best Friend', 'Friendship', 'The Road to Modern English', 'Standard English and Dialects', 'The Journey Down the Mekong 1', 'Journey Down the Mekong 2', 'Earthquake' and 'A Night Us Didn't Sleep'. Four texts were used in the lessons to promote analyzing skills while another four texts were chosen to teach generalizing skills. The texts "Ann's Best Friend", 'Friendship', 'The Road to Modern English' and 'Standard English and Dialects' were used for instructions related to analyzing skills, while other texts were used for the lessons on generalizing skills.

The participants were given the usual English reading instructions in the control group. They used the New Senior English textbook for Chinese students and were taught similar topics to the experimental group. A post-test was administered after 12 sessions of teaching the experimental and control group. The last part of the study was a semi-structured interview conducted with the experimental group participants. Ten subjects volunteered to be involved in the interview, and they were accepted as they fulfilled the adequate number of samples for an interview as recommended by Creswell (2009). The interview instrument consists of eight questions to gather the students.

3.4 Data Analysis Method

The S.P.S.S. (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used to analyze the pre and post-test scores. The analyzing method for this quantitative data is a nonparametric test, in which Mann-Whitney U and Wilcoxon Signed Rank tests were used. Descriptive statistics are employed to present the quantitative data. The qualitative data obtained from the interviews with the students were subjected to thematic analysis. These verbal responses were analyzed and sorted out categorically to understand better their perceptions of GOs in developing their CT skills.

4. RESULTS

The results of the study are presented and discussed in this section according to the research questions.

4.1 Findings on the Effects of GOs on Students' CT Skills in English Reading Class

The following sections present the findings on how GOs affect the students' CT skills in their English reading class.

4.1.1 The scores of the reading comprehension test between the control and the experimental groups in the pre-test

Mann Whitney U test was used to compare the pre-test scores between the control and the experimental groups. From the data presented in Table 1, the total pre-test score of the control group was 43.33, while the total pre-test score of the experimental group was 42.33, which is slightly lower than the score of the control group. In addition, there was no significant difference in the pre-test scores between the control and experimental groups ($z = -0.438$, $p = 0.661$). Thus, it can be concluded that the students in the control and experimental groups were of the same level regarding their analyzing and generalizing skills in reading comprehension. Therefore, the first null hypothesis was accepted.

Table 1. Pre-test scores of the control and experimental group.

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	z	p
Total pre-test score	Control	30	43.33	7.58	-0.438	0.661
	Experimental	30	42.33	8.48		

4.1.2 The scores of the reading comprehension test between the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental group

The results of the pre-test and the post-test presented in Table 2 show that there was a difference between the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test for the experimental group. The mean score for the pre-test was 42.33, while the score for the post-test was 52.17. There was a difference between the pre-test and post-test when the scores for both tests were compared ($M = 9.84$), indicating an improvement in the

achievement of the experimental group. The statistical results demonstrate a significant difference ($z = -4.532$, $p = 0.0001$). This shows that the scores in the experimental group improved significantly after the intervention. Therefore, the second null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 2. Pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group.

Group	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	z	p
Total pre-test score	42.33	30	8.48	-4.532	0.0001
Total post-test score	52.17	30	8.48		

4.1.3 *The scores of the reading comprehension test between the pre-test and the post-test of the control group*

The results shown in Table 3 indicate that there was a difference between the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test of the control group. In the pre-test, the mean score was 43.33, and 43.67 in the post-test. The difference between the mean score of the pre-test and the post-test was 0.34. The statistical results demonstrate no significant difference ($z = -0.326$, $p = 0.744$), which shows no significant difference in the results of the reading comprehension test of the control group before and after the lessons. Hence, the third null hypothesis was accepted.

Table 3. Pre-test and post-test scores of the control group.

Group	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	z	p
Total pre-test score	43.33	30	7.58098	-0.326	0.744
Total post-test score	43.67	30	7.42007		

4.1.4 *The reading comprehension test scores between the control and experimental group in the post-test*

Based on the results presented in Table 4, the post-test mean score for the control group was 43.67, while the post-test mean score for the experimental group was 52.17. The data indicate that the mean score in the experimental group was higher than the control group by a difference of 8.5. Moreover, the statistical results of the Whitney U test demonstrate a significant difference ($z = -3.762$, $p = 0.0001$). The results show that the experimental group performed significantly better than the control group in the post-test, providing evidence that GOs support the development of CT skills among the participants in the experimental group. Based on the findings, the fourth null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 4. Post-test scores of the control and experimental group.

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	z	p
Total post-test score	Control	30	43.67	7.42	-3.762	0.0001
	Experimental	30	52.17	8.48		

4.2 Findings on How GOs Affect Students' CT Skills in English Reading Classes

The findings about how GOs impact students' CT skills in their English reading class are presented in the following section.

4.2.1 The scores of analyzing skills in the experimental group between the pre-test and the post-test

A Wilcoxon Signed Rank test was used to analyze the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group. The results presented in Table 5 indicate that there was a difference in the mean scores between the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group in the aspect of analyzing skills. The mean score for the pre-test was 20.33, and that of the post-test was 23.83, with an increase of 3.5. The statistical analysis shows a significant difference ($z = -3.447$, $p = 0.001$). The students' scores in the experimental group increased significantly after the treatment, indicating that the GOs were used to support the development of analyzing skills in reading comprehension classes. Thus, the fifth null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 5. Pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group in analyzing skills.

Group	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	z	p
Analyzing-pre	20.33	30	6.149	-3.447	0.001
Analyzing-post	23.83	30	5.972		

4.2.2 The scores of generalization skills in the experimental group between the pre-test and the post-test?

Table 6 demonstrates the results of the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group, focusing on generalization skills. The results of the test indicate that there was a difference between the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test. The experimental group obtained a mean score of 28.33 in the post-test compared to a 22.00 mean score in the pre-test. The mean score difference between the pre-test and post-test was 6.33. The statistical analysis result also indicates a significant difference ($z = -4.744$, $p = 0.0001$). The GOs were effective in promoting generalization skills among the participants in the experimental group. Hence, the sixth null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 6. Pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group in generalization skills.

Group	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	z	p
Generalization-pre	22.00	30	5.813	-4.744	0.0001
Generalization-post	28.33	30	6.065		

4.3 Findings on the Students' Perceptions of GOs in Promoting CT Skills

Data from the interview suggests that most students (8 out of 10) agreed that using GOs allowed them to analyze better and generalize what they have read. Data analysis from the interviews generated seven common themes, as presented in Table 7, which can be divided into two categories. They are themes related to the participants' views about GOs and themes suggesting their benefits in supporting critical thinking skills in reading lessons. The themes of stimulating lessons, ease of comprehension, and more focused reading are related to the effects of GOs on the participants' reading lessons. In terms of critical thinking, the themes of increased awareness about CT skills and ease of application of critical thinking skills were generated, suggesting the benefits of GOs in promoting critical thinking skills.

Table 7. Common themes identified from semi-structured interviews.

No	Themes
1	stimulating lesson
2	ease comprehension
3	more focused reading
4	increased awareness about CT skills
5	ease application of CT skills

The following extracts from the interviews support the participants' views that the lessons using GOs are stimulating.

- (1) These sessions are quite different from our usual classes. I feel they are very interesting to learn. I heard CT before but did not know what it was. It is my first time to know and learn about GOs. (P1-stimulating lesson)
- (2) It was a great idea to use it during the English reading classes. Our teacher divided us into groups to discuss using the maps in our reading. I think we had much fun. (P2-stimulating lesson)
- (3) For me, this is new knowledge. I think they are full of fun. They are quite different from our usual classes. (P4-stimulating lesson)

Furthermore, the following are excerpts related to the participants' feedback that GOs ease their comprehension of the reading texts presented in the lessons.

- (4) These GOs helped to digest those passages so that I could acquire the fundamental facts of these passages. (P9-ease comprehension)
- (5) It helped me to understand the points in the passage. (P4-ease comprehension)
- (6) I could more easily find the key information from the text. (P6-ease comprehension)
- (7) These GOs helped to digest those passages so that I could acquire the fundamental facts of these passages. (P9-ease comprehension)

The participants also reported that they felt their reading was more focused when they used the GOs in the activities related to reading comprehension.

- (8) I found it easier for me to get the main ideas of the passages and catch their key points. (P3-more focused reading)
- (9) They were just like a framework of reading material. We only needed to find the "bones" of it, which means the key information or keywords. Take the big question map, for example, it gave me six keywords as a guide. Following these keywords, I could spot the key information quickly. (P6-more focused reading)
- (10) I feel more confident to get the keywords of the passage and to grasp the structure of a passage. I have become more conscious about getting the main idea of a passage or paragraph and finding the supporting details. (P8-more focused reading)
- (11) I found my thinking was more focused and logical when I used these organizers to analyze and generalize. (P9-more focused reading)

The following excerpts present the participants' views on how using GOs increased their awareness about using CT skills in reading.

- (12) I started to pay more attention to my thinking processes. (P3- awareness about using CT skills)
- (13) And I think we must learn more CT skills and GOs to put our thinking to a higher level. (P4- awareness about using CT skills)
- (14) The GOs worked well to help us think about analyzing and generalizing. (P9- awareness about using CT skills)

Finally, the following excerpts suggest that the participants felt the GOs eased the application of CT skills.

- (16) From my point of view, analyzing is a very abstract skill, which I felt was hard to master at one time. These sessions showed clearly the usage of analyzing. When we analyze, we tend to break things into parts, which helps greatly when we try to know the whole thing. (P4- application of CT skills)
- (17) The Hierarchy Diagram map let me divide the passage logically so that I can further analyze the passage at a paragraph level. (P5- application of CT skills)
- (18) Take the hierarchy diagram, for example, I find it quite informative and of great value in argumentative writing. In argumentative writing, usually, there is a topic, which is supported by several sub-topics. The sub-topics are also supported by details, respectively. The hierarchy diagram is a very effective presentation of this structure. It can guide us to analyze and generalize the topic, sub-topic, and supporting details of a passage. (P7- application of CT skills)

5. DISCUSSION

The study has five main findings. First, both groups are homogeneous, with no significant difference between the mean scores. It implies that the difference is the result of different interventions. The second finding conveys that students' CT in the experimental group has significantly improved after the intervention. The third finding is that the pre-test and post-test results in the control group show no significant difference. It provides empirical evidence that the traditional classroom instruction used in the control group had no positive effects in fostering CT skills, particularly for reading comprehension. The fourth finding is that the post-test scores in the experimental group were significantly higher than those in the control group. This provides evidence that the use of GO has a more positive influence on students' critical reading performance. The fifth finding is that after the intervention, the analyzing and generalizing skills of the experimental group improved significantly.

Based on the above findings, three major conclusions can be drawn. First, GOs in the experimental group positively impact students' critical reading performance. Second, the GOs in the experimental group have a more positive influence on students' critical reading performance than the conventional instruction. Last, implementing GOs contributes to the development of students' analyzing and generalization skills in the English reading class of the experimental group. The results echoed findings from past studies that highlighted the improvement in students' critical thinking skills using GOs (Brady et al., 2021; Kurniaman et al., 2018; Samba et al., 2020). Studies have indicated that GOs assist learners in organizing their thoughts and ideas, which are key in analyzing and generalizing reading texts (Kurniaman et al., 2018; Odiri, 2015).

Apart from the quantitative findings of pre-test and post-test, qualitative findings support the positive effects of implementing GOs in promoting analyzing and generalization skills in English language reading classes. Most students reported that the sessions using GOs were different, new, fun, engaging, and helpful in their English language learning compared to the traditional methods. It was their first time getting exposure to GOs in reading classes. They thought the sessions were interesting. Using maps to read English was unique and stimulating. They thought these instructions were informative and creative. Previous studies held similar perspectives (Hazaymeh & Alomery, 2022; Kurniaman et al., 2018; Samba et al., 2020; Zaini et al., 2010).

Most students highlighted that teaching using GOs has two major benefits to their reading comprehension process. The benefits are that (1) the practice has made them see the rationale of using GOs and (2) it enabled them to use the GOs taught in the reading context. They mentioned that the key characteristics of GOs made reading lessons more interesting and the text more comprehensible; information was easily recalled, main ideas could easily be identified, and the sequence and relationships of information could be understood. These characteristics were also reported in using GOs in reading classes (Moya & Tobar, 2017; Salleh & Halim, 2019). The findings support the notion in schema theory whereby the GOs get students to link new concepts to their previous knowledge. The findings also relate to Cognitive load theory whereby the visual organizers increase understanding of reading texts as it facilitates logical thinking. Besides that, most participants thought this new experience created awareness about CT skills. They also realized the importance of cultivating CT skills, which they had not previously paid attention to (Hazaymeh & Alomery, 2022; Kurniaman et al., 2018; Samba et al., 2020). They learned skills of analyzing and generalization and how to apply these skills to their reading process. Most students agreed that using GOs allowed them to analyze and generalize better. They thought GOs helped them grasp the most important information by revealing the structure of a passage and by guiding them to think logically. These conceptions were confirmed by considerably related studies (Hazaymeh & Alomery, 2022; Pang, 2013; Praveen & Rajan, 2013; Sari et al., 2019).

The students also mentioned that mastering CT skills is essential to comprehend reading texts. All respondents agreed that it is important to master these CT skills, such as analyzing and generalizing in English reading. All of the students could learn more about CT and GOs. They hope to master more CT skills to improve their reading and exam performance.

6. CONCLUSION

This research highlights the critical role of GOs in promoting CT skills in China's English language reading classes. The results of the study suggest several implications in teaching reading using GOs and promoting analyzing and generalization skills among English language learners, particularly in an EFL context.

The first implication is the impact on materials used in teaching. The research findings show that using GOs supports senior high school students' CT skills development. Their CT in reading improved, and the students learned to use it in different reading contexts. Therefore, this positive finding should encourage teachers to use GOs in English language classes to develop their learners' CT skills. Teachers and pre-service teachers need to vary their teaching approaches and present their instructions using different tools to promote interest among learners. The second implication relates to the pedagogical aspect whereby teaching reading can be more effective using GOs. It is proven effective because not only did the student's CT scores in reading improve, but they also felt more motivated to learn as they found that the maps assisted them in organizing, analyzing, and generalizing the content. Furthermore, from the interview findings, most of them held a positive attitude toward these instruction sessions. They actively used these new skills in their future reading and hoped to learn more about using GOs and CT skills.

This study has enriched the existing literature on strategies to promote students' CT in an EFL context. Although many researchers have stressed the need to cultivate CT skills in senior high schools' English reading, empirical studies are still very limited, especially in evaluating the efficiency of a specific reading strategy to develop students' CTS, particularly in China. Future researchers are encouraged to look at more CT skills such as inferring, classifying, problem-solving, and other GOs in English reading. Future studies can also be conducted with bigger sample sizes and different data collection methods. In addition, researchers can compare the use of GOs with other approaches to improve students' CT skills, such as group discussion, storytelling, speeches, and cooperative learning.

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Technology-Enhanced Task-Based Language Teaching toward Their Self-Directed Language Learning: ESP Learners' Views

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Abstract

Utilising technologies to enable language learners to accept authentic and communicative assignments is proliferating, but its effect on their self-directed language learning (SDLL) needs to be investigated. To this end, the present study aimed to investigate English for specific purpose (ESP) learners' views on using technology-enhanced task-based language teaching (TBLT) toward their self-directed language learning. A mixed-method approach with a sequential explanatory design with 103 nursing students as research participants. This study used two research instruments: the Likert scale and an open-ended questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, Path analysis, and thematic analysis were employed to analyse the data. The findings from quantitative data revealed that students' learning needs and utilising skills of SDLL categories have a strong influence on English mastery after receiving technology-enhanced TBLT. Consequently, ESP students must also improve process planning and use skills. They should be encouraged to schedule more consistent English lessons in and out of class. Meanwhile, the qualitative data disclose that technology-enhanced TBLT assists the learners in improving their language learning, i.e., planning process, completing tasks, and

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internal attributions. ESP students expressed their concerns and reported some challenges in applying language skills during speaking activities. This study implies that ESP lecturers can adopt various ways to assist ESP students in mastering English language goals through technology-enhanced TBLT.

Keywords: English for specific purposes, ESP learners, self-directed language learning, technology-enhanced TBLT.

1. INTRODUCTION

The practice of teaching English has experienced considerable changes due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic by utilising technologies such as internet sources, live online meetings, and learning management systems to well organise the materials. This condition has also affected English instruction, where language teachers must innovate to produce effective and dynamic online learning projects that allow students to continue developing their language skills (Yi & Jang, 2020). The integration of technology and digitalisation of learning has made learning English more effective, practical, and varied with technology (Karademir et al., 2021).

In language teaching related to English for Specific Purposes (ESP), this technology can improve the receptive skills of language learners from online learning resources and facilitate them to demonstrate their productive language skills well (Alizadeh, 2018). However, ESP learning by integrating technology still encounters several obstacles in practice. The obstacles include the difficulty of managing an online classroom effectively, controlling students during the e-learning process, and the low level of student participation in learning (Mulyadi et al., 2020). Another challenge related to ESP instruction is that many ESP lecturers lack knowledge of the specific subject of ESP learners' discipline and hence cannot share ideas contributing to the desired learning outcomes (Asfihana, 2013).

To cope with the aforementioned obstacles, implementing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has become an ideal language teaching technique to facilitate students' English learning engagements and motivation. Numerous scholars have asserted that TBLT is the ideal pedagogical technique for language teaching and learning because it enables students to effectively learn language through authentic communicative tasks (Chen, 2021; Ellis, 2017; Li et al., 2016). Currently, learning technologies like online learning sources and media provide a natural and authentic substrate for successfully implementing the methodological principles of TBLT. In contrast, TBLT provides a pedagogical and rational framework for technology uptake and use (Tavakoli et al., 2019).

Various studies show that integrating TBLT and learning technologies effectively empowers students to master English. As evidence, Technology-enhanced TBLT is effective in improving students' motivation for reading comprehension (Tavakoli et al., 2019), enhancing ESP learners' content knowledge and English skills (Tsai, 2015), and fostering EFL learners' writing proficiency (Wang, 2022). In addition, technology-enhanced TBLT refers to the use of technology and online resources in the mastery of English so that language learners' self-directed language learning (SDLL) will develop and become more robust. Their SDLL leads them to

practice language skills independently, administer them to identify learning requirements, make goals, determine learning resources, and self-assess their learning results (Lai, 2015; Lai et al., 2017; Moradi, 2018). However, their perceptions of SDLL after receiving Technology-enhanced TBLT have been rarely investigated. Therefore, the present study investigates ESP learners' views on implementing Technology-enhanced TBLT toward their SDLL. The following three research questions were addressed in greater detail in this study.

1. How do ESP learners perceive technology-enhanced TBLT toward their SDLL?
2. To what extent do correlations exist among students' SDLL categories (learning needs, utilising skills, enduring challenges, self-efficacy in learning, planning the process, completing tasks, evaluating the process, internal attribution) after experiencing technology-enhanced TBLT?
3. How do students perceive the benefits and drawbacks of technology-enhanced language instruction on their SDLL?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Self-Directed Language Learning

Adult learners may expect to be more independent and, therefore, more inclined to engage in self-directed learning than younger learners (Haidari et al., 2019). However, the challenges of this learning can only be achieved if the learners have self-awareness, abilities, and strategies and accept responsibility for their learning (Churchill et al., 2016). In this case, students must have a supportive environment, sufficient time, and authentic context to actively and confidently build shared knowledge with peers, take responsibility for their learning, and become independent learners.

Students who reported having little experience playing were more inclined to have low to moderate levels of self-direction. In contrast, more advanced players reported intermediate to high levels of self-direction. SDLL is becoming increasingly required in today's society with widely accessing to online learning resources, as students require the ability to process and assimilate knowledge independently and can study more autonomously (Suh et al., 2015). Cultural expectations were found to play an essential role in determining if students desire to be self-directed learners. The quality of the teacher-student relationship and communication were both found to be important determinants of successful collaboration. These findings suggest that the theoretical application of the SDLL model could provide teachers with a means to assess and discern their adult students' learning needs (Leahy & Smith, 2021).

2.2 Technology-Enhanced TBLT

Technology-enhanced TBLTs that are carried out based on the principles of Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) have demonstrated effectiveness in fostering student-centred learning to increase students' English communication (Wu et al., 2016). Additionally, these tasks can help them become more motivated to participate in language acquisition (Aliasin et al., 2019). The integration of TBLT and technology in language learning tasks is believed to have great potential in language teaching (Lai

& Li, 2011; Ziegler, 2016). Additionally, studies on task-based learning in ESP learning demonstrate the benefits of interactive learning (Tsai, 2015) and empower students to become more self-sufficient in their English learning (Mulyadi & Prasetyanti, 2016). Thus, emphasising technology-based tasks will likely foster independence and high enthusiasm in ESP learners while improving their English language skills.

2.3 English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

English for specific purposes (ESP) is an approach to the process of learning English that is closely related to the needs of participants (Aliakbari & Boghayeri, 2014; Donesch-jezo, 2012). It typically refers to imparting English language instruction, emphasising specific vocabulary and skills that university students need. Students' linguistic and communicative needs must be met by ESP instruction focusing on the environment in which they use English upon joining the workforce.

3. METHODS

3.1 Participants

This research was carried out at the Undergraduate Nursing Program of a private university in Central Java, Indonesia. The participants in this study were 103 out of 150 undergraduate nursing students with whom the survey was shared. There were 80 females and 23 males aged between 19 and 22. According to Longman's TOEFL diagnostical test, their English level was 30%, including intermediate proficiency, and 70% with elementary proficiency.

3.2 Instruments and Data Analysis

A mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory design was employed to gather qualitative and quantitative data, so the results were used to comprehend a study issue (Creswell, 2009). Utilising this methodology, the quantitative data with a Likert scale questionnaire as a research instrument were employed to find out the study's significant findings. Meanwhile, qualitative data were collected during this time to enhance the quantitative data based on participant debriefing.

First, the Likert scale questionnaire was employed using a self-directed language learning (SDLL) questionnaire modified from a self-directed language inventory (Suh et al., 2015). It is a procedure whereby individuals take the initiative, with or without assistance from others, to diagnose their learning requirements, formulate learning goals, locate learning materials, select and use suitable learning strategies, and assess the results of their efforts. This SDLL questionnaire involves eight categories. They comprise learning needs, utilising skills, enduring challenges, self-efficacy in learning, planning the process, completing tasks, evaluating the process, and internal attribution. After pilot testing, this questionnaire was statistically validated.

The Likert scale findings were examined and analysed using descriptive statistics with SPSS 21, including means and standard deviation. The typical value ranges between 1 and 2.5, suggesting a low level of ESP learners' SDLL, 2.6–3.5, a

medium level, and 3.6–5, indicating a high level. Once the descriptive analysis was completed, the data were evaluated using Path analysis utilising AMOS 23. This Path analysis was conducted as a form of multiple regression to determine whether a multivariate set of observable variables fit a hypothesised model to examine the causal relationships among categories (Kline, 2016). In the present study, the categories of the SDLL questionnaire comprising learning needs, utilising skills, enduring challenges, self-efficacy in learning, planning the process, completing tasks, evaluating the process, and internal attribution were analysed with path analysis. Subsequently, the results of this analysis were analysed to determine the strength of the relationship among variables based on the Interpretation criteria of correlation coefficient results (Sugiyono, 2019), i.e., very high correlation ($r = .800 - 1.000$), high correlation ($r = .600 - .799$), medium correlation ($r = 0.400 - 0.599$), low correlation ($r = .200 - 0.399$), and very low correlation ($r = .000 - .199$).

Second, at the same time, the open-ended questionnaire was also distributed to 103 ESP learners. It was conducted to examine data on the benefits and limitations of technology-assisted English learning tasks employed in online or blended learning environments. Two experts initially validated the questions for an open-ended survey. Thematic analysis was undertaken based on the responses to open-ended questions in which the first author utilised the NVIVO 12 program to classify the categories according to their content. Moreover, the first and second authors examined whether or not all assigned categories were apposite. They also securitised the themes' results and assured coding reliability (Boyatzis, 1998). Subsequently, the data that were tabulated and categorised were presented in diagrams.

3.3 Procedure

These instruments were initially tried on a small scale with 30 ESP students in one private university to determine their validity and reliability. Its reliability was found to be between 0.84 and 0.96. Expert validation conducted by two experienced ESP lecturers was also employed to examine the questionnaires' content and appearance regarding linguistic use and materials.

The questionnaires were sent to all participants, who were informed that their responses would be kept anonymous and utilised solely for the current study, which included informed consent forms. All efforts have been made to preserve anonymity, which is the goal of the poll. The survey results are automatically anonymised and aggregated in a way that makes it impossible to identify specific respondents or attribute specific responses to a specific respondent. The online questionnaires were created using Microsoft Forms and required 16 to 23 minutes; participants were given fourteen days to complete the surveys carefully.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Students' Perceptions of Self-Directed Language Learning toward Technology-Enhanced TBLT

Descriptive statistics using SPSS 21 was employed to analyse the results of the SDLL questionnaire. These results can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Students' perceptions of SDLL toward technology-enhanced TBLT.

Category	Code (path analysis)	Self-directed Language Learning Statements	Mean	SD
Learning Needs	C1Q1	ESP learners want to continue learning English as long as possible, both online and offline learning context.	4.42	0.65
	C1Q2	ESP learners have an inquiring mind for knowledge in mastering English.	4.43	0.60
	C1Q3	ESP learners try their best to learn English, especially in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) of Nursing.	4.35	0.59
	C1Q4	Speaking in English is one of the language skills that they like in the learning process.	2.87	0.82
	C1Q5	ESP learners are more enthusiastic about attending English class even though there is no attendance requirement for these courses.	4.01	0.76
Utilising Skills	C2Q1	ESP learners can understand even the most difficult things that are being discussed in the English class.	3.45	0.97
	C2Q2	ESP learners are good at English tests.	2.99	0.72
	C2Q3	ESP learners can learn English knowledge and skills quickly.	3.16	0.83
	C2Q4	ESP learners try to understand the grammar when reading English texts even though the lecturer does not tell them.	3.77	0.74
Enduring Challenges	C3Q1	ESP learners try to learn English no matter how busy they are.	3.62	0.76
	C3Q2	ESP learners can stay up all night to enhance their English skills.	3.10	0.77
	C3Q3	ESP learners are determined to learn to communicate in English effectively.	4.10	0.72
	C3Q4	ESP learners want to be the best learner in the best English class.	3.71	0.85
	C3Q5	ESP learners always ask their teacher for clarification when an idea is unclear.	3.52	0.74
	C3Q6	ESP learners purposively use English that they have learned for communication. (e.g., speaking, writing).	3.75	0.79
	C3Q7	When ESP learners find familiar words, they ask others what it means.	4.14	0.80
	C3Q8	When ESP learners find unfamiliar words, they look them up in the dictionary or on the internet.	4.46	0.61
Self-Efficacy in Learning	C4Q1	ESP learners are satisfied with their performance in utilising learning technologies-based language tasks to learn English.	3.96	0.66
	C4Q2	ESP learners are satisfied with their "English reading comprehension" performance after receiving technology-enhanced language learning tasks.	3.87	0.68
	C4Q3	ESP learners are satisfied with their "English listening comprehension" performance after receiving technology-enhanced language learning tasks.	3.61	0.80
	C4Q4	ESP learners are satisfied with their "English speaking ability" performance after receiving technology-enhanced language learning tasks.	3.69	0.74
	C4Q5	After receiving technology-enhanced language learning tasks, ESP learners are satisfied with their "English writing ability" performance.	3.71	0.77

Table 1 continued...

Planning The Process	C5Q1	It is not hard for me to make study plans to master English courses.	3.42	0.71
	C5Q2	ESP learners prepare the materials before studying English class.	3.40	0.69
	C5Q3	ESP learners formulate their own English study plan in addition to what the teacher teaches in class.	3.50	0.74
	C5Q4	ESP learners formulate their own English study plan in addition to what the teacher teaches in class.	3.53	0.73
Completing Tasks	C6Q1	ESP learners always try to finish the technology-enhanced English tasks and assignments.	4.18	0.64
	C6Q2	ESP learners always complete technology-enhanced English assignments and tasks on time.	4.24	0.66
	C6Q3	ESP learners always complete the English tasks and assignments.	4.20	0.66
Evaluating The Process	C7Q1	It is important to evaluate ESP learners' English performance in completing technology-enhanced English tasks.	4.09	0.72
	C7Q2	It is interesting to evaluate ESP learners' English performance in completing technology-enhanced English tasks.	3.91	0.70
	C7Q3	It is important to evaluate the effectiveness of the English learning plans.	4.02	0.66
Internal Attribution	C8Q1	If ESP learners have excellent English performance, they believe it results from their efforts.	4.22	0.61
	C8Q2	ESP learners' good achievement of English performance is because of their well-managed English learning process.	4.11	0.61
	C8Q3	ESP learners deemed that the lack of effort deals with the bad results of their English performance.	4.29	0.62

According to the 'learning needs' category of self-directed language learning students (see Table 1), two categories received high scores. The highest one indicates that ESP learners possessed an enquiring approach toward knowledge when acquiring English. Additionally, they desired to continue learning English for as long as possible, whether online or in a traditional classroom setting. Meanwhile, speaking English was considered the lowest category across all categories. Indeed, speaking is a critical kind of communication while working for an international firm or institution that interacts globally. Therefore, ESP teachers should encourage students to spend more time and effort preparing to enhance their speaking performance. It includes researching interesting topics, looking for high-quality materials, and practising delivery (Zhang et al., 2020).

The second category is related to the self-directed language learning of ESP learners in terms of 'utilising skills'. Participating in mastering ESP through technology-enhanced task-based instruction, students believed that they had practised understanding the grammar when reading texts even though their lecturer did not ask them. The previous study supports this finding that a more efficient and effective reading comprehension motivation can help students better understand the context in which grammar is used (Karimi & Dastgoshadeh, 2018). Thus, grammar is not merely a rote formula but is critical in assisting students in comprehending the text during the reading process. So, the point of autonomy of students' independence is that they begin to understand grammar when they learn English by practising reading. Meanwhile,

they tend to be lower than other aspects in this category in the testing aspect. This aspect should be anticipated in teaching ESP because language testing can improve teaching practices and delivery methods to target different student proficiency levels and establish minimum language proficiency standards for undergraduate students (Becker et al., 2017).

Table 1 shows that of the eight aspects in the 'enduring challenges category', the highest category of students' perceptions said they tend to look for vocabulary they do not know from a dictionary or online internet. Then, the significant aspect refers to the statement 'ESP learners ask questions about the vocabulary they did not understand to friends' who better understand English. This finding is relevant to previous research that, considering the strategies evaluated by the study participants, Iranian EFL teachers and students should prioritise the form of vocabulary items because they are regarded as critical for word discovery (Amiryousefi, 2015). In contrast, the lowest aspect of this category is their lack of motivation to learn more to improve their English skills. This happened because there are some limitations to effective language practices in the online learning context.

There are five aspects of 'self-efficacy' in the learning category that ESP students perceive. From these aspects, ESP lecturers were satisfied with their performance in utilising learning technologies-based language tasks to learn English. Meanwhile, the lowest aspect shows that English listening comprehension is still a problematic language skill even though technology-based tasks have been integrated. This data corroborates the previous finding. Most students attributed their problems with listening to their perceived lack of listening aptitude and challenges with listening comprehension (Elfiona et al., 2019; Graham, 2006; Serraj, 2014). Thus, ESP teachers should pay attention to the issue of how learners listen and their attitudes about listening skill practice to resolve it.

ESP learners' perspectives on the 'planning process category' show that they can formulate their own English study plan. However, their study plan before the classroom is included in the low category before studying in the class, in which they may not know or forget what material will be taught. The report from the previous study suggested that the teachers in each class assign different tasks to different students based on their abilities and work to ensure that each student has their home study plan (Dai & Lin, 2020).

In the 'completing tasks' category, students strongly believe ESP learners always complete technology-enhanced English assignments and tasks on time. This is a good point of the utilisation of technology-enhanced language instruction. Additionally, students believe completing English linked with learning technology is essential in the 'evaluating the process' category. Surprisingly, good achievement refers to the category of 'Internal attribution' related to characteristics of a person's behaviour that originate with the individual. These characteristics are viewed as high scores with an average of above 4.

As shown by Figure 1, students already had learning needs, completed English learning assignments, and had a high internal attribution for mastering English. However, data on utilising skills remains low since ESP students struggle with comprehending and practising English. Therefore, English language instruction must lead to the development of communicative language skills. To wit, the practice of speaking and dialoguing in a work setting with a sufficient vocabulary. These findings are commensurate with the study that The specialised vocabulary taught in class must

be used in ESP contexts such as reading, writing, speaking, and casual media requiring learners to communicate in English (Sabieh, 2018).

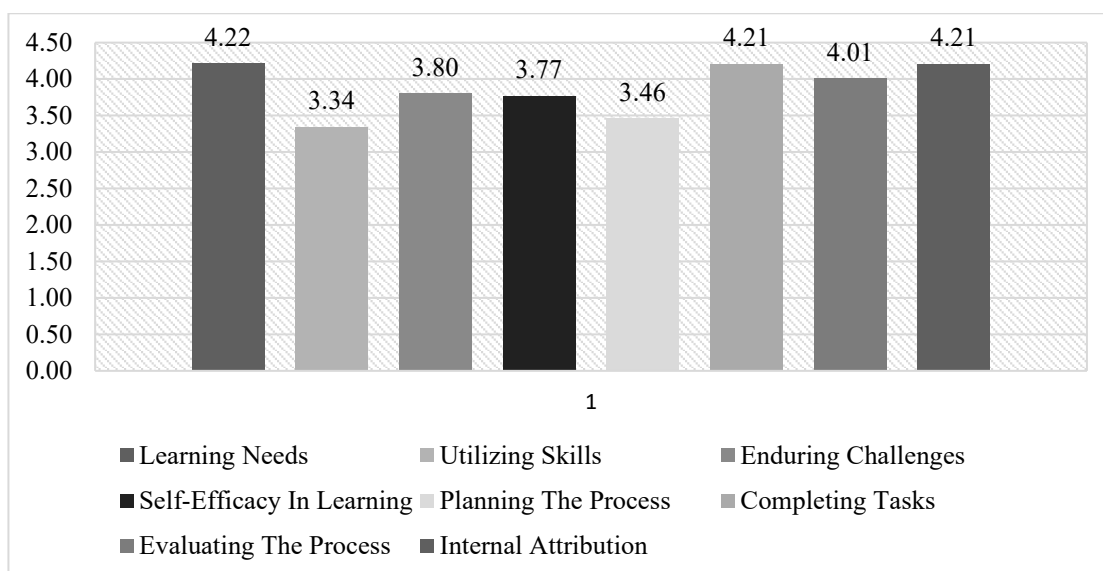


Figure 1. The level differences among categories of students' perceptions of self-directed language learning toward technology-enhanced TBLT.

Furthermore, ESP students must also strengthen their process planning abilities and remaining utilisation skills. They should be motivated to create more consistent English lesson plans within and outside the classroom. ESP teachers must emphasise the importance of pre-learning material preparation.

The results of Path Analysis in Figure 2 show that the model scheme related to SDLL categories of ESP students mostly fit the data finding with the good category. It was evident with ($c = 902.669$, $p = 0.000$, $df = 532$, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.831, Chi-square of Minimum Discrepancy Test (CMIN) = 1.697, The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.083). According to the model, SDLL categories comprising the category of Learning Needs (-0.09), Utilising Skills (-0.40), and Planning the Process (0.01) statistically do not influence Internal Attribution (self-directed language learning) with standardised path coefficients. Meanwhile, Enduring Challenge (0.28), Self-Efficacy Learning (0.18), Completing Task (0.11), and Evaluating the Process (0.76) categories statistically affect Internal Attribution with standardised path coefficients. All path coefficients and correlation coefficients are significant at the 0.05 level.

In Figure 2, it can be seen that the categories of ESP students' SDLL that have a very high correlation are Utilising Skills with Enduring Challenges ($r = .87$), Learning Needs with Enduring Challenges ($r = .81$), and Enduring Challenges with Evaluating the Process ($r = .82$). Meanwhile, other SDLL categories are categorised as a high correlation. They include Learning Needs with Evaluating the Process (0.74), Completing Task with Evaluating the Process (0.72), Enduring Challenges with Completing Task (0.75), Utilising Skills with Planning the Process (0.73), Utilising Skills with Self-Efficacy Learning (0.72), Enduring Challenge with Self-Efficacy Learning (0.76), and Enduring Challenge with Planning the Process (0.72). We can deduce from the results of path analysis that all ESP students' SDLL categories have been influenced significantly after they have experienced English Instruction that

Technology-enhanced TBLT has been implemented. The previous study supports this finding that it is necessary to consider the function and capabilities of technology in language learning because of its capacity to aid the effective tasks of the language learning process (Canals & Mor, 2023).

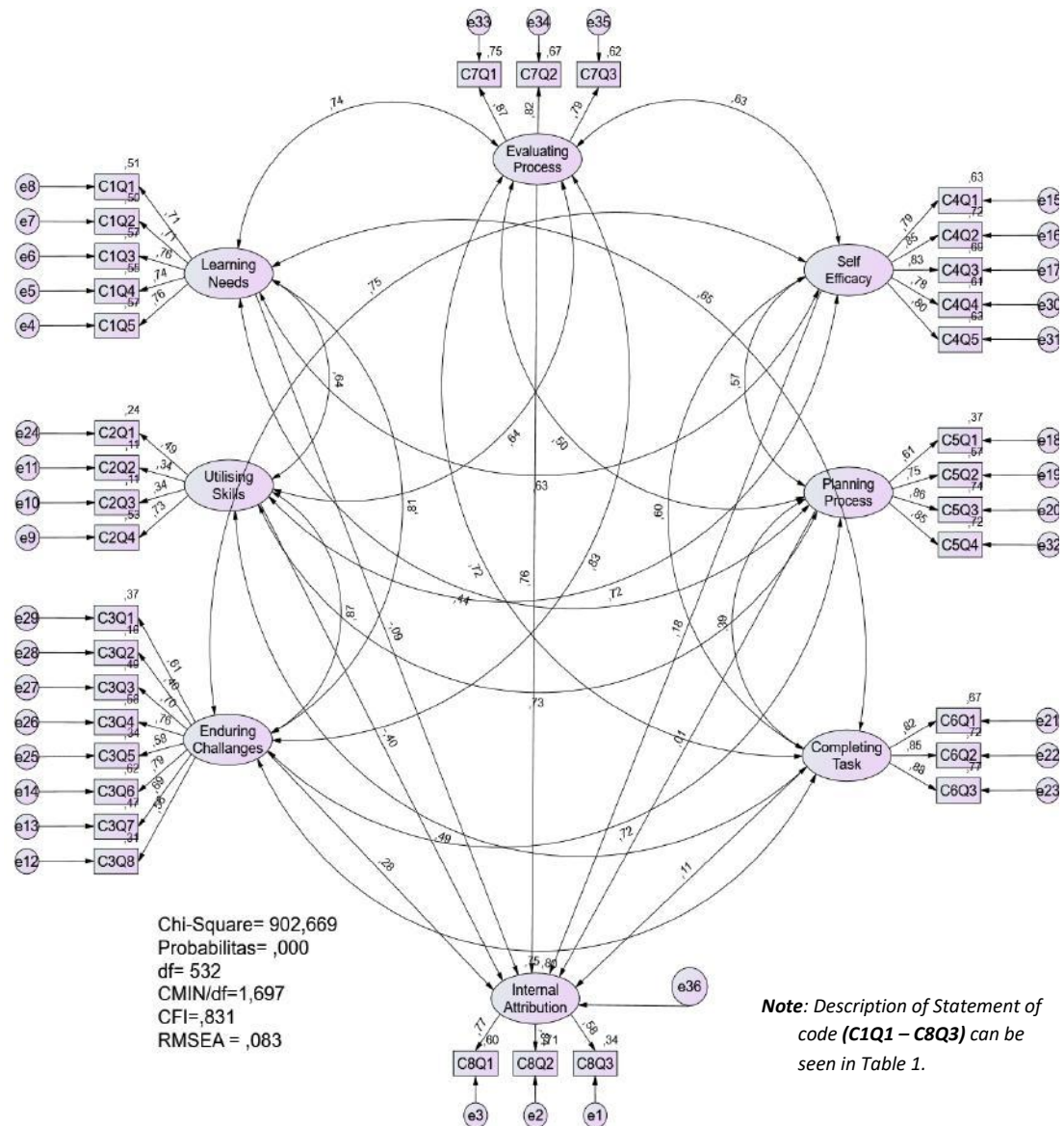


Figure 2. Path Analysis results of ESP learners' SDLL categories after receiving technology-enhanced TBLT.

4.2 Factors that Motivate ESP Learners More Consistent in SDLL Via Technology Enhanced TBLT

Factors that motivate ESP learners to be more consistent in SDLL via Technology Enhanced TBLT were investigated based on students' perceptions in responding to an open-ended questionnaire. Figure 3 demonstrates the results of the thematic analysis of the results.

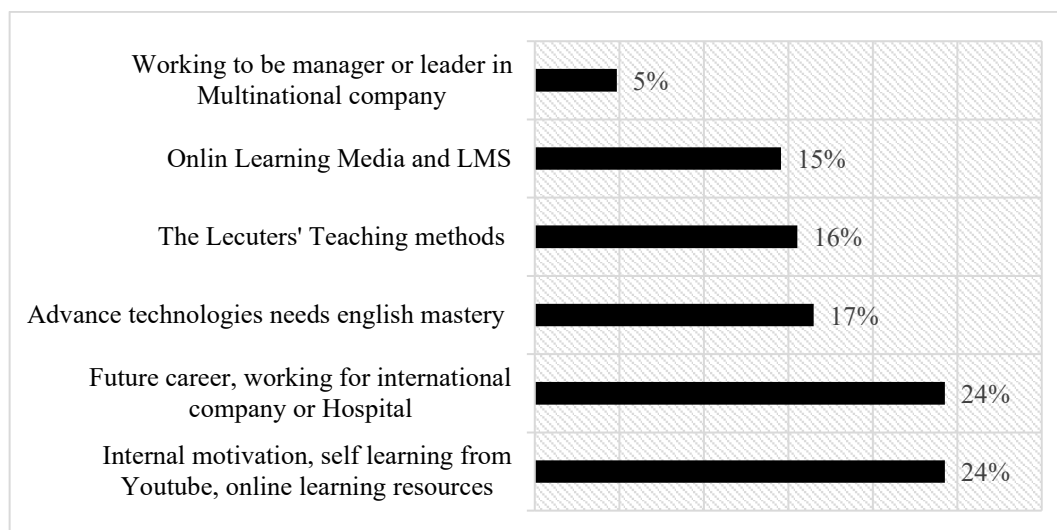


Figure 3. Factors that can motivate ESP learners more consistent in SDLL through technology-enhanced TBLT.

As shown in Figure 3, the following factors may encourage ESP learners to be more consistent in their self-directed language learning through technology-enhanced TBLT. The two most important factors are internal motivation through online learning resources such as YouTube and their future career goals of working for an international company or hospital. The presence of online learning or technology-enhanced language learning can aid learners' commitment to enhancing their learning accomplishment by increasing their level of learning autonomy and social interaction in language learning (Lee, 2016). Apart from that, being in the category of presentations with a probability of less than 20% promotes their independence in learning English, especially with the advent of learning technology, online learning media, and learning management systems, which should also be criticised in this instance. One of the reasons they might develop greater independence in enhancing their English skills is the lecturers' instructional approaches. Thus, this becomes material for ESP lecturers to continue developing their teaching methods, motivating or directing students to study more independently to improve their English language skills.

4.3 Challenges ESP Learners Encountered in SDLL via Technology Enhanced TBLT

The results of an open-ended questionnaire related to challenges in SDLL through technology-enhanced TBLT were interpreted based on thematic analysis and presented in Figure 4.

ESP students' difficulties in developing their English learning independence can be categorised into five categories, as seen in Figure 4. They believe that the major obstacles in the online learning context are a lack of motivation and focus. This finding is also supported by (Yates et al., 2021) that this lack of motivation was attributed to contextual factors such as family obligations, such as caring for siblings or assisting around the house or farm; distractions such as Netflix or online purchases; lack of availability of educator or peer assistance; a lack of extrinsic consequences; and a lack of difference between school and home. Additionally, they perceived a scarcity of

opportunities for speaking practices. Furthermore, internet issues remain a significant impediment to technology-enhanced language task-based learning, which remains relatively large. However, the smallest percentage of difficulties ESP students encounter is a lack of English practice using ESP materials. Surprisingly, in utilising technology-enhanced language instruction, learning engagement was still challenging to improve students' self-directed learning. This finding is relevant to the previous study that undergraduate students in South Korea perceived that utilising learning technologies did not enhance their learning engagement (Yates et al., 2021).

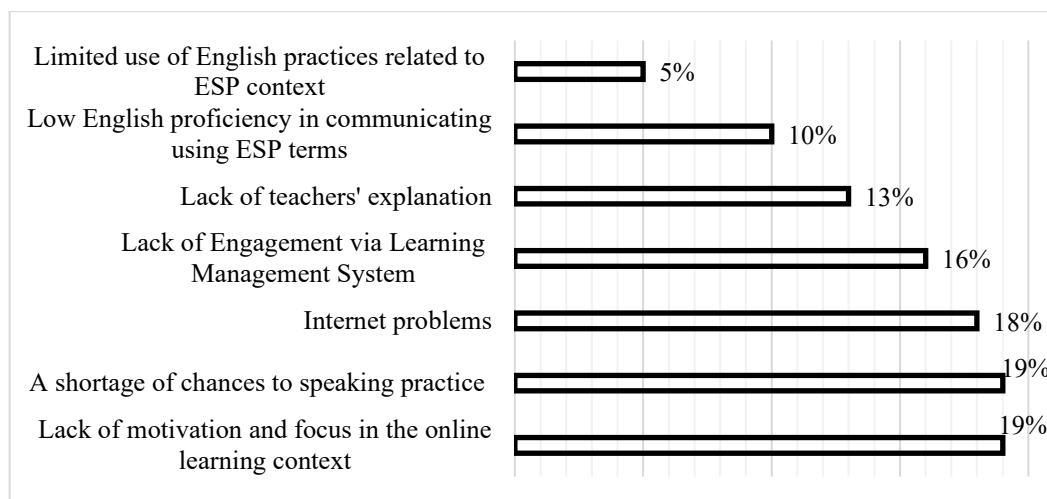


Figure 4. Challenges in SDLL through technology-enhanced TBLT.

5. CONCLUSION

This study investigated learners' perceptions of self-directed language learning and discerned their experiences for successful practice and challenges through technology-enhanced tasks-based language instruction. The highest one shows that ESP learners were enthusiastic when learning English in the 'learning needs' category. They also wanted to keep learning English online or in a traditional classroom. Speaking English was the lowest category of all. The 'utilising skills' category shows that even though their lecturer did not ask them, students claimed they had mastered understanding grammar when reading texts by participating in the classroom. The highest group of students' perceptions reported that they tend to look up unfamiliar words in a dictionary or online in the 'enduring challenges category'. ESP students' perceived 'self-efficacy' in the learning category refers to ESP lecturers being pleased with their success in using technology to study English. In addition, ESP learners also positively perceive their planning process, completing tasks, and internal attributions during technology-enhanced task-based language learning instructions.

Some critical issues should be considered in which utilising skills remains low since ESP students struggle with comprehending and practising English. Therefore, English language instruction must lead to the development of communicative language skills. Besides, ESP students must also improve their process planning and remaining utilisation capabilities. English lesson plans should be more consistent both within and outside the classroom. Preparation of pre-learning materials is essential for ESP teachers.

The open-ended survey data also demonstrated benefits and challenges during technology-enhanced TBLT toward their SDLL. The following elements may encourage ESP learners to self-direct language acquisition through technology-enhanced TBLTs, including internal motivation through online learning resources. This instruction also helps ESP lecturers enhance their teaching methods by encouraging students to study independently to improve their English language skills. They feel the main challenges in online learning are motivation and focus. They also saw a lack of possibilities for speaking practice. Furthermore, internet connection problems continue to be a substantial barrier to technology-enhanced language task-based learning. The most common problem ESP students face is a lack of practice using ESP materials.

This study has several drawbacks; the study was done in the context of learning a foreign language, with over 70 per cent of participants remaining at the beginner level in English. Student population characteristics could potentially bring bias to the results. Further investigation is expected to focus on the research participants of ESP learners with comparable English language proficiency from beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels to obtain a more accurate generalisation of the findings.

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Augmenting the Quality of Acehnese Knowledge-Based EFL Material through a 4D Model

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Abstract

Integrating local knowledge into English learning material is crucial in this globalized era as it has multiple functions, such as building students' identity, motivating them to learn, making them attached to their culture, and preserving their local knowledge. Anchored by the curriculum theory, this study systemically developed an Acehnese Islamic cultural knowledge-based lesson material for learning English by students at senior high school and analyzed its quality based on the curriculum perspective. In doing so, this study involved EFL teachers using Tiagarajan's 4D (Define-Design-Develop-Disseminate) model for developing the English learning material as a supplementary material for senior high schools. Local knowledge, such as Molod Nabi, Meuleumak, and Toroyong, was selected to be its content. Its quality was then assessed based on the quality criteria of a curriculum product, such as validity and practicality. The results revealed that the Acehnese local culture knowledge-based EFL lesson material for senior high schools is valid based on the teachers' perceptions. It contains state-of-the-art knowledge and is practical for teaching English to foster the deradical characters of senior high school students. In conclusion, using the 4D model in collaboratively developing the local knowledge-based EFL English lesson material is beneficial for producing high-quality curriculum products.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This disruption era has witnessed heated debates on radicalism issues at the national and international levels. How to overcome radicalism through various mechanisms has been iteratively and rigorously discussed. Many countries have exercised multiple approaches, such as a challenging approach through military operations and a soft approach through an educational mechanism. From an educational perspective, many scholars (e.g., [Dixon & Court, 2015](#)) consider it necessary to deal with radicalization through education. In the same vein, [Sjøen and Jore \(2019\)](#) suggested that it be essential for schools and universities as educational institutions to take the lead in global counterterrorism.

Indonesia has repeatedly reformed its educational curriculum to deal with the radicalism issue. The currently implemented curriculum aims to develop students' good character through their vertical and horizontal relationships ([Kaimuddin, 2014](#)). It intends to nurture students with four Core Competencies (CC), such as 'affective' competencies to believe in God (CC1) and build good relationships among human beings (CC2), besides having good 'cognitive' skills (CC3) and 'psychomotor' skills (CC4) ([Yaumi, 2017](#)). All these competencies are essential for developing students to be competent and to become good citizens, including learning English. In the Islamic religion, as primarily embraced in Indonesia, people with good character are more emphasized than those with high competencies in their respective disciplines. This is obvious in the mission of the Prophet Muhammad that he was sent to this world to perfect the noble character of human beings (Narrated by Bukhari & Ahmad, as cited in [Habrun, 2017](#)).

Unfortunately, using local knowledge in English textbooks is relatively less ([Muslim et al., 2009](#)). Many EFL textbooks used at schools in Indonesia adopt the target language cultural (i.e., western culture) knowledge. Adopting the target language culture in learning the language is ideologically, economically, politically, and pedagogically unfavorable. Privileging the target culture in learning may mean marginalizing the local values embedded in our own culture. Moreover, it is through learning that identity is constructed ([Wenger, 1998](#)). Hence, learning most Western cultures affects the identity of learners. Many scholars believe learning is gaining knowledge and becoming a particular person in a sociocultural context ([Lave & Wenger, 1991](#)). Indonesian generations become more familiar with Western culture than their own and develop into an uprooted generation ([Muslim et al., 2009](#)). Hence, imposing Indonesian students to learn Western cultures without learning their local cultures may make them slip from the track or goal of Indonesian education.

Using the target culture (Western culture) in learning English in this globalization era has eroded local values ([Gunara et al., 2019](#); [Kanoksilapatham & Suranakkharin, 2018](#)). Western culture is often used as the norm through which other societies are interpreted ([Nugroho et al., 2018](#)). In English learning, [Kristiawan \(2012, p. 174\)](#) states, "teaching EFL adopting the target culture makes it difficult for students to understand the material as they find unfamiliar lexical as well as cultural items which are alien to them." The students may also not increase their motivation in

learning because they do not have prior knowledge of the target culture; students' motivation will increase, and their attitude will be positive when learning English using local knowledge (Fredricks, 2007; Post & Rathet, 1996). Therefore, developing lesson materials that integrate local cultural knowledge into learning English is essential.

Moreover, culture guides behavior and life patterns; therefore, cultural inheritance must be maintained to make it sustainable (Eptiana & Amir, 2021; Minkov & Hofstede, 2011). Kanoksilapatham and Suranakkharin's (2018) research also revealed that using a local culture of northern Thainess-based English lessons in teaching made learners more knowledgeable of their own regional identity and used their local knowledge to develop their English-speaking skills. In this regard, Verhoeven et al. (2019) posited that the tools, norms, and values explicitly or implicitly communicated through educational activities and learning contents influence students' self-understanding. In Aceh, where several privileges in education, Islamic religion, and customs have been granted, it is essential to develop local-based textbooks for teaching English, through which students learn the local wisdom with various cultural values, such as honesty, politeness, and work ethics.

Existing studies have developed lesson materials using many kinds of systematic models, such as 4D (Define-Design-Develop-Disseminate) model (Jasrial et al., 2022), ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation) model (Trust & Pektas, 2018), and ADER (Analysis, Design, Evaluation, and Revision) model (Oktarina et al., 2022). Using the 4D model, for instance, increased the validity and practicality of the lesson materials (Jasrial et al., 2022). Similar findings (improved validity and practicality of the product under development) were revealed in the research by Oktarina et al. (2022), who used the ADER (analysis, design, evaluation, and revision) model in developing EFL reading materials for 21st-century learning. However, the study that uses the systemic model, such as the 4D model, in collaboratively developing Acehnese knowledge-based English lesson material is rare. This study intends to integrate Acehnese cultural values in the lesson material development in collaboration with school teachers to deal with radicalism.

Literature indicates that involving teachers in all stages of lesson material development is advantageous. This is so because teacher agency and collaboration strongly influence improved learner outcomes (Datnow & Park, 2018; Hargreaves & Ainscow, 2015; Harris et al., 2017). However, developing a textbook by teachers is not easy because they are busy with their daily obligations (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018). Differently, if teachers only serve as the recipients of top-down change, the outcomes are far less promising (Harris & Jones, 2019). This study involved teachers in collaboratively developing EFL lesson materials that integrate Acehnese cultural knowledge. It needs to support the idea of making the English language culturally responsive, relevant, appropriate, and compatible with the culture of the learners by utilizing local knowledge in the teaching and learning process.

This study addresses the following overarching question: How do the teachers perceive the quality of the collaboratively developed EFL lesson materials based on Acehnese local Islamic knowledge? The question is broken down into the following questions:

1. How do the teachers perceive the validity of the lesson material?
2. How do the teachers perceive the practicality of the lesson material?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Defining curriculum and its representations

In this study, we used and reviewed curriculum theories in developing the English learning material because, as Voogt et al. (2011, p. 1236) stated, “Curriculum materials are the products of a curriculum.” Traditionally, the curriculum has been defined based on the Latin word *curere*, which means the distance traveled in horse races (Pinar, 2019). However, various definitions of curriculum have been developed until now by those engaged in curriculum development. The simplest one was a learning plan by Goodlad (1979). Despite its simplicity, according to Thijs and van den Akker (2009), “the definition does not easily or unnecessarily narrow the perspective but permits all sorts of elaboration for specific curricular levels, contexts, and representations” (p. 9).

For further understanding of curriculum in the current context, Table 1 presents the levels of curriculum representations.

Table 1. Curriculum representations (Thijs & van den Akker, 2009, p. 10).

Levels		Representations
Intended	Ideal	Curriculum as intended in the rationale or basic philosophy underlying a curriculum
	Formal/Written	Curriculum written as formal documents and/or materials
Implemented	Perceived	Curriculum as perceived by teachers
	Operational	Curriculum operated in actual teaching and learning
Attained	Experiential	Curriculum as experienced by learners
	Learned	Curriculum as learned by students

Table 1 shows that there are six levels of curriculum representations. The ‘ideal curriculum’ is the first, which emanates from the vision behind the curriculum developed and implemented (Thijs & van den Akker, 2009). In Indonesia, it intends to develop its citizens into human beings who believe and are cautious in God Almighty, noble, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens (President of Republic of Indonesia, 2003). Those are then incorporated into a curriculum draft by the curriculum developers.

These ideals must be put into a concrete or ‘formal curriculum’ (Thijs & van den Akker, 2009). However, Marsh and Willis (2007) pointed out that the written curriculum will only be ably judged for its quality once its implementers operate it in teaching real classrooms. Therefore, before its implementation, a curriculum must be well-perceived by its implementers (teachers) (Thijs & van den Akker, 2009). That is why Goodlad (1979) calls the teacher’s perception of the written curriculum the level of curriculum representation. The correct perception of teachers determines the quality of the curriculum at another level, the operational level.

Curriculum representation at the ‘operational level’ is also influenced by the condition of the classroom, the teacher’s teaching ability, students, class size, and other instructional facilities. Therefore, the teacher must prepare a conducive classroom for teaching and learning. It is also essential to encourage students to participate actively in the learning process through which they learn many things, ranging from expressing their ideas, working together, using language publicly, and improving their confidence.

The quality of the curriculum at the operational level also affects the curriculum quality at the 'experiential level'. By experiential representation, Goodlad (1979) means the curriculum represented in the students' learning experiences. The extent to which students experience the teaching and learning process influences their attainment during the examination. Van den Akker (2003) calls this level of curriculum representation an 'attained' or learned curriculum.

2.2 Understanding the Quality of Curriculum Product

Various quality criteria have been proposed in evaluating a curriculum product. For instance, Thijs and van den Akker (2009) proposed three quality criteria based on the levels of the curriculum representations, as depicted in Table 2.

Table 2. Quality criteria of a curriculum product.

Levels		Quality Criteria	
INTENDED	Ideal	Validity	Does the curriculum product reflect the rationale or basic philosophy underlying a curriculum?
	Formal/Written		Does the curriculum product written reflect the fulfill the state of the art knowledge? Does it have essential components of a curriculum? Are the components of the curriculum product strongly linked with each other?
IMPLEMENTED	Perceived	Practicality	Is the curriculum product practical as perceived by the teachers?
	Operational		Is the curriculum product practical as used by the teachers in teaching?
ATTAINED	Experiential	Effectiveness	Is the curriculum product effective for using in the classroom learning by learners?
	Learned		Is the curriculum product effective when used for doing tests by students?

Table 2 shows a quality curriculum product based on the three criteria: validity, practicality, and effectiveness. To evaluate the validity of lesson material, for instance, the developer(s) can evaluate whether its contents reflect the rationale or basic philosophy underlying a curriculum, fulfill the state-of-the-art knowledge, and its components are strongly linked. To evaluate its practicality, writers can ask whether it is practical as perceived by the teachers and practical when used in teaching. In addition, to evaluate its effectiveness, the developer(s) can evaluate whether it is effective for use by students in classroom learning and effective for students in learning for sitting the tests.

2.3 Integrating Local Knowledge into English Lesson Material

Integrating local knowledge or culture into English learning is strongly recommended today. Many scholars (e.g., Bao, 2016; Tomlinson, 2012) suggest that it is necessary to incorporate the students' native culture to address their background,

emotions, experiences, and culture in learning materials and activities. This is so because there is a strong link between culture and language (Alakrash et al., 2020; Kim, 2020; Turan & Akcay, 2021). The term ‘local knowledge’ is often equated with local wisdom, indigenous knowledge, local genius, and original indigenous wisdom (Sinapoy, 2018). Local knowledge means “a cultural rationalization of daily life as foundations for individual or community to live in specific areas” (Gunara et al., 2019, p. 22).

According to Kuo and Lai (2006), incorporating culture into a second language learning and teaching component is beneficial. Students can succeed in their target language learning if cultural issues are part of the language curriculum and instruction. Besides, Hunaepi et al. (2016, 2020) and Simamora et al. (2019) argued that students who learn from the lesson materials that integrate the values of local wisdom or local culture would have a sense of love for their local cultures, build their character, ease them to remember facts and think innovatively based on local culture. Scholars believe that communication in English subject knowledge provides more chances for learners to engage in meaningful and authentic interaction (An & Thomas, 2021).

2.4 Using Research and Development Model in Developing Lesson Material

Previous studies have recurrently revealed that collaborating with potential users and using systematic models in developing lesson materials is paramount. It can increase the quality of the product under development, particularly its validity and practicality, and improve teacher collaborators’ knowledge of the process of lesson material development (Usman et al., 2021). By participating in the development process, teachers experience and gain direct knowledge about the process to make it easier to use the product (McKenney et al., 2022; Voogt et al., 2019). Negotiation and collaboration of the people involved, including teachers, in designing and developing a learning book can reach the textbook quality criteria (Widodo, 2015).

Among the models used in developing lesson materials are ADDIE (analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation) (Branch, 2009) and 4Ds (define, design, development, and dissemination) models (Thiagarajan, 1974), which are used in this study. Many researchers (e.g., Jasrial et al., 2022; Nurhikmah et al., 2022) found that using systematic and systemic models, like the 4D model, in developing a curriculum product can improve its quality. Jasrial et al. (2022), for instance, used the 4D model to develop teaching materials such as e-books to improve student literacy in the Education Administration Study Program of the Faculty of Education, Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia. It revealed that the use of the 4D model increased the validity and practicality of the product, such as the validity of the material aspect was 95%, that the validity of the product media aspect was 85.5%, and that the trial validity of the product language aspect was 96.25%. The results of practicality test analysis from lecturers were 96.66%, and student practicality trial results were 91.7%. It concludes that developing e-book teaching materials helps improve student literacy.

Nurhikmah et al. (2022) also used the 4D model to develop local content reading books for the history of Wajo. It showed that the book had reached good validity and practicality. Similarly, Solikin and Amalia (2019) also used the 4D model to develop mobile web-based digital lesson materials, producing a practical quality product for student learning. According to Stefaniak et al. (2022), systematic models improve

product quality because each phase feeds the subsequent phases of the lesson material development.

Of the reviewed studies, we conclude that teacher is of the utmost importance to research, especially regarding their perceptions of the developed textbook/module/lesson materials. This is like what many scholars, such as Varghese et al. (2005, as cited in [Almayez, 2022, p. 2](#)), posit that it is essential to understand teachers to understand language teaching and learning. That is the reason this study intends to understand teachers' perceptions of the quality of the local knowledge-based lesson materials developed by using the 4D model for developing students' deradicalization character. It is expected that using the 4D model for developing a local knowledge-based EFL lesson material not only supports students in learning English but also provides teachers with knowledge of the design and use it in teaching.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This research used the Research and Development (R&D) method for developing English lesson materials for senior high school students based on Acehnese knowledge, which is Islamic. In developing the local knowledge-based EFL materials, we used a 4-D model encompassing four stages: define, design, develop, and disseminate ([Thiagarajan, 1974](#)).

It was carried out in Aceh, involving the school teachers of two schools under the control of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) and the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC). In developing the lesson material, the participants were approached through meeting with the school principals after having research ethics from the Research Center of Islamic Higher Education in Aceh. The participants were informed about the need to develop Acehnese knowledge lesson materials for the English subject to support the government program in dealing with radicalism in Aceh, Indonesia. Using the lesson material, students will learn Acehnese local cultural knowledge that contains peace values, working together voluntarily, working as part of remembering Allah, working together without classes, etc. To support the students to have Islamic, local knowledge, it is necessary to support their teachers to have good perceptions of the intervention before they operate it in the classroom process ([Thijs & van den Akker, 2009](#)).

3.2 Procedure of the Lesson Material Development

The simplified process of the lesson material development can be understood from a series of activities in several stages, as depicted in Figure 1. At the Define stage, we analyzed the learning requirements, such as students' needs, concept analysis, task analysis, and specification of learning objectives. One of the analysis results is that the existing textbook needs to be supplemented with lesson material that integrates Islamic and local cultural knowledge.

At the Design stage, we used the ideas from the define stage to develop its table of contents. In this stage, we designed several chapters. Using some local knowledge for English lesson materials is necessary for Acehnese people because it enables them

to cultivate local cultural values in the students' minds and preserve local cultures (Eptiana & Amir, 2021; Minkov & Hofstede, 2011; Muslim et al., 2009). This study used three kinds of local knowledge, including *Molod Nabi*, *Meuleumak*, and *Toroyong*. These topics were selected because they can empower local wisdom to the fore, such as the important values for young generations in Aceh, such as working together, work ethics, sincerity, working to please Allah, etc.

At the Development stage, we developed the table of contents into several chapters. Each comprises four main parts of curriculum products: goals, contents, methods of delivery, and evaluation. We developed an entire chapter. Then, we formatively evaluated each chapter involving experts and potential users (curriculum experts, instructional design experts, and teachers). A revised module draft was produced based on their inputs.

In the Dissemination stage, we disseminated the designed lesson materials to the school teachers to evaluate the product's quality. During the Dissemination stage, teachers evaluate using it before using it in their classrooms.



Figure 1. The process of the lesson material development.

3.3 Data Collection

Data for this research were collected using several instruments, such as self-evaluation, expert appraisal, one-on-one evaluation, and questionnaire. However, in the article, we only report data through questionnaires collected when the learning material had been in the semi-final version. Meanwhile, the data collected through self-evaluation, expert appraisal, and one-on-one evaluation were used in the design and development stages.

This study collected data through questionnaires distributed to the potential users (English language teachers). The teachers' perceptions of the lesson materials under development are crucial because the teachers are the implementers. Therefore, the questionnaires developed based on five Likert Scales (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree) were administered to collect data on the teachers' perceptions of the validity and practicality of the lesson materials for teaching English. Sixteen questionnaire items were created based on the curriculum theories regarding the validity and practicality of the curriculum product quality criteria developed by Thijs and van den Akker (2009). Eight items were developed to evaluate the validity and eight to practicality.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data from the questionnaires regarding the teachers' perceptions of the quality of the lesson materials under development was analyzed descriptively. This analysis was because this study intends to evaluate the quality of the module for English teaching. The percentage of their responses was calculated to determine the

tendency of the research participant's responses to the module quality (its validity and practicality).

4. RESULTS

4.1 Validity

We assessed the module's validity based on two main criteria: content validity and construct validity (Thijs & van den Akker, 2009). We also assessed the content validity to understand whether the module developed sufficiently has the four main components of a curriculum product, including the goals of using the module, the contents, and the evaluation. Meanwhile, the construct validity was assessed to determine whether there was a strong link between the components of the module developed. Table 3 shows the perceived quality of the module.

Table 3. The validity of the module.

No.	Criteria	Responses						N
			1	2	3	4	5	
	Validity:							
1.	The content of the module to foster characters of deradicalism is very representative.	F	0	1	3	15	6	25
		%	0	4.0	12.0	60.0	24.0	Mean= 4.04 SD=0.72
2.	The module developed is based on the Basic Competencies of the 2013 Curriculum.	F	0	0	2	11	12	25
		%	0	0	8.0	44.0	48	Mean=4.40 SD=0.63
3.	Its learning objectives are in accordance with the 2013 Curriculum.	F	0	0	1	13	11	25
		%	0	0	4.0	52.0	44.0	Mean= 4.40 SD=0.57
4.	Information on the learning module provides new knowledge.	F	0	0	0	12	13	25
		%	0	0	0	48.0	52.0	Mean= 4.52 SD=0.5
5.	All the components of the module are strongly linked.	F	0	0	2	13	10	25
		%	0	0	8.0	52.0	40.0	Mean= 4.32 SD=0.61
6.	The presentation of the material in the module is appealing.	F	0	1	2	10	9	22
		%	0	4.5	9.1	45.5	40.9	Mean= 4.23 SD = 0.79
7.	The examples provided are in accordance with the material and increase students' curiosity and understanding.	F	0	0	1	13	11	25
		%	0	0	4.0	52.0	44.0	Mean= 4.40 SD=0.57
8.	The deradicalism character assessment instrument presented is appropriate.	F	0	0	1	14	10	25
		%	0	0	4.0	56.0	40.0	Mean= 4.36 SD=0.56
	Cumulative		0	2	12	101	82	Mean= 4.34 SD=0.64

Table 3 shows that the school teachers' perceptions of the English lesson material have fulfilled the validity criteria. The module developed for English learning of Senior High School/Madrasah Aliyah students was perceived to have all the main components of a curriculum product and integrate local contents, as most of their

perceptions fall into agree (4) and strongly agree (5) levels. They also perceived that the components of the module have a strong link with one another. For instance, the goals of the English curriculum currently implemented at schools/madrasahs link with the curriculum contents, methods of delivery, and evaluation.

The mean on all items with a value that almost reaches the maximum number shows that the data is concentrated in the expected category, namely $4 < \text{mean} < 5$. Its standard deviation on every item with a minimal value, < 1 , shows that the sample data distribution is very close to a significant mean. This means that most participants provide choices in narrow intervals around the center of data distribution. Both show that respondents stated that the module developed was valid. In other words, the module provides content that contributes to developing an attitude of deradicalism according to the demands of the applicable curriculum.

4.2 Practicality

Regarding the practicality of the module, the teachers perceived it as usable in teaching English to students at senior high schools/Madrasah Aliyah. Table 4 highlights the findings on the perceived quality of the module in terms of its practicality.

Table 4. The practicality of the module.

No.	Criteria		Responses					N
			1	2	3	4	5	
	Practicality:							
1.	The learning module is easy to use in the learning process.	F	0	0	1	11	13	25
		%	0	0	4.0	44.0	52.0	Mean= 4.48 SD=0.57
2.	The goals in the module are easy to understand.	F	0	0	1	11	13	25
		%	0	0	4.0	44.0	52.0	Mean= 4.48 SD=0.57
3.	The content of the module is aligned with students' level of maturity.	F	0	0	1	11	13	25
		%	0	0	4.0	44.0	52.0	Mean= 4.48 SD=0.57
4.	The module is usable to attract students' attention on learning.	F	0	1	2	15	7	25
		%	0	4.0	8.0	60.0	28.0	Mean= 4.12 SD=0.71
5.	The module is easy to use in teaching students the 21st century skills.	F	0	0	0	15	10	25
		%	0	0	0	60.0	40.0	Mean= 4.40 SD=0.49
6.	The module is practical to use in supporting students to be not radical.	F	0	0	0	15	10	25
		%	0	0	0	60.0	40.0	Mean= 4.40 SD=0.49
7.	The evaluation in the module is usable to understand students' knowledge on the 21 century skills.	F	0	0	1	16	8	25
		%	0	0	12.5	64.0	32.0	Mean= 4.28 SD=0.53
8.	The module is usable for teaching English language functions.	F	0	0	1	9	15	25
		%	0	0	6.7	36.0	60.0	Mean= 4.56 SD=0.57
	Cumulative	%	0	1	7	103	89	Mean= 4.40 SD=0.58

Table 4 shows that the practicality of the module receives a high percentage. The goals, contents, methods, and evaluation are clearly stated and easily understood. The mean on all items with a value almost reaching the maximum number shows that the data is concentrated in the expected category, $4 < \text{mean} < 5$. The standard deviation on every item has a small value, < 1 , indicating that the sample data distribution is very close to a significant mean that most respondents provide choices in narrow intervals around the center of data distribution. The two things above show that participants generally stated that the developed module was very practical.

5. DISCUSSION

This R&D study has collaboratively developed Acehese, an Islamic cultural knowledge-based lesson material for English teaching and learning of senior high school students to foster students' de-radical characters. The findings showed that the developed EFL lesson materials designed, developed, and evaluated had been perceived to have high quality based on two out of the three criteria of a curriculum product: validity and practicality (Thijs & van den Akker, 2009). The developed lesson material is perceived by its potential users to have reached the validity quality because it supports the goals of fostering students' deradicalization character. Besides, its content aligns with the methods of delivery and evaluation. Its components have a strong link with each other, which is crucial in a curriculum product (Thijs & van den Akker, 2009). More importantly, the lesson material is considered usable in the classroom by its potential users, the teachers. All components of the lesson material were readily used in teaching. According to curriculum scholars such as Thijs and van den Akker (2009) and McKenney and Reeves (2018), a curriculum product can be assessed its quality through the perception of its users.

The findings corroborated previous research findings by Usman et al. (2021), Hilmianti and Listiawati (2022), Jasrial et al. (2022), Nurhikmah et al. (2022), and Oktarina et al. (2022), who found that using systematic design in developing lesson materials produced high-quality curriculum products. This is so because its potential users were involved in all stages of the lesson materials development. During the process, they can interact and understand the contents and systematic process that starts with needs analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. Hence, developing lesson materials for school subjects that integrate local knowledge is worthwhile in educating students with their local knowledge values. As suggested in previous studies, using local knowledge for learning English can motivate students to learn because they have a gap between learning material and students' background or prior knowledge (Fredricks, 2007; Graves et al., 2004; Post & Rathet, 1996) and prevent the erosion of local values (Gunara et al., 2019). Moreover, the school teams will also know that local values are valuable resources for teaching and learning. Moreover, by engaging in lesson material development, they will know how to do so for other subjects they teach.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, this research concludes that the teachers perceived that the module developed had reached the intended quality of a curriculum product to a certain extent, such as its validity and practicality. These quality criteria of the book, as perceived by the teachers, are critical because it is teachers who will use it to support the development of deradicalization of students. Hence, the involvement of many stakeholders in developing the module is beneficial both for the quality of the product and for the process, as experienced by the teachers. However, the use of the module in teaching strongly depends on the skills of the teachers.

Nevertheless, this study was limited to the lesson material developed for the EFL subject for grade XII of the senior high school students. Its evaluation was only based on two curriculum product criteria, validity and practicality. Further research is worthwhile for developing lesson materials that integrate local knowledge for students learning English at all grades so that they would understand more local values in developing students' deradical characters and assess all criteria of a curriculum product, validity, practicality, and effectiveness. In this way, the effect of using the intervention on students will be understood.

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Palestinian Undergraduate Learners' Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety in Online Environments

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Abstract

Despite foreign language classroom anxiety having been studied since the 1980s, there has been little research into this phenomenon in the context of online and blended learning environments. There is a clear need for this study as higher education becomes ever more adaptable, post-pandemic. The portfolio of methods for supporting teaching and learning is widening, with most institutions now offering online and hybrid modules and courses. The purpose of this study was to investigate the levels of anxiety among Palestinian undergraduates learning the English language through online courses. This study also investigated the effects of gender variables (310

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males and 1210 females) on foreign language classroom anxiety levels. We surveyed a random sample of 1520 undergraduate students from different universities in Palestine. We used the well-established Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986; Horwitz, 2016), which is the most commonly-used measure of anxiety related to language learning. The findings of the study revealed that undergraduate learners experience anxiety when speaking with native speakers. Results indicate no significant differences in the students' gender and foreign language classroom anxiety at universities. However, female learners were more anxious in language classrooms where the level of classroom anxiety was high. Finally, we offer tentative solutions for how tutors can support students experiencing foreign language anxiety.

Keywords: Gender, language classroom anxiety, learning environment online courses.

1. INTRODUCTION

In some ways, traditional classroom instruction and evaluation have been substituted by online teaching and learning in universities throughout the COVID pandemic (see, e.g., Batez, 2021; Cheung, 2021; Coman et al., 2020; Hodges et al., 2020; Osman, 2020; Smith & Traxler, 2022). With the spread of the pandemic, there have been concerns, initiatives, and advancements regarding instruction, learning, and evaluation in unconventional contexts (García-Peñalvo et al., 2021). While we are entering a post-pandemic world, the abrupt shift to online modes of teaching and learning precipitated by COVID-19 demonstrated to many educators that there is much that can be achieved online that complements – or exceeds – what can be done in traditional face-to-face learning environments. Maximizing these opportunities is part of a growing worldwide interest in using technology in education (Qaddumi et al., 2021). The development of ICT in support of teaching and studying foreign languages has not been isolated from this burgeoning use of technology in universities, especially online language learning (McQuirter, 2020).

While we move on to a full literature review in the next section, we note here that anxiety is an unavoidable part of learning, especially in Higher Education, where the stakes are high and where many outcomes are determined by examination, which is, by its nature, anxiety-inducing (Trifoni & Shahini, 2011). Language learning adds an extra stressor to what can already be an anxiety-inducing experience (Král'ová & Sorádová, 2015). This is also true of English language learning in Palestine, which is the specific focus of this paper.

Beginning with their first semester of university, students must take numerous exams as part of their language learning process, which causes them anxiety (e.g., Farran et al., 2020). Passing an English language entrance exam is crucial for students in Palestine who want to enroll in universities and take a variety of English-language courses using a blended learning approach. This factor increases the students' worry and anxiety while learning and lowers their self-esteem. This study attempts to determine the level of anxiety that undergraduate students experience when using blended learning. Additionally, it assesses the degree of classroom anxiety among

university students in English language courses who are experiencing blended learning.

English is considered as a foreign language (EFL) in Palestine. English became a significant language of political, economic, and cultural power in Palestine during the British Mandate (Bianchi & Hussein-Abdel Razeq, 2017). English is used in the Palestinian context as a foreign language as it is only used at schools, colleges, and universities inside English language learning classrooms (El-Helou, 2010). With the construction of the separation wall between Palestinian territories and Israel in 2002, some solidarity movements began to visit the wall, where people found a chance to communicate with foreigners. That was the only case where people in Palestine used English outside the classroom. English is placed in the expanding circle (Tajeddin & Pakzadian, 2020). In Palestine, schoolchildren used to begin English instruction in the fifth grade at the age of 11. Later, the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) decided that learners begin studying English in first grade. Many academics and researchers questioned the advantages of such a policy change (Bianchi & Hussein-Abdel Razeq, 2017). According to Shehadeh and Dwaik (2013), large class sizes, a lack of weekly instructional time, limited access to technology as additional barriers to learning English, and teaching English in a cultural vacuum, which makes it seem unimportant and undesirable to students, all have an impact on the quality of English instruction. They further point out that young children who must learn English frequently have not even established critical thinking skills in Standard Arabic before studying English, thereby impeding their growth in English. This is due to the diglossic nature of Arabic. There is no question that these elements, particularly substantial class sizes, present significant obstacles to English Language Teaching ELT in Palestinian public schools.

Our personal experiences with Palestinian schools aroused our attention, and conversations with students over time revealed that many students face fear when learning a language. What makes this study special is that all the studies carried out in the Palestinian context investigated one type of language anxiety. For example, Yahya (2013) studied only speaking anxiety in speaking courses among Palestinian students at Arab American University in Palestine. Abu Taha and Abu Rezeq (2018) studied oral communication apprehension among students at Al Quds Open University in Palestine. We were thus motivated to investigate the realities of foreign language classroom anxiety and, as such, the study addresses the following research questions that underpinned our inquiry:

1. What is the level of foreign language classroom anxiety in students at universities?
2. Is there a significant relationship between students' gender and foreign language classroom anxiety at universities?

These questions provide a basis for exploring the level of foreign language classroom anxiety in Palestinian university students.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Types of Foreign Language Anxiety

Anyone who uses a second or foreign language could show anxiety, tension, or apprehension (Horwitz et al., 1986). Without a doubt, language is a vital tool for

interaction between individuals where they may share their thoughts and ask each other questions. Learning a language has become a crucial tool for becoming fluent in a language of communication and for educating people about the various features and laws of that language. A literature review leads one to the conclusion that education entails putting a lot of demands and needs on students and that learning a language is challenging. An umbrella term for tension, worry, and self-doubt, anxiety can be broadly classified as a disorder ([National Institute of Mental Health, 2023](#)). Anxious conduct and anxiety are two terms used to describe a person's persistent attitudes in various situations. These emotions include anxiety before online or in-person exams, worry about a communication scenario, and fear of how others will perceive one's language ([Luo & Xu, 2016](#); [Peng, 2009](#); [Russell, 2020](#)). Based on ground-breaking research, the affective filter hypothesis contends that when language learners experience anxiety, a mental filter that prevents linguistic input from entering is activated ([Krashen, 1982](#)). Thus, perceptions of stress and anxiety among students may hurt language learning ([Jugo, 2020](#)).

For some students, language classroom anxiety can be overwhelming for students, with studies showing a connection between anxiety and performance in foreign language classrooms. Anxiety arises from fear of the learning environment. This anxiety can reflect the suffering of native speakers or those using other languages to correct it ([Kráľová & Sorádová, 2015](#); [MacIntyre, 2017](#)). Foreign language classroom anxiety involves feeling uncomfortable, tense, and dreadful, reflecting native speakers' suffering and second language learners' struggles in teaching communicative and receptive skills like speaking and writing or receptive skills like reading and listening ([Marlow, 2021](#); [Newton & Nation, 2020](#); [Sabina, 2018](#); [Szyszka, 2017](#)).

There are three kinds of language anxiety ([Nugroho et al., 2021](#)). Communication anxiety occurs when learners struggle with interpersonal communication, while test anxiety is a fear of failing exams and unpleasant memories. Both are influenced by a fear of failure ([Anjaniputra, 2021](#); [Rahmat, 2020](#)). Finally, avoidance of situations that could lead to a poor evaluation out of fear. Fear of unfavorable appraisal, according to [Lisnychenko et al. \(2020\)](#), is described as anxiety over other people's opinions and distress.

According to [Anjaniputra \(2021\)](#), a type of shyness characterized by fear or anxiety about communicating with people is communication apprehension. Speaking anxiety results from a lack of trust in one's linguistic knowledge. Speaking in front of the class and other students makes people anxious when learning a foreign language ([Pahargyan, 2021](#)). It is consistent with how communication anxiety manifests itself, as [Horwitz et al. \(1986\)](#) suggested that it is difficult for students to speak in front of groups or in public.

Test anxiety can be 'an unpleasant feeling or emotional state that has both physiological and behavioral components, and that is experienced in formal testing or other evaluative situations' ([Dusek, 1980, p. 88](#)). According to [Sarason \(1986\)](#) and [Sarason and Sarason \(1990\)](#), this particular fear increases during tests, and the person suffers no apparent anxiety in normal situations. Test anxiety stems from state and trait anxiety ([Spielberger, 1980](#)). Test anxiety is a form of anxiety that is brought on by a fear of failing, making faultless performance the only definable accomplishment and increases while students attend exams ([Chapell et al., 2005](#); [Sari et al., 2018](#)), and it is usually related to the student's past experiences. Test-anxious students experience

ruminative thoughts of disappointment, pain, and physiological thrill, leading to anxiety and fear of failure, potentially causing disastrous consequences. (Wang & Zhan, 2020).

Additionally, due to the frequent evaluation of student performance, test anxiety is a widely prevalent phenomenon in language classes (Al-Saggaf & Al-Aidaros, 2021). Lack of preparation and stress are two major causes of exam anxiety (Umisara et al., 2021). Students who cram the night before the examination, have poor time and study management and struggle to comprehend literature are underprepared students. The second element, meanwhile, has something to do with anxiety regarding performance on previous tests, how peers and other students do, and the adverse effects of failure (Darmawangsa et al., 2020).

Fear of negative evaluation is a general anxiety that involves avoiding evaluations and not thinking negatively about others' opinions. This anxiety can occur in various situations, including group projects and interviews, and can hinder students' ability to start conversations or interact with others (Al-Shboul, 2022; Mokhtar & Haron, 2021; Rofida, 2021; Zhang & Lai, 2023).

2.2 Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety among Blended Learning Students

Many learners who suffer from foreign language classroom anxiety might decide to engage in an online course because they want to feel safe and anonymous, as they think there will not be many speaking exercises or opportunities for peer engagement (Rajendran & Yunus, 2021). However, in reality, according to Zhang and Zou (2022), online language students are frequently obliged to use audio and video resources to connect with their teachers and peers in the target language; as a result, students may experience anxiety related to both the language and the use of the instructional technologies (Timpe-Laughlin et al., 2020). Numerous students are currently being compelled to learn languages online, and their lack of choice in the method of instruction delivery may also be a source of anxiety. Not all students are suited to online language learning, particularly those who lack the drive and/or self-discipline necessary to take ownership of their education (Al Lily et al., 2020). In addition, online students must allot enough time to complete the course on time, ask for assistance when necessary, and be willing to learn despite being emotionally and physically isolated from their peers (Thumvichit, 2021).

Lisnychenko et al. (2020) compared students' foreign language classroom anxiety in face-to-face and online settings in Ukraine. Results showed increased communication anxiety and fear of negative evaluations, while test anxiety and fear of mistakes decreased slightly. Changes in the learning context and virtual classrooms led to decreased anxiety levels. Strategies for lowering language anxiety include raising students' knowledge, computer-based communication proficiency, peer support, and learner autonomy.

Pichette (2009) analyzed the anxiety levels of traditional and online language learners at various levels in Canada. When all levels of learners were considered, the results of his study showed no variations in the anxiety profiles between classroom and distance learners, and no sign that advanced online students experienced less anxiety than first-semester students in traditional classes. Gopang et al. (2015) investigated students' anxiety about learning a foreign language in Pakistan. Additionally, the results showed no difference between the anxiety levels of majoring and non-majoring

students. Additionally, there was no difference in linguistic anxiety between male and female respondents. A significant association between the variables was also revealed. The results indicated that students had relatively high anxiety when learning English online.

Zrekat et al. (2016) investigated how anxious Jordanian undergraduate students studying English as a foreign language (EFL) were about their oral communication skills at Jerash University. The results showed that 60.7% of the respondents reported feeling anxious when speaking English. Kültür and Özcan (2022) studied the associations between the cognitive and emotional components of test anxiety. The results showed that the cognitive and emotional components of test anxiety had significant negative relationships with the test performance of the high-achieving group.

The results of these previous studies that dealt with this subject by study and analysis varied according to many variables, including gender, where the results tended to record anxiety more among females, and levels of achievement, where anxiety was more pronounced among the categories of moderate and low achievement compared to those of high achievement. Another variable was the type of test, where anxiety was more common among candidates for important (high-risk) state exams. Studies also indicated many interventional and therapeutic techniques and methods designed to overcome this problem, including funny drawings, expressive methods, breathing exercises, studying more effectively, relaxation, adequate sleep, and others.

The aforementioned studies demonstrate that anxiety is a critical issue in learning at all levels and has not been resolved for all learners by the time they reach Higher Education. This literature review has shown how important it is to investigate the severity of foreign language classroom anxiety within the framework of blended learning. Our current study is only one part of those efforts. We also see that this problem negatively impacts the performance and delivery of tests or the attempt to learn languages, especially foreign ones, whether the education is conducted face-to-face or online, and that its impact affects all categories of achievement.

3. METHODS

3.1 Participants and Locations

There are nine universities in the northern part of Palestine. The study was conducted in the academic year of 2021–2022 when many students attended these universities. Thus, 20% of the students at universities participated in the study. A survey of students to collect data was used. Table 1 displays the sample. The students completed the surveys to elicit their' perceptions of language anxiety. The data was analyzed with the help of SPSS software.

Table 1. Details on the sample and population.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	310	20.4%
Female	1210	79.6%
Total	1520	100%

3.2 Instruments

The scale we used was mainly based on Horwitz et al. (1986) and Horwitz (2016) and other research studies conducted by Alam (2013), Sari et al. (2018), and Xie et al. (2019) and focused on the level of foreign language classroom anxiety in university students and their relation to gender. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the scale was 0.78. The researchers used the standard FLCAS tool, or Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, to determine students' levels of EFL learning anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986) in online courses. The FLCAS has undergone comprehensive validation for construct validity, internal reliability, and test-retest reliability. It has been used in 106 studies in 35 countries/regions (Toyama & Yamazaki, 2022).

For our research, a survey with a five-point Likert scale and two parts was given out. The purpose of part one was to gather personal data about the participants, such as their gender. The second portion was used to identify how anxious students were in the classroom when taking an English as a Foreign Language Course (EFLC). This scale was made up of the 33 items of the FLCAS, of which eight items measure communicative apprehension (1, 9, 14, 18, 24, 27, 29, and 32), nine items measure fear of negative evaluation (3, 7, 13, 15, 20, 23, 25, 31, and 33), and five items deal with test anxiety (2, 8, 10, 19, and 21). The other 11 items were grouped under foreign language classroom anxiety in EFL learning.

The FLCAS was created to investigate the students' test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and foreign language classroom anxiety related to communication apprehension. The extant literature describes how learners' shyness is brought on by nervousness when attempting to speak in a foreign language is known as communication apprehension. Similarly, test anxiety is shown to be caused by language learners' dread of failing or performing poorly. Apprehension, avoidance, and expectation of a harmful evaluation by others are all terms used to describe the anxiety of receiving a bad review. Several specialists from different universities were given the scale by the researcher, and all agreed that it was appropriate for this study (Botes et al., 2020).

3.3 Technique of Data Collection

We surveyed students to understand their anxiety and confidence about learning languages online. We asked students how they felt when learning a language online to determine their anxiety. Tables 3, 4, and 5 (see section 4) display the outcomes, whereas Table 6 shows the ranks of domains. Please see Table 2 for our classification of responses: for example, we have classed an average response of less than 50% as a 'very low' response".

3.4 Technique of Data Analysis

To understand, organize, analyze the results, and convert the various formats of the data into a consistent and clear format, we used quantitative data analysis techniques that involved dealing with numerical variables. We used several statistics such as frequencies and percentages, means, and Standard Deviation to measure and identify the level of anxiety the students may have. An Independent Samples T-Test

was implemented as the two-sample means, males and females, were from unrelated groups. We used SPSS software version 22 to manipulate data. The items and domains were designed to solicit students' perceptions of their language learning anxiety.

3.5 Scaling

The scaling of the items was the following: We gave five points for 'strongly agree', four points for 'agree', three points for 'undecided', two points for 'disagree', and one point for 'strongly disagree' (Berowa, 2018). Table two demonstrates how the responses are categorized.

Table 2. Responses' percentage scale.

Percentage	Level
Less than 50 %	Very low
From 50-59 %	Low
From 60-69 %	Moderate
From 70-79%	High
80% and more	Very high

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The Level of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety of University Students

4.1.1 The level of foreign language classroom anxiety in the communication apprehension domain

A survey of students was conducted to understand how Palestinian university students perceive the degree of their language learning anxiety. Table 3 displays the outcomes. As stated, a survey at the universities was conducted to get a sense of how students felt about learning a foreign language online.

Table 3. Palestinian university students' perceptions of their level of foreign language classroom anxiety in the communicative apprehension domain.

No.	Items	Mean	Percentage	Degree
1.	Whenever I talk in English, I never feel completely confident in myself.	3.23	68.20%	Moderate
2.	When I have to speak in front of the class without any practice, I start to become nervous.	3.58	72.20%	High
3.	I wouldn't feel comfortable conversing in English with native speakers.	4.05	80.50%	Very high
4.	When I speak in English in my language lesson, I feel confident.	2.22	51.20%	Low
5.	When I talk in front of the other students in English, I feel really self-conscious.	3.20	61.01%	Moderate
6.	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	3.25	64.24%	Moderate
7.	When the language teacher speaks, and I don't comprehend every word, I become anxious.	3.23	65.20%	Moderate
8.	I doubt that being around English native speakers would make me feel at ease.	3.05	61.05%	Moderate
	Total score	3.23	66.54%	Moderate

Table 3 indicates that the degree of foreign language classroom anxiety of the university students in the communication apprehension domain was generally moderate ($M = 3.23$), where 66.54% of the respondents agreed on the essence of the item. However, it was very high on item number 3, as its response was 80.40%. In addition, 72.20% of the respondents indicated that when they had to speak in an online foreign language class without any practice, they started to experience anxiety. Students with such feelings of anxiety or wordiness may be affected by their achievement. These findings suggest that students would experience anxiety if they communicated with native English speakers online. This lack of interaction and conversation with native speakers – and even foreigners online – makes students feel stressed and anxious. According to the responses on the first item, it was clear that students needed to be more self-confident when they went to the online language classrooms. These results concur with [Tanveer \(2007\)](#), [Al-Jamal and Al-Jamal \(2014\)](#), and [Alrashidi and Phan \(2015\)](#).

Furthermore, students lacked confidence when speaking a foreign language in their online language class. This feeling resulted from English being a foreign language where students do not have enough chances to interact and communicate. Students who learn English as a foreign language face many challenges regarding basic language skills and oral communication with native speakers due to their low level of confidence and lack of practice in communicating in the English language and their general use of the Arabic language in various social activities within EFL classes. The process of learning English as a foreign language is primarily based on teaching reading and comprehension skills. [Zrekat et al. \(2016\)](#) and [Tridinanti \(2018\)](#) concur with this result and claim that psychological factors like anxiety and self-confidence might impact the capacity to communicate in a foreign language. In foreign language classes, learners who exhibit high levels of anxiety, worry, fear, and low levels of self-confidence may struggle to improve their speaking skills.

4.1.2 The level of foreign language classroom anxiety in fear of negative evaluation domain

Students were surveyed to evaluate their fear of negative evaluation. The findings were obtained by computing the means and percentages for each survey question. Students were asked to list their difficulties while participating in educational activities.

Table 4. Means and percentages of students' degree of foreign language classroom anxiety in the fear of negative evaluation domain.

No.	Items	Mean	Percentage	Degree
9.	When I anticipate being quizzed in the language class, I quake.	3.00	60.00%	Moderate
10.	I frequently believe that the other pupils are linguistically more proficient than I am.	3.33	66.00%	Moderate
11.	I feel embarrassed to offer solutions in my language lesson.	2.80	46.40%	Low
12.	When I can't grasp what the teacher is correcting, I become irate.	2.56	41.20%	Low
13.	When I'm going to be called on in language class, I can feel my heart beating.	2.58	41.22%	Low

Table 4 continued...

14.	I frequently believe that other pupils speak English more fluently than I do.	3.32	65.00%	Moderate
15.	The pace of language instruction is so rapid that I'm concerned about falling behind.	2.70	50.00%	Low
16.	When I speak in English, I worry that the other students in my class will make fun of me.	3.56	71.20%	High
17.	When the language instructor gives me a question that I haven't thought about in advance, I become anxious.	3.55	71.00%	High
	Total score	2.70	59.68%	Low

Students were asked to identify the degree of their foreign language classroom anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. For example, students reported high degrees for items 16 ($M = 3.56$, 71.20%) and 17 ($M = 3.55$, 71.00%), while the degrees were moderate for items 9, 10, and 14, with percentages of 71.20% and 71.00%. However, the responses for items 11, 12, and 15 and the total score were low, with percentages between 50% and 59%.

According to the results displayed in Table 4, students believed they could not have the desired and appropriate social impact. Some degree of the procedure was influenced by the fear of being judged by others. In this regard, we observed among the students that their anxiety about teacher evaluation was lower than their anxiety about peer evaluation. Most of the students were highly afraid that the other students in the class would laugh at them when they communicated in the English language. They experienced stress when the language teacher asked questions that they did not prepare in advance. Students felt very shy and afraid when they were called on in online language classes during a course, so they did not like the idea of being called on to participate. As students reported, during language class, they got upset when they did not understand what the teacher was correcting. These challenges were also highlighted by Aida (1994), Kitano (2001), Qaddumi (2013), Rahmat (2020), Russell (2020), and Pan and Zhang (2021). They further explain that, when students in English language courses are not very familiar with the content and the teacher asks them, they express significant levels of anxiety due to being negatively evaluated by the teacher and classmates.

4.1.3 The level of foreign language classroom anxiety in the test anxiety domain

The test anxiety is represented by five items in the survey. Table 5 demonstrates the test anxiety among EFL students.

Table 5. Means and percentages of students' degree of foreign language classroom test anxiety.

No.	Items	Mean	Percentages	Degree
18.	Making mistakes in the English classroom worries me.	3.35	65.50%	Moderate
19.	When I take assessments in my language class, I often feel comfortable and at ease.	1.81	46.20%	Very low
20.	The repercussions of failing my language class frighten me.	3.50	70.00%	High
21.	I worry that my language instructor will fix every error I make.	3.15	62.50%	Moderate

Table 5 continued...

22.	I am increasingly confused when I study for a language test.	2.87	52.60%	Moderate
	Total score	2.88	53.24%	Moderate

The results indicated that the degree of students' foreign language classroom test anxiety was moderate. For example, the most frequent challenges and affecting factors that contributed to their degree of stress and fear of exams were their fear of failing language exams, making mistakes even in online classrooms, and experiencing discomfort when taking tests in their online language classes; these factors of academic stress could also lead to the fear of being evaluated academically. Items like item 19, 'I usually feel comfortable when taking tests in a language classroom', scored very low ($M = 1.81$, 46.20%). Students denied feeling comfortable throughout assessments in their language lessons in general. They were concerned about what would happen if they failed the course. As a result of the absence of dialogic feedback, students worried about the consequences of failing their English class.

These results confirm Cooper and Brownell (2020) and Kültür and Özcan (2022), who indicated that test anxiety is thought to be a worry about making mistakes in exams. It is further asserted that test anxiety is related to trepidation about the academic examination, which arises from a fear of failing. People with test anxiety may feel physically unwell, have rapid heartbeats, sweat, trembling, and/or have difficulties sleeping. In two anxiety level tests involving fear of receiving a poor grade and test anxiety, EFL students showed some worry when studying English. These two anxiety level scores were also positively associated. Even in the virtual language classroom, students were concerned about making mistakes.

4.1.4 The level of foreign language classroom anxiety in the EFL learning domain

Based on Table 6, students reported feeling anxious about learning the English language, even in online classes. For example, relatively few pupils felt that they were very sure and relaxed when they had language class ($M = 1.54$, 39%). This conveys a negative meaning since it suggests that pupils do not feel at ease and secure in an EFL classroom. The replies ranged from high for items 23 and 27 (scores between 70 and 79%) to medium for items 24 through 33 (total score between 60 and 69%) to low for items 29 and 32 (scores between 50 and 59%). Given that its proportion was 65.71%, the overall score was middling. Except for item number 32 (When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed), which is negative in meaning because it suggests that students do not feel relaxed and confident when they attend an EFL classroom, the figures from Table 7 show that most of the items in this domain scored moderate to high levels of anxiety.

Table 6. Means and percentages of students' degree of EFL learning anxiety.

No.	Items	Mean	Percentage	Degree
23.	When I can't comprehend what the teacher is saying in English, I am scared.	4.00	80.00%	Very high
24.	I wouldn't mind taking additional English language lessons at all.	2.13	4.60%	Very low
25.	I often find myself thinking about stuff unrelated to the lesson when in a language class.	3.35	65.50%	Moderate

Table 6 continued...

26.	Why some individuals get so outraged over language lessons is beyond me.	3.15	62.50%	Moderate
27.	I sometimes become so tense in language classes that I forget stuff I already know.	3.90	79.01%	High
28.	I have anxiety even when I am fully prepared for a language class.	03.3	65.00%	Moderate
29.	I frequently consider skipping my language class.	2.27	57.00%	Low
30.	I don't feel any pressure to do well in language class beforehand.	3.40	68.00%	Moderate
31.	Compared to my other subjects, my language class makes me feel more uncomfortable and anxious.	3.00	60.00%	Moderate
32.	On the way to a language session, I feel really confident and at ease.	1.54	39.00%	Very low
33.	There are so many restrictions in the English language that I find it overwhelming.	3.3	65.00%	Moderate
	Total score	3.29	65.71%	Moderate

4.1.5 Rankings of undergraduate learners in foreign language classrooms at higher education institutions in the online learning course domain

When the averages and percentages of the various anxiety domains were calculated, it was found that the three domains and the total score ranked in the middle. According to these rankings, undergraduate college students reported feeling worried. Undergraduate students had a foreign language classroom anxiety level that was very mild, at 3.15 on average.

Table 7. Means and percentages of foreign language classroom anxiety in undergraduate learners in the domains and total score.

No.	Domain	Mean	Percentage	Rank
1.	Communication apprehension	3.22	65.44	Moderate
2.	Fear of negative evaluation	2.85	59.52	Low
3.	Test anxiety	3.00	60.00	Moderate
4.	Language Class anxiety	3.33	65.55	Moderate
	Total score	3.15	63.10	Moderate

Based on Table 7, foreign language classroom anxiety among undergraduate students was moderate for domains 1, 3, and 4, and their overall scores for their degrees ranged from 60% to 69%. However, because the response rate was only 59.52%, it was low for domain number 2. It is acceptable to say that, depending on the evaluations of the domains, communication apprehension was ranked moderate since, in an EFL class, students who were required to speak without preparation were worried. Communicative apprehension is a sort of shyness that occurs when communicating with others and displays uneasiness. Additionally, when interacting with English-speaking natives, they were likely to feel uneasy. This resulted in a moderate level of anxiety about receiving bad feedback. This is due to, as is the case at the HEIs in Palestine, requirements for students to raise their level of knowledge, as is the case in any educational institution. Therefore, at any point of cross-linguistic development, not just at elementary levels, learners may perceive a discrepancy between their language knowledge and the need to succeed in the tasks conducted in class.

The learners' limited English proficiency, which prevents them from freely communicating with others, articulating themselves effectively during class, and responding appropriately to teachers' inquiries, was another factor the researcher identified as contributing to the students' nervousness. Students are therefore more concerned in English classes than in other classes since much communication is involved. The lack of adequate English proficiency among the learners, which prevented them from speaking openly, explaining themselves adequately in the classroom, and responding appropriately to teachers' queries, was another factor the researcher identified as contributing to the students' nervousness. As a result, learners are more nervous in English classes than in other classes because of how much communication is required. This is because learners are not accustomed to speaking before a group of peers and are, therefore, reluctant to talk in English sessions. This result concurs with [Yahya \(2013\)](#), who explains that students are not allowed to practice their English. Their exposure to the language is insufficient to enable them to speak more freely and, as a result, experience less communication anxiety.

4.2 The Relationship between Students' Gender and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety at Universities in Palestine

The second research question aimed to identify whether there is a significant relationship between students' gender and foreign language classroom anxiety at universities in Palestine. Table 8 shows the results of this question.

Table 8. Results of the independent samples t-test based on gender variables.

No.	Domain	Male		Female		(T)	SIG
		M	S.D.	M	S.D.		
1	Communication apprehension	3.02	0.59	3.30	0.50	0.10	0.91
2	Fear of negative evaluation	2.80	0.80	3.01	0.57	1.72	0.09
3	Test anxiety	3.10	0.50	3.20	0.63	0.73	0.46
4	Class anxiety	3.01	0.57	3.54	0.54	3.06	0.00*
	Total score	3.08	0.44	3.30	0.42	1.93	0.05

Due to the gender variable in domains 1, 2, and 3 and the overall score, Table 8 demonstrates no significant differences at 0.05 in the association between students' gender and foreign language classroom anxiety at universities. The fourth domain, where the value was 0.00, revealed substantial disparities between students' gender and foreign language classroom anxiety at universities in favor of females. This is because female students in the Arab culture and context are more likely than male students to be shy and cautious in front of others ([Abdel-Khalek & Alansari, 2004](#); [Al-Saraj, 2014](#)). The results concur with [Çağatay \(2015\)](#), who found that female students appeared to be quite nervous in speaking. Another interesting finding is that when speaking with a native speaker as opposed to other students, pupils' foreign language anxiety increased ([Kamarulzaman et al., 2013](#)). It could be concluded that females showed more foreign language anxiety than males.

However, this is not consistent with [Rafek et al. \(2014\)](#), who showed that male students experience anxiety when they are less self-assured and insecure. Teachers in English courses take on the role of dominators or dictators; this is a customary

setting. Students typically experience anxiety, passivity, or oppression. As a result, they lack a liberated, unstructured setting for learning English.

Last but not least, another aspect that should not be disregarded is the high hopes Palestinian families have for their children; lofty hopes typically do not inspire pupils but frequently lead to increased worry. Most English language learners in Palestine, particularly university students, rarely have the chance to interact with English-speaking natives. As a result, university students typically have more anxiety in English classes. Additionally, reading and writing are heavily emphasized in most Palestinian schools and institutions, whereas speaking and listening are mostly disregarded. These results go against the results of [Damanhour \(2022\)](#), who concluded that there is a significant reduction in anxiety symptoms in virtual classrooms. The findings showed that the uniqueness of the language and technical difficulties in the classroom are the adverse factors in this situation. Nearly all of the participants in this survey advised using blended learning in the future by better-integrating technology into educational institutions to maximize the advantages of both communication methods.

5. CONCLUSION

Essential findings about the anxiety of students in Palestinian EFL classes have been provided in this study. Most students were observed to be anxious in class, particularly when it came to speaking with native English speakers. It was discovered that female students experience more anxiety in English classes than male students, particularly in the classroom. Additionally, it was discovered that anxiety, particularly anxiety related to exams and English classes, is a barrier to language learning. The results of this study indicate that the majority of students had moderate levels of communication anxiety. This strongly suggests that anxiety is still one of the impediments to language development, although the level is moderate. For some students, language learning anxiety can be dismissed as a minor concern. However, the effects are too obvious to be dismissed as trivial. Therefore, language lecturers or teachers must be aware of all those aspects, particularly the dread of evaluation.

We are aware of limitations in this study, as with all other studies. These limitations also point toward potential topics to be addressed in the future. Although we posit that we surveyed many students on EFL courses in Palestine, it was only a sample and cannot be read as truly representative of all voices. Although the results are reliable and valid in representing faithfully the perspectives of those who participated, future studies could involve more participants with more diverse viewpoints, perhaps asking teachers/educators for their views. Secondly, as the focus of the study is specifically English language learning in Palestine, the generalization to other contexts is not necessarily reliable. We suggest that future studies may adjust their focus and emphasis to other contexts, such as learning different languages or in different countries. Lastly, as social scientists, it would be good to see a representative sample of participants interviewed to gain a richer, thicker understanding of the phenomena underlying foreign language anxiety ([Geertz, 2008](#)).

Since language learning evaluations are unavoidable, students must learn to deal with their anxieties wisely by adopting tactics and preparing for English sessions. Teachers of the English language should address their pupils' emotional needs. A laid-

back classroom setting, for instance, might assist English language learners in feeling comfortable speaking or expressing their opinions in English. Tutors must refrain from making derogatory comments about pupils in the classroom and instead encourage them when they perform poorly. The teachers ought to take action to reduce exam-related stress among students, for instance, by spending five minutes to reassure the students taking the exam that they do not need to focus only on the results. It is suggested that English language instructors invite native speakers to talk to the students as guests, especially online (see Itmeizeh et al., 2022). If not, the lecturer can strengthen their speaking and communication abilities by including drama and role-playing in their lessons. Teachers may consistently recognize students for their contributions and speaking skills. Painful communication-related experiences may cause a person to fear communicating. Behaviorism can support the effects of rewards or verbal praise. Much research has demonstrated that behaviors are more likely to be encouraged by positive outcomes after the action. While it is impossible to eliminate stress and anxiety from learning and, more so, from speaking in another language – especially when being tested in a foreign language – we posit that it is essential for tutors to recognize and reduce the stressors where possible. We hope that this paper adds to our knowledge of foreign language anxiety in the classroom and that it will catalyze investigation into solutions and, in the future, positive change for the benefit of students.

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The Manifestation of Interlanguage Pragmatics in Direct and Indirect Request Strategies Used by International Students

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Abstract

This study focused on how interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) is manifested in a multicultural environment. Learners' ability to make requests has received considerable attention in ILP research because requests are intrinsic face-threatening acts. The question this study aimed to address was to what extent a culture has an impact on the direct and indirect level of request strategies. The data were collected from thirty participants (fifteen males and fifteen females) representing five nationalities (Russian, Indonesian, Pakistani, Jordanian, and Hungarian) and studying at the University of Pannonia. The Discourse Completion Test (DCT) developed

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by Hendriks (2002) was used as an instrument, containing different situations to which the participants had to respond. The linguistic and cultural background of the participants was identified using an online tool, namely the Language History Questionnaire. The participants' responses were then recorded and transcribed. The direct and indirect levels of the requests were analyzed by categorizing the head act and the internal (syntactic and lexical) and external modifiers. The data showed that the participants generally used more indirect strategies in making requests (86.2% indirect, 13.8% direct), especially those from Indonesia. Participants from Pakistan were the most direct in making requests. Moreover, they used more external modifiers than other participants to compensate for their directness.

Keywords: Interlanguage pragmatics, mother tongue, pragmatics, second language acquisition.

1. INTRODUCTION

The European Union has been encouraging its citizens to learn two or more languages besides their mother tongue (Katsarova, 2022). Many exchange programs have been launched to facilitate the process through formal education. As an EU member state since 2004, Hungary has supported these programs in terms of outgoing and incoming students in higher education. Thousands of students from all over the world apply for higher educational studies in Hungary every year. Besides the Erasmus, Campus Mundi, and Makovecz programs, the Hungarian government opened educational cooperation with 51 countries around the world in 2013 as part of the Hungarian Government's Global Opening Policy introducing the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship program (Tempus Public Foundation, 2017a). Now there are more than 2.929 international students listed as active students in Hungary within the Stipendium Hungaricum program (Tempus Public Foundation, 2017b). From this number, 112 students are enrolled in one of the B.A., M.A., or Ph.D. programs at the University of Pannonia, Veszprém.

The growth of the international student population in Veszprém affects the city, more precisely the university student community, making it more multilingual and multicultural. Incoming students face challenges and problems during their lives in the multilingual and multicultural society, both in their academic activities and in their daily lives. This mix of languages and cultures builds an acculturative experience for international and local students including their academic environment, language(s), rules, norms, lifestyles, routines, and physical, and socio-cultural environments (Mukminin, 2012; Mukminin, & McMahon, 2013; Mukminin, 2019). This phenomenon highly affects the integration of students into the community.

Due to (mainly) historical reasons, the linguistic and cultural composition of Hungary is quite homogeneous, which makes it even more challenging for international students to integrate. English is the main medium of communication between the students at the university, either in daily communication or communication in the academic field. However, since the students are non-native English speakers, their languages and cultures are assumed to influence their English

language use, including the pragmatics of their speech. As a consequence, linguistic misunderstanding may happen during the communication, especially when the politeness level is concerned (Nursanti et al., 2023). There are different norms of politeness and impoliteness in each country which greatly contributes to the success or failure of communication. Likewise, speech performances, such as requests, apologies, refusals, invitations, thanking, and complaints, are performed based on different rules in different cultures, often resulting in pragmatic transfer from the first language (L1) to the second language (L2). The degree to which strategies in making requests are employed, they vary from culture to culture (Jia & Huang, 2008), even in the same culture, people can request in various ways depending on education, socio-economic status, etc. Therefore, non-native English speakers from different countries have their own ways of using English.

Furthermore, learners' ability to make requests has received considerable attention in interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) research, as requests are intrinsic face-threatening acts and how they apply the rules of 'politeness' language in formulating requests in English in their daily communication. This study focused on how ILP is manifested in a multicultural environment. The target group of the study was composed of international students studying at the University of Pannonia in Hungary. The study aimed to address the following research question:

- To what extent do language proficiency and culture have an impact on the politeness level of request strategies?

Regarding the research question, three hypotheses were set up:

- (i) language proficiency has a bigger impact on the way request strategies are expressed than the cultural background,
- (ii) participants generally use more indirect strategies than direct ones, and
- (iii) Indonesians are the most indirect participants in making requests compared to those from the other nations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP)

The area of ILP is categorized as a second-generation hybrid; it is a combination of second-language acquisition and pragmatics (Kasper, 2022; Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993). Therefore, this field is a study of pragmatic competence acquisition in a foreign language by non-native speakers. It is about the way non-native speakers express something in a foreign language (Kasper, 2022; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). This pragmatic study is related to the speech act performances, such as apologies, asking questions, giving directions, thanking, admiring, making requests, etc. Sometimes, the same word or utterance expressed by different persons does not have the same meaning. For example, when a person says "I don't have time", it can convey several pragmatic meanings: (i) he/she does not have time, (ii) he or she wants to stop the conversation, (iii) he or she wants to leave, etc. Speech acts are difficult to study because there can be a lot of interpretations and implications behind them.

People from different cultural and educational backgrounds are assumed to show different types of language pragmatic acquisition patterns in a foreign language. There are a number of factors playing roles in this acquisition, including L1 pragmatics. L1

pragmatic transfer is a phenomenon when people transfer their L1 pragmatics to their LX pragmatics (Kasper, 1992; Kasper & Rose, 2002). Besides, some studies found that language exposure or the experience of living abroad can have an impact on the acquisition of pragmatics (e.g., Barron, 2000; Cohen & Shively, 2007; Hassall, 2006). In their studies, Hassall (2006) as well as Cohen and Shively (2007) found that the experience of living abroad helped learners achieve pragmatic competence toward the native speaker's norms.

2.2 Request Strategies

There are individual differences in expressing requests. These are acts in which the speaker attempts to create a message in a way that he/she gets the hearer's intention to do the requested favor (Balman et al., 2020; Searle, 1979). Meanwhile, directness and indirectness are two separate strategies in communication (Blum-Kulka, 1987; Linh, 2015). A number of studies found various and sometimes contradictory results about using the directness and politeness levels in making requests by foreign language learners compared to native speakers. For example, English learners from different first-language backgrounds were more direct in making requests in English than native speakers of English (Billmyer & Varghese, 2000).

Directness and indirectness are assumed to have a massive relationship with politeness level; the more indirect the request is, the more polite it will be (Byon, 2006). Likewise, based on the levels of directness and indirectness in the request strategy, Hendriks (2002) classified the request strategies into seven categories. This classification ranges from the most direct to the most indirect strategy.

Table 1. Classification of request strategy (Hendriks, 2002).

No.	Strategies	Examples
1.	Imperative	Give me your seat.
2.	Performative verb	I ask you to give me your seat.
3.	Obligation statement	You must give me your seat.
4.	Statement of want or wish	I want you to give your seat.
5.	Suggestion	Why don't you give me your seat?
6.	Reference to preconditions non-obviousness willingness ability	Will you give me your seat? Are you willing to give up your seat? Can you give me your seat?
7.	Hint	I can't stand up...

These classifications of request strategies are measured in the 'head act' of the request. Furthermore, to mitigate the imposition of the request, some speakers modify their request internally and externally (by using internal and external modifiers) to emphasize or to enlighten the request. Therefore, they are able to get the hearers' intention in fulfilling their request, make it more acceptable, or remove the expression of force that can appear in the request, especially in the imperative strategy.

External modifiers involve one or more sentences before or after the head act of the request. The head act is the main part of a request where the act of request is conveyed. External modifiers are also used to persuade the hearer to perform the request. According to Hendriks (2002), there are seven categories of external modifiers. As described in the examples, external modifiers may come before and after the head acts. Table 2 provides the classification of external modifiers.

Table 2. External modifiers (Hendriks, 2002).

No.	External modifiers	Examples
1.	Preparator; signaling devices	Could I ask you a question?
2.	Getting precommitment; elements that try to secure pre-commitment before the request is made	Could you help me?
3.	Grounders; reasons, explanations, or justifications for the request.	Hey, I have an important meeting, ...
4.	Disarmer; elements indicating that the speaker realizes the imposition of the request	I know it's too late, but...
5.	Rewards	I'll pay for the lunch.
6.	Expressions of thanks/appreciation	I'll be so grateful
7.	Cost minimizer	It will not take a long time.

Internal modifiers refer to the linguistic means by which the head act is expressed. Hendriks (2002) categorized two types of internal modifiers: syntactic modifiers and lexical modifiers. Syntactic modifier uses the syntax to modify the head act, such as the interrogative sentence, past tense, negation, modal, tag question, embedding, aspect, and subjunctive, while lexical/phrasal modifier consists of politeness markers (e.g. please), downtoners (e.g., maybe, possibility), understaters, subjectivizers, consultative device, hedges, and interpersonal markers (Færch & Kasper, 1989; Trosbog, 1995). Hendriks (2002) found that participants who used more direct request strategies also used more modifiers to compensate for their directness.

2.3 The Role of Culture and Politeness Level in Speech Act Performances

In learning and using a second language, it is often found that cultures, communication behaviors, and language backgrounds influence the learners' performance. Therefore, pragmatic transfer is a common phenomenon when people are speaking in their second language. Pragmatic transfer is when the speakers use the rules and behaviors of their native language in the target language (Takahashi, 2020; Wolfson, 1989). Due to the failure of pragmatic competence, second language learners might fail to communicate in the target language effectively although they have excellent grammatical and lexical competence.

Motivation, acculturation, and other affective factors are crucial in the development of pragmatic competence (Sánchez-Hernández, 2017; Schmidt, 1993; Santos, & Mukminin, 2022). Culture influences people's language behavior and may lead to a misunderstanding between two speakers of different languages. Different cultures have different standards of politeness in communication. Even when someone transfers the speech acts from their first language to their second language, it might be interpreted differently in terms of politeness. For example, when Jordanian Arabic speakers transfer their request strategy from Arabic to another language, such as English or Malay by saying, for example, "I want your pen for a moment", it can lead to misunderstanding because it sounds aggressive and demanding to the hearer. As such, it might be seen as an unacceptable request in many cultures (Al-Natour et al., 2015).

2.3.1 Indonesian

In the southeast part of Asia lies Indonesia, a country that consists of many islands and regions and is known for its cultural diversity. The cultures of this country

are assumed to influence the ways people express themselves in their daily communication. In Indonesia, there is an etiquette in communication called *tata krama*. This ethics is related to cultural norms; it includes the ways of communication, the customs of communication, and the habits of communication formed by society and based on societal agreement (Alfiati, 2015). This communication etiquette requires the speaker to take into account the age and gender of the hearer, the social distance between the conversation partners, and the situation of the communication (formal or informal) (Hassall, 1999; Hassall, 2006).

In the Indonesian community, intonation and the volume of voice are generally considered essential factors in communication. In terms of intonation, the origin of the speaker is decisive; people from Sumatera tend to have a higher tone in speaking than those from Java. In Javanese culture, there are the levels of politeness in communication, *ngoko* (the lowest level), *krama madya* (the middle level), and *krama inggil* (the highest level) (Sukarno, 2013). *Ngoko* expresses the least polite and *krama inggil* indicates the politest. In addition, each level is different from one to another in their lexical items. Based on the norms, these three levels of politeness are used in different situations based on the above-mentioned characteristics of the hearer (age, gender, status) and the level of familiarity between the interlocutors. These norms are applied in all types of speech acts in daily communication, including requests. In making requests, most Indonesians prefer using indirect strategies to direct ones.

2.3.2 Jordanian

A number of studies have been conducted to compare Arab learners of English and American English native speakers. Umar (2004) found that Arab learners of English from Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Bahrain used more direct requests than the American English speakers. However, Arabic speakers tend to use more internal modifiers to compensate for their directness and make their requests more polite and tactful. Arab culture is classified as high-context (less direct) and American culture as low-context (more direct) (Al-Shboul & Maros, 2020). In the Arabic culture, sometimes a hidden message of an expression is more important than what is said. Meanwhile, on the other hand, for Americans, words represent the truth; hence, they prefer expressing what they want more directly.

In Jordan, social distance, and power play significant roles in daily communication. Some studies about speech acts focusing on the Jordanian Arabic language found that most Jordanians prefer expressing themselves directly and less politely when addressing the hearers of lower power. Al-Omari (2007) discovered that, in situations where speakers have high power and low social distance, they tend to warn hearers of low authority using very direct and impolite strategies without giving any reasons. However, in situations where the speakers have low authority, they always give a reason for the warnings they made and use more indirect strategies. Their communication is also more polite, protective, and justified. In the equal power situations, the participants use direct and indirect, polite, and impolite strategies depending on the levels of their familiarity (friends or strangers). Al-Omari (2007) also found that Jordanian Arabic speakers are more indirect compared to American English speakers, but are also more emotional than American English speakers in terms of swearing, frightening, blaming, etc. Al-Natour et al. (2015) revealed that Jordanians

tend to use indirect strategies in making requests; most of them used “الممكن مهيل، ممكنه” [*Momkin, Hal mnalmomkin*] which means ‘can’ or ‘could’ (337 out of 700 requests).

In contrast to the previous results, [Al-Momani \(2009\)](#) who compared the production and perception knowledge of Jordanian learners of English (JEFL), Jordanian Arabic (JA) speakers, and American English (AE) speakers found that Jordanian learners of English used more direct strategies than American English. Even though, most of the participants preferred using the conventional indirect strategies (AE 80%, JEFL 64.6%, and JA 53.8%), the JEFL used more direct strategies than the AE speakers, such as “I want to postpone my appointment with you till Wednesday evening”. He concluded that they were influenced by their native language and did pragmatic transfer. There were no statistically significant differences between the JA speakers and JEFL.

2.3.3 *Pakistani*

Pakistanis are known for their directness. In their culture, the age, and the levels of authority in the society are very important in communication. Pakistani society is non-egalitarian ([Kousar, 2015](#)); they believe in hierarchy and social status. For example, [Harry \(2012\)](#) noted that in Pakistani society, men have higher power than women in the family. Therefore, men tend to use more direct ways of speaking to women than vice versa. However, he also pointed out that this directness is not performed in an apology because most Pakistanis consider an apology as a shameful and embracing act of their self-pride in society.

In Pakistan, besides Urdu, there are some regional languages spoken, such as Pashto, Siraiki, Punjabi, Kashmir, etc. There are some differences in the culture and behavior of the speakers of these regional languages. [Alam and Gill \(2016\)](#) conducted a study about the Siraiki and Pashto learners of English. Based on the interviews with the participants, they found that the linguistic resources and cultural norms of their first languages affect them in using the speech acts in English. However, Pashto learners of English perform the requests in a more polite way than they perform apologies. In the requests, they used dominantly indirect strategies. However, in apologies, they preferred using direct strategies and keeping their distance and cultural egotism. Meanwhile, Siraiki learners of English used indirect strategies in performing speech acts (request and apology). Due to colonialism, English is spoken as a second language in Pakistan. Besides Urdu, English is also an official language used in educational institutes, government, official documents, etc. People speak English in official and non-official settings (home, family, and neighborhood). Most people acquired it in early childhood. Hence, the language behavior of English has an impact on their behavior in using Urdu because English is more prestigious, sophisticated, and powerful ([Shamim, 2017](#)).

2.3.4 *Russian*

[Rathmayr \(2008\)](#) found that Russian people interpret directness as honesty. Mostly they prefer speaking directly without hiding any intention in their conversation. Furthermore, indirectness is mostly thought of as a waste of time for the hearers. According to [Rathmayr \(2008\)](#), the Russians usually use indirect requests only in a high-level formality of conversation. Furthermore, [Ogiermann \(2009\)](#) in her study

about politeness and indirectness of British, German, Russian, and Polish discovered that even though all participants preferred using interrogative requests which are categorized as an indirect strategy, German, Russian, and Polish were more direct than English speakers.

Furthermore, [Dubinina et al. \(2010\)](#) in their research about heritage Russian (diaspora) pragmatic competence in the Russian language revealed that most participants from Russian native speakers and Russian heritage speakers used conventional indirect requests by using ‘can’ or *можно*. It was found that 70% were native speakers and 80% were heritage Russian speakers. However, Russian speakers did not use a lexical politeness marker *пожалуйста* or ‘please’ in the indirect head act, only in some imperative requests to compensate for their directness, whereas the heritage speakers used more lexical politeness markers. Therefore, this study provided a brief description that basically Russians prefer asking a favor indirectly; however, they do not use any lexical markers or modifiers.

2.3.5 Hungarian

Hungary is located in the center of Europe. The official language of the country is Hungarian. The country is often considered monolingual. Hungary has 13 official minorities and other linguistic and national minorities ([Ethnologue, n.d.](#)). [Szili \(2016\)](#) conducted a research on making requests in Hungarian which involved two groups: adult workers and students. She reported that adult Hungarian workers used more direct requests than the students. The results also showed that social distance and power played a role in the ways they made requests. Both adult and student groups used less direct strategies when the requests were addressed to strangers.

Furthermore, [Bátyi \(2020\)](#) in her study on the language attrition of Hungarians in the Netherlands discovered that the majority of requests were formulated with the conventionally indirect strategies, the ‘ability’ strategy was found as the dominant strategy, while the number of direct strategies and hints was low. She also revealed that they dominantly used grounders to modify their requests. Furthermore, she also reported that the participants used a more direct strategy when they addressed the requests to strangers or people with high power than to people who have a close relationship (such as family, or friends) and people with low power. Interestingly, the results showed that the participants did not compensate for their directness by using more external modifiers.

2.4 The Impact of Situational Variants on Making Request Strategy

In this study, this situational variant includes power, social distance, and context. Power means the status of the speaker in the society, whether he or she has superior/high authority or inferior/low authority. In the present study, power is divided into low power (P1), equal power (P2), and high power (P3) ([Hendriks, 2002](#)). Meanwhile, social distance relates to the relationship between the speaker and the hearer (level of familiarity). Social distance is classified as acquainted (S1) and unacquainted (S2) ([Hendriks, 2002](#)). The last is the context of communication which concerns the types of conversation, whether it is formal conversation or informal conversation. Based on the context, the situation is categorized into two types: institutional situation (C1) and non-institutional situation (C2). For example:

Situation 1: In the living room (Hendriks, 2002)

You were in your room upstairs doing your math homework, but you could not do the sums. You need some help. You go down to the living room where your dad is watching a documentary on television. What do you say to your dad?

In this situation, the situation describes the speaker as having lower authority than the hearer (P1). Furthermore, there is a closed social distance between the speaker and hearer as a son and father (S1). This conversation is categorized as a non-institution context because they were talking about the son's homework between the family members (C2).

Situation 2: In the bus (Hendriks, 2002)

You are a pensioner. You have been out shopping all day, and you are now on your way home. You have just got onto the bus to find that there are no free seats left. In a seat near you, a young man is reading a magazine. What do you say to the young man?

The second situation describes the speaker as having higher authority or superior power than the speaker (P3). However, the speaker and hearer do not know each other (unacquainted social distance), thus categorized as S2. Besides, the situation is a non-formal or non-institutional situation (C2). These situations and contexts are very crucial in communication. They encourage different behaviors and different interpretations in communication. In some situations, for example, when a superior person makes a request to a person with a lower power than her/his, she or he tends to use a direct request strategy. Contradictorily, when a speaker has lower power than the hearer, she or he tends to use an indirect request strategy. Furthermore, as Hornberger and McKay (2010) said, social context is one of the essential components of learning a language. It precisely explains that different contexts might give different meanings in a speech.

3. METHODS

In order to answer the research question, this research was conducted using a quantitative method. The data were collected from 30 participants studying at the University of Pannonia, Veszprém, Hungary, through the Language History Questionnaire (LHQ) and Discourse Completion Test (DCT). They were enrolled in different programs, faculties, and majors. Four of the participants were doing their bachelor's, 19 of them were doing their Master's, and 7 were in the Ph.D. program. They come from five different countries where English is not spoken as the native language: Russia, Indonesia, Pakistan, Hungary, and Jordan. The starting age of learning English varied across the group; 14 of them started learning English early under the age of 10, and the rest were late starters (after the age of 10).

Furthermore, 24 participants acquired English as a second language while others acquired English as a third language after German and other languages. The participants were bilingual and multilingual speakers. Besides English, they also speak some other languages, such as German, Italian, Arabic, Hungarian, French, Spanish, Kalmyk, and Urdu. The following table gives us further information about the participants' backgrounds.

Table 3. Information of participants' background.

Nationality	Male	Female	Mean Age	English Language Exposure	Language Proficiency (Mean)
Hungary	1	5	25	14	4.6
Jordanian	3	3	25	16	5.6
Indonesian	3	3	29	19	5.0
Pakistan	6	-	24	13	6.0
Russian	2	4	23	13	6.0

Furthermore, as they come from different home countries, they have different cultural backgrounds. Some of the participants have been living in Hungary for more than one year while some others just started their first year here, which means they had been in Veszprém for four months. Regarding their experience of living abroad, some participants had lived in other countries for a short time before coming to Hungary (e.g., USA, United Arab Emirates, Great Britain, Spain, Finland, Italy, Great Britain, South Korea, China, the Philippines, Germany, Bosnia, and Canada). The participants were invited to participate in this research by using the snowball or chain approach, that is, the participants helped to recruit other participants (Creswell, 2007).

3.1 Instruments

To collect the required data, this research used two instruments: The Language History Questionnaire (LHQ) and the Discourse Completion Test (DCT). The linguistic background of the participants was identified using an online tool: the Language History Questionnaire (Li et al., 2013). This questionnaire consisted of 23 questions about the participants' background information: language history and background, language proficiency in each of their languages, length of exposure to the language, and experience of living abroad. The participants needed to fill in the questionnaire with information about their ID, and the answers were directly transferred to the authors' research account. The DCT was used as the instrument to check the directness and indirectness levels (Hendriks, 2002). It consisted of 21 situations with three different speech act categories: request strategy, apology strategy, and refusal strategy. These twelve situations required the participants to make requests, while the rest were used as distractions. Participants were presented with a situation on a screen and they were asked to respond to them orally with no time restriction. In this test, three factors were manipulated in the situations: social distance (level of familiarity between speaker and addressee), power (authority relation between speaker and the addressee), and context (setting of the request).

Each participant was asked to read the situations and give their verbal responses to the situations. This test was conducted individually in English. Then, the responses were recorded and transcribed. Before the test began, each participant was asked to imagine themselves in the given situations and respond to them as they would naturally do. There was no time limitation for the participants to read and respond to the situations.

The transcripts of participants' responses were analyzed carefully utterance by utterance to code schemes (Stuckey, 2015), based on the classification of request strategies as well as the classification of external and internal modifiers. The analysis was continued in Excel sheets to find out the numbers of each category of request types and modifiers. The SPSS was run to find the correlation between the dependent

variables and independent variables. These analyses were also conducted to figure out the impacts of situational variants (power, social distance, and context).

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Request Strategies: Head Act-Direct and Indirect Strategies

Figure 1 shows the data on the number of request strategies produced by the participants in each category. Based on the results, it can be seen that most participants preferred using indirect strategies to direct strategies when making requests, with 86.2% (306 out of 355) of all requests being indirect and 13.8% (49 out of 355) being direct.

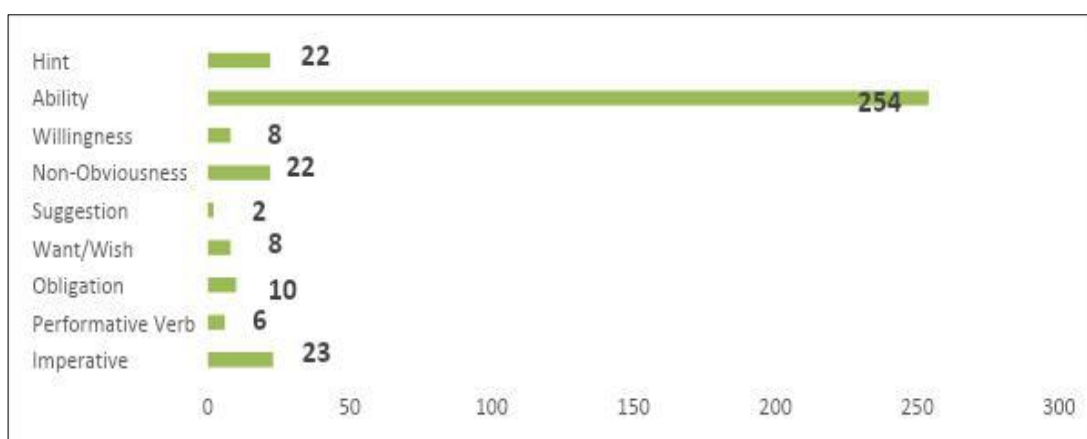


Figure 1. Number of request strategies by type.

From the indirect strategies, the most often used strategy was ‘ability’, accounting for 71.54% (254 of 355) of all requests. For example:

- (1) “Can you please help me for a moment?” (Indonesian; Female)
- (2) “Could you please help me to finish the campaign?” (Female; Jordanian)
- (3) “Please, if you can change my ticket.” (Male; Pakistani)

The next two categories, ‘hint’ and ‘non-obviousness’, were used equally, namely 6.19% (22 of 355) of all requests in each of the two categories.

From the non-obviousness, the data are as follows:

- (4) “Would you please check and approve if you don’t mind?” (Female; Russian)
- (5) “Would it be possible could give it a look, please, tonight?” (Male; Pakistani)
- (6) “Would you be so kind to take over your seat for me?” (Female; Hungarian)

From ‘hints’, the data are as follows:

- (7) “I’m old, I’m tired, and I need to have a seat.” (Male; Jordanian)
- (8) “John, this project is so sick. Definitely, you get the mark for it and you will go up in the carrier later.” (Male; Russian)

- (9) “Brown, I’m asking for your apology. As I mentioned I need to pick up both of you and your children from the football practice, but I couldn’t make it, because I have an urgent meeting to do.” (Male; Indonesian)

Examples of ‘hints’ show that the requests remain implicit since there is no head act in these sentences. This type of request requires extra effort from the hearer to understand what is asked. Hints are the least face-threatening acts for both the hearer and speaker, as it is well demonstrated by the last example of hints.

‘Imperative’ was the most commonly used direct strategy. For example:

- (10) “Mallory, please clean up the mess!” (Female; Jordanian)
 (11) “You, please summarize and approve my report for tomorrow’s submission.” (Male; Pakistani)
 (12) “Please open your bag, and let me see it myself.” (Female; Hungarian)

4.2 The Impact of Culture on the Politeness Level

One of the main questions of the study was whether culture has any impact on the directness level employed by the participants. A two-way ANOVA test was conducted to examine the effects of culture on the directness level of the head act. None of the variables showed a significant effect.

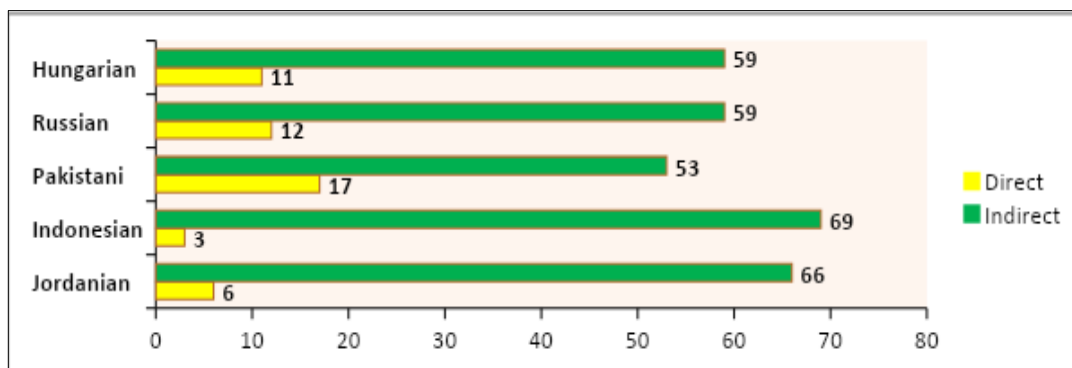


Figure 2. The directness level of the head acts as expressed by different cultures.

As displayed in Figure 2, all of the five groups employed indirect strategies dominantly, with Indonesians and Jordanians exceeding the other groups. Participants from Pakistan were the most direct in making requests (17 direct strategies out of 70 requests (24.28%)). They were followed by Russians with 12 direct strategies out of 71 requests (16.9%) and Hungarians who used 11 direct strategies out of 70 requests (15.71%) with the imperative strategy being the most favorable. For examples:

- (13) “Please stay a half an hour more to finish this paper.” (Russian)
 (14) “Please open your bag, and let me see it myself.” (Hungarian)
 (15) “Please give me the chance to pay the bill and to be in the meeting on time.” (Pakistani)

4.3 The Impact of Power, Context, and Social Status on the Politeness Level

Following Hendriks (2002), the researchers would also like to see whether factors, such as the level of familiarity between the speakers and hearers, power/authority and the context of the request have any effect on the politeness level of the request. As described earlier, in the DCT, the participants were placed into

different situations in which they had low or high authority; they were acquainted or unacquainted with the hearer, and the context was either institutional or non-institutional. A Multivariate Regression analysis was run to see whether social distance, power, and context predict the number of direct and indirect strategies. None of the variables had considerable predictive power (direct strategies $F(3,8)=.177$, $p>.05$, $R^2=.062$; indirect strategies $F(3,8)=.133$, $p>.05$, $R^2=.047$).

Table 4 shows the percentage of the use of direct and indirect strategies by the different nationalities according to the power of authority.

Table 4. Request strategies based on the level of power.

No.	Nationalities	P1		P2		P3	
		Low power (%)		Equal power (%)		High power (%)	
		Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect
1.	Jordanian	4.16	95.83	0	100	20.80	79.10
2.	Indonesian	4.16	95.83	0	100	8.33	91.60
3.	Pakistani	22.72	72.27	16.66	83.33	33.33	66.66
4.	Russian	17.39	82.60	12.50	87.50	20.83	79.10
5.	Hungarian	30.43	69.56	8.69	91.30	8.33	91.66

It was assumed that participants would use more direct strategies when they had higher power than the hearer. However, as shown in Table 3, there are cultural differences. Jordanians and Indonesians hardly used any direct strategies in low-authority situations and none in situations when they had equal power with the hearer. Meanwhile, both groups showed more directness in high-power authority situations, as was assumed. Pakistanis and Russians were more direct with more power. Surprisingly, Hungarians were more indirect with high power authority. Overall, based on these findings, we can see that most groups preferred asking for indirect requests regardless of the authority level. For example:

Situation 5: At customs (Hendriks, 2002)

You are a customs official at Heathrow Airport. You suspect that the young woman who is about to walk through customs has bought too many duty-free goods. You feel you had better check her luggage. What do you say to the woman?

In this situation, the speaker has higher power than the hearer. Even though most participants used indirect strategies in this situation, the data shows this situation has the biggest number of direct strategies: 10 direct strategies out of 30 requests. Most of them were obligation and imperative strategies.

(16) "I must check your luggage." (Pakistan; Obligation statement)

(17) "You, please open your luggage." (Indonesian; Imperative)

(18) "Let's check your luggage baggage." (Russian; Suggestion)

The second factor was the level of familiarity between the speaker and the hearer; whether they were acquainted or unacquainted. It was expected that in close relationships, participants would use more direct strategies than with strangers. Table 4 includes the data in each situation produced by the groups. Each group in both situations used more indirect strategies.

Table 5. Request strategy based on the level of familiarity (social distance).

No.	Nationalities	S1		S2	
		Acquainted (%)		Unacquainted (%)	
		Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect
1.	Jordanian	10	90	7.14	92.85
2.	Indonesian	3.33	96.66	4.76	95.23
3.	Pakistani	35.71	64.28	21.42	78.57
4.	Russian	17.24	82.75	16.66	83.33
5.	Hungarian	10	90	20	80

Participants from Jordan, Pakistan, and Russia were more direct when talking to people with whom they had close relationships (acquaintances) than to strangers (un-acquaintance). For example:

Situation 1: Living room (Hendriks, 2002)

You were in your room upstairs doing your math homework but you could not do the sums. You need some help. You go down to the living room where your dad is watching a documentary on television. What do you say to your dad?

The situation above describes the speaker and hearer as having a close relationship as a son and father. This situation encouraged some participants from Jordan, Pakistan, and Russia to use direct requests.

(19) “I want you to help me with my math homework.” (Jordanian; Statement of wish/want)

(20) “Help me solve the sum.” (Pakistani; Imperative)

(21) “Please help me with this math homework.” (Russian; Imperative)

Regarding the participants from Indonesia and Hungary, the number of direct strategies increased when dealing with people who were not close to them. There was a slight difference in the Indonesian groups in the two situations; they used 4.76% of direct strategies in unacquainted situations and 3.33% of direct strategies in acquainted situations. The difference was more significant in the Hungarian group, in which they used 20% direct strategies in unacquainted situations and 10% direct strategy in acquainted situations.

The next factor is related to the context of the situation. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Request strategies based on the context of situations.

No.	Nationalities	C1		C2	
		Institutional (%)		Non-institutional (%)	
		Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect
1.	Jordanian	8	92	8	92
2.	Indonesian	2.77	97.22	5.55	94.44
3.	Pakistani	25.70	74.28	22.85	77.14
4.	Russian	13.88	86.11	20	80
5.	Hungarian	11	89	20.58	79.41

It was expected that in a non-institutional situation, the participants would use more direct strategies than indirect ones. Indonesians, Russians, and Hungarians confirmed the hypotheses. However, Pakistani, and Indonesian participants showed the opposite. In Table 6, we can see that the Indonesian participants had 5.55% of

direct request strategies in institutional situations and 2.77% of direct strategies in non-institutional situations. Meanwhile, Russian, and Hungarian participants showed a significant difference. Nonetheless, there were different results regarding the Jordanian and Pakistani participants. The Jordanians were found to use an equal number of direct and indirect strategies in both institutional and non-institutional situations. Meanwhile, the Pakistanis used more direct strategies in the non-institutional situations (20.58%) than the institutional situations (11%).

Situation 6: The advertising department (Hendriks, 2002)

You and your colleague, John Martin, are advertising managers and are at present working for the same client. You were supposed to have finished an advertising campaign for this client by next week. Although you were assigned to do this particular campaign on your own, you now realize that you will be too busy with another client and will therefore not be able to work on the campaign next week. You would like John to finish the campaign for you. What do you say to your colleague?

In this example, the institutional situation was set where the student was talking about the report of work experience with his/her supervisor. The following responses contained the request strategies used by the participants:

- (22) "I would kindly ask you to finish this campaign for me." (Russian; Performative verb, direct)
 (23) "Can you please help me out with this one?" (Jordanian; Ability, indirect)

4.4 Request Strategies: External Modifiers

To decrease the directness, participants involved the external modifiers in their requests. As explained in the previous section, external modifiers are classified to be some categories, such as preparatory, getting a pre-commitment, grounders, disarmer, rewards, expressions of thanks/appreciation, and cost minimizing. In Figure 3, the participants from Pakistan used more external modifiers than participants from other nationalities. Generally, they used more than two external modifiers in each request.

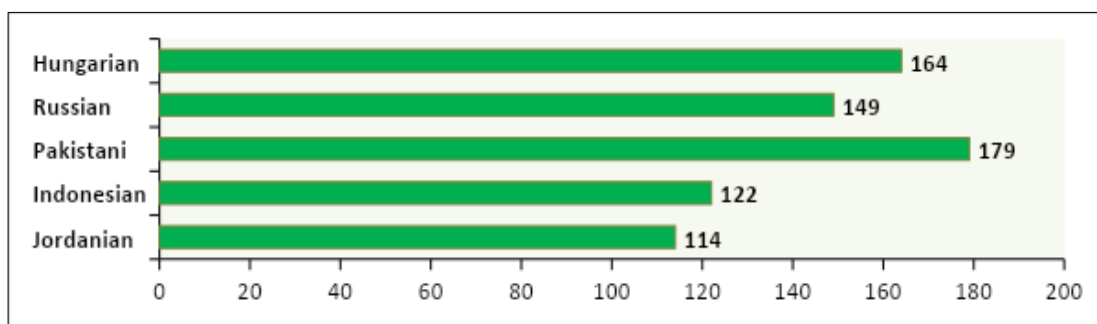


Figure 3. The number of external modifiers by culture groups.

- (24) Good evening, mom. How are you? E...this is a random security check, **could it be possible for you could open your luggage for us?** And we will go through your luggage. This is just a random check; you are not to be pointed out for this. Thank you.

This request consists of a head act and some modifiers. If we decompose it, we can see that the bold sentence is the head act of the request while the rest are the external modifiers. The participant used the external modifiers before and after the head act.

Figure 4 shows that the Pakistanis are followed by the Hungarians who used 155 external modifiers and the Russians who utilized 149 external modifiers. For Indonesian and Jordanian participants, even though they were the most indirect nationalities in this study, they used fewer external modifiers than the others. The Indonesian participants were found to use 122 external modifiers while the Jordanians used 114 external modifiers in their requests. If we compare these results with the directness and indirectness of the head act, we can see in Figure 4 that the more indirect the group, the fewer external modifiers used by them.

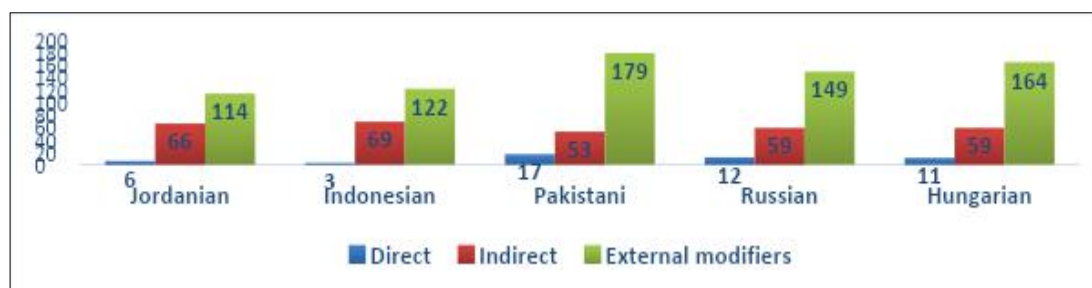


Figure 4. The number of direct-indirect strategies and external modifiers.

Figure 5 shows the number of external modifiers in each category used by the participants in each nationality group. It can be seen that grounders were employed by all groups the most frequently. It should be mentioned that most participants varied their requests by using grounders and other modifiers within the same request. Cost minimizer modifiers had the lowest number of uses.

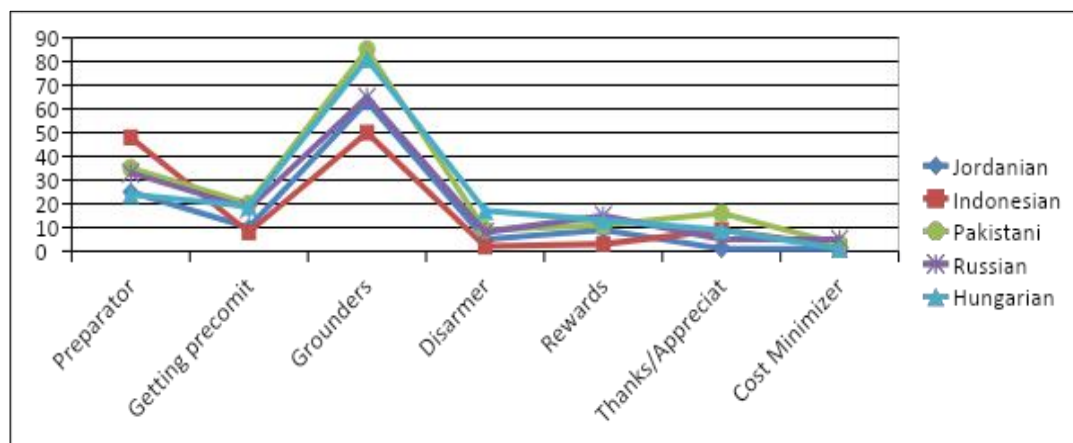


Figure 5. The number of external modifiers in each category.

4.5 Request Strategies: Internal Modifiers

Internal modifiers are included in the head act of request. In this study, there were two classifications of internal modifiers: syntactic modifiers and lexical modifiers. Based on the data, the participants preferred using the syntactical modifier to the lexical modifier. Sometimes, they mixed the syntactic and lexical modifiers in the head act. This happened because most participants used indirect strategies expressed through interrogatives. The participants used the internal modifiers to

downgrade their directness in making requests. Figure 6 shows the frequency of the syntactic and lexical modifier use in general.

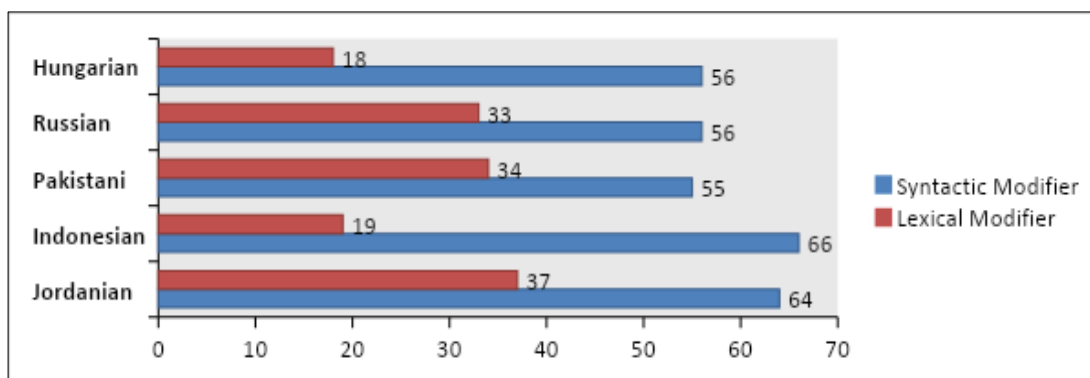


Figure 6. Internal modifiers.

From this general result, we can subdivide the syntactic and lexical modifiers in a more detailed manner through categorizations. Figure 7 presents the syntactic modifiers categorized as subjunctive, aspect, embedding, modal, tag question, negation, past tense, and interrogative, where the interrogative modifier was the most favorable. Figure 8 presents the lexical modifiers which consist of seven categorizations: interpersonal markers, hedges, consultative devise, subjectivizer, understarters, downtoners, and politeness markers. In the lexical modifier group, the politeness marker is used more frequently.

- (25) “Could you give me a hand?” (Syntactic modifier; Interrogative)
- (26) “Would you just stay for half an hour to re-correct it?” (Syntactic modifier; Interrogative)
- (27) “Could you give me your seat?” (Syntactic modifier)
- (28) “**Please** clean up the mess.” (Lexical modifier; Politeness marker)
- (29) “**Please** open your luggage” (Lexical modifier; Politeness marker)
- (30) “**Could** you help me, **please?**” (Syntactic and lexical modifiers)

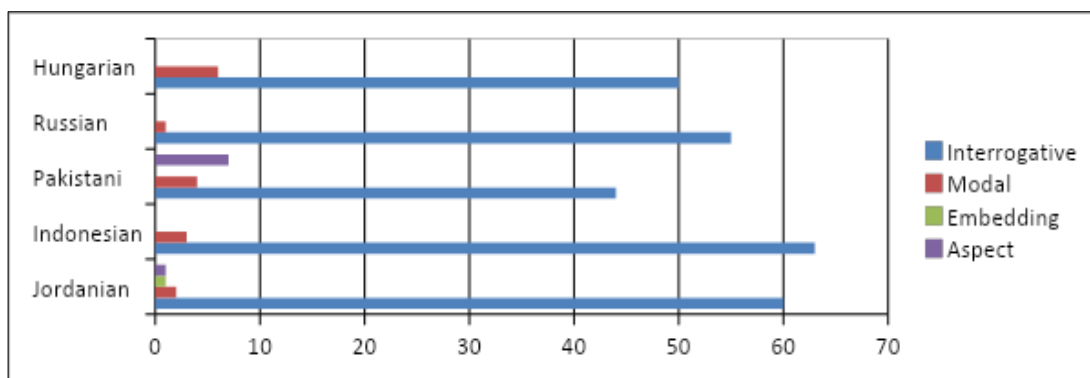


Figure 7. Syntactic modifier of each nationality.

In Figure 7, we can see that most participants overused the politeness marker ‘please’ in their requests, with the Jordanian and Russian groups exceeding the others.

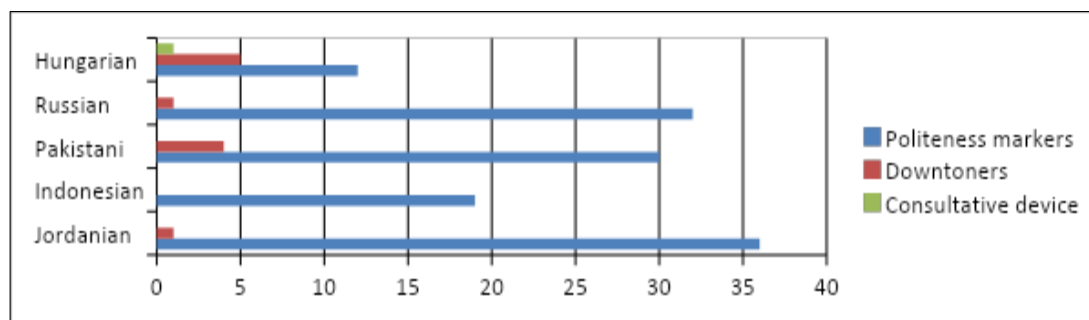


Figure 8. The number of lexical modifiers produced by each nationality.

5. DISCUSSION

A request is a directive speech act expressed by a speaker to get the hearer to do what he or she wants. Researchers in the field of ILP found that people from different cultural backgrounds produce requests in different ways (e.g., [Jia & Huang, 2008](#)). In addition to culture, other factors, such as education or situational context, were also proven to be influential. Directness and indirectness in communication have a strong correlation with culture ([Al-Shboul & Maros, 2020](#)). In the case of bi- and multilingual speakers, a phenomenon known as L1 transfer often occurs in each language dimension, including pragmatics. As shown in some previous studies, transferring the pragmatic rules from the first language to the second language is a common phenomenon in second language acquisition (e.g., [Takahashi, 2020](#); [Wolfson, 1989](#)).

Regarding the cultural background, in this study, we found that there is no statistically significant effect of culture on using direct and indirect request strategies. Most participants preferred using indirect strategies in making requests, with Indonesian and Jordanian being the most indirect groups in the study. These findings are in line with previous findings in which Indonesians used a range of request strategies with indirect strategies being the most frequently used ([Akmal et al., 2022](#); [Hassall, 1999](#)). They followed the widely accepted etiquette of communication in Indonesia. [Alfiati \(2015\)](#) also noted that in Indonesia, some cultural norms manage people's behavior and the ways they speak to each other in daily conversation.

Speaking of Jordanians, there were two contradictory findings in the previous studies about the level of directness in their communication. On one hand, Jordanians were found to express what they want or wish directly (e.g., [Al-Momani, 2009](#)). On the other hand, in another study, they were labeled as indirect and vague as Arabic speakers (e.g., [Al-Shboul & Maros, 2020](#); [Zaharna, 1995](#)). In the present study, we found that most Jordanians used indirect strategies in their requests. The results showed that 91.6% of the requests by Jordanian participants were formulated with indirect strategies.

Even though all participants in this study performed mostly indirect strategies, the Pakistanis were the most direct participants, followed by the Russians and Hungarians. [Rathmayr \(2008\)](#) reported that Russian people associate directness with honesty. They prefer talking directly without hiding any intention. These findings are reflected in the findings of the present study as well, in which they used slightly different direct and indirect strategies. Nevertheless, the Russian participants were the second most direct group. Russian participants also used more direct request strategies

in higher-power situations than in lower-power situations. Moreover, they paid attention to social distance in their conversations.

Very few studies focused on the politeness of Hungarians in the literature. In this study, the results showed that Hungarians were the third most direct participants. Following a similar research design to the present study, Szili (2016) discovered that social distance and power influenced the ways Hungarians made requests. However, regarding social distance, this is similar to Bányi (2020), where Hungarian participants used more direct strategies when they addressed the requests to strangers or people with high power than to people with close relation (such as family, or friends) to them. Furthermore, the results of this study showed that the participants used more direct strategies in lower-power situations than in higher-power situations, yet they used more external modifiers in lower-power situations than in the higher-power ones.

Even though some participants were concerned about the situational variant (power, social distance, and context), the statistical results showed no significant effect of power, social distance, and context despite the existing slight differences between the cultural groups. As shown in the findings, Jordanian participants delivered their requests more directly when they had a close relationship with the hearers and indirectly when talking to strangers. As Al-Momani (2009) claimed, Jordanians are concerned about the power and social distance in their conversation which is in accordance with the present study findings that Jordanians performed more direct requests in the higher-power situations than in lower-power situations. For Pakistanis, for example, the power or level of authority is also one of the core factors in communication. As Kousar (2015) claimed, Pakistanis are a non-egalitarian society that believes in the hierarchy of social status. We found that Pakistani participants paid attention to social distance by using more indirect strategies when they had an unacquainted relationship with the hearers. However, they employed more external modifiers than the others to minimize the imposition of their requests. Besides, they also utilized a lexical modifier 'please' to downgrade the directness of their requests.

However, there was a correlation between the number of direct strategies and external modifiers used by the cultural groups. The statistical analyses showed that the more direct a cultural group in making requests, the more they used external modifiers to compensate for their directness. It was shown that the most direct participants overused the external modifiers by using more than two external modifiers in each request. Moreover, the Hungarians and Russians were the second and third groups in terms of using external modifiers the most. These findings were in accordance with previous results in Hendriks (2002) that non-native speakers vary the directness strategy by modifying their requests, both externally and internally (Færch & Kasper, 1989; Hendriks, 2002; Trosbog, 1995). The analyses of the external modifiers showed that grounders were used most frequently, followed by preparators. Even, the Pakistani participants used grounders dominantly in their requests. These findings were also in line with Soler et al. (2005) that grounders and preparators were overused by both English native speakers and German learners of English. Besides external modifiers, the participants also varied their requests by involving internal modifiers in the head act of requests. The most frequent internal modifiers in this study were syntactic modifiers, especially interrogative modifiers. This phenomenon might occur because most of them used indirect strategies with interrogative sentences. Moreover, the participants also used internal modifiers in their requests. The use of the politeness marker 'please' was also found to be dominant.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of this study, we can see that most participants were dominantly indirect in making requests. There was no significant impact of culture on the request strategies as there was no observable L1 pragmatic transfer. However, in terms of indirectness, the participants used a range of strategies to express their requests. There were three situational variants assumed to have impacts on making requests, such as power, social distance, and context. In this study, some cultures are concerned about power and social distance (e.g., Jordanian, and Russian) while some other cultures only consider power when using direct and indirect strategies (e.g., Pakistani). Furthermore, differences existed in the ways they used external modifiers; some participants overused them in requests while others only used one or two, or none. It became clear that the more direct the participants, the more the modifiers were used to alleviate the imposition of their requests. Furthermore, language proficiency influenced the number of external modifiers. The statistics showed that the speakers with a higher level of proficiency in English used more external modifiers to vary their requests.

In future related to studies, to obtain more comprehensive and deeper results, it is suggested that researchers focus on a larger group of international students from other countries as well. More cross-cultural and politeness-focused empirical studies are required to explain a wide range of language behaviors in general, and of directness and indirectness in particular.

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Indonesian English Learners' Attitudes towards Cheating, Absenteeism, and Gender: Interactions with L2 Achievement

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to find out Indonesian English as a Second/Foreign Language (L2) learners' attitudes towards cheating (AtC) in online English classes, as well as the possible influence of the combination of three variables, which are their AtC, absenteeism, and gender, on their L2 achievement as measured with their final grades. The study employed a survey method and was conducted by distributing an online questionnaire. In total, 164 Indonesian learners from various non-English departments at a university in Java participated in the study. Through descriptive statistics, it was found that generally learners reported their negative AtC in English class, suggesting disapproval towards cheating. Through multiple regression analysis, the study further found that the combination of learners' AtC, absenteeism, and gender significantly influenced their L2 achievement, and the overall model could predict 34.5% of the total variance in L2 achievement. However, based on the beta coefficient of the three variables, only learners' absenteeism and gender significantly affected their L2 achievement. As learners had higher absenteeism, they obtained lower L2 achievement. From a t-test analysis, female learners were found to have significantly better L2 achievement than their male counterparts. While the findings on the influence of absenteeism on L2 achievement generally conformed to literature in the

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field, the findings on the influence of AtC and gender on L2 achievement may suggest that further explorations may be necessary.

Keywords: Absenteeism, attitudes towards cheating (AtC), gender, L2 achievement, second/foreign language (L2).

1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of cheating is not at all a new phenomenon in education, including in second/foreign (L2) language learning. Cheating behaviors affect the cheating learners and their peers, as such practices create an unfair system around learners (Asrifan et al., 2020). The non-cheaters may feel disadvantaged, and as such, cheating may be seen as an acceptable way of staying and getting ahead (Tacker, 2020). Cheating eventually negatively affects the quality of assessment, further giving a false impression of learners' learning achievement. A quantitative study involving 800 Iranian Junior High School learners by Rahimi and Goli (2016) investigated the relationship between L2 achievement and cheating attitudes. They found that the higher learners' L2 achievement, the more likely they agreed that the instances mentioned in the scale were cheating and dishonest behaviors. This finding suggested that negative attitudes towards cheating are associated with better achievement. Cheating may also be more widespread in online learning contexts (Rofiah & Waluyo, 2020). A study in an Indonesian university context found that a lack of teacher-learner and learner-learner social interactions during online learning hindered the learning process (Subekti, 2020a), and this may be a contributing factor for learners to cheat. In line with that, several studies reported that online learning situations, with all practicalities the advancement of technology could offer, are often prone to cheating behaviors (Dewi, 2021; Rofiah & Waluyo, 2020; Tacker, 2020).

Another issue concerning L2 learners is the lack of attendance or absenteeism. Several studies on absenteeism have been conducted in various L2 learning contexts, mostly in the Middle East, e.g., Yemen (Al-Mekhlafi, 2016), Oman (Ancheta et al., 2021), Iran (Niknezhad & Heidar, 2017; Rajabnejad et al., 2017), Iran and Iraq (Pishghadam et al., 2019, 2021), and China (Yan & He, 2019). Studies suggested that learners' lack of attendance resulted in insufficient learning and academic failure (Al-Mekhlafi, 2016; Ozkanal & Arikan, 2011). Absenteeism may have a downward spiraling effect; that is, learners who are often absent could be lagging behind their peers in terms of language performance, which could stimulate them to continue skipping the class (Klem & Connell, 2004). A study in a Tunisian university context by Ali and Manouba (2014) found that regularly attending classes gave them the opportunity to learn all the materials, thus their better understanding and achievement.

Among studies on absenteeism in L2 classes, several specifically investigated the relationship between learners' absenteeism and their L2 achievement (Al-Mekhlafi, 2016; Ancheta et al., 2021; Karabiyik, 2016; Rajabnejad et al., 2017) and they were all conducted in the Middle East while the issue of absenteeism seems to be quite common in various L2 contexts, such as in China (Yan & He, 2019) and Indonesia (Subekti, 2020b). Investigating un-motivation (Sakui & Cowie, 2012), the combination of motivation and demotivation among Indonesian L2 learners from non-English departments, a qualitative study by Subekti (2020b) reported widespread

absenteeism in English classes. The English teacher participants in the study reported that the position of English classes as complementary in these learners' departments leads to their lack of motivation to strive in English classes, including regularly attending them.

Another area closely related to L2 learning is learners' gender. Several studies suggested that female learners are superior to their male counterparts in language learning. For example, they were reported to be more self-directed in L2 learning (Subekti, 2022), to have higher motivation (Polat, 2011), to perform better in language tests (Zoghi et al., 2013), and to be able to write better (Al-Saadi, 2020). Such studies may strengthen the widespread belief that learning belongs to a feminine domain (MacIntyre et al., 2002). Nevertheless, several recent studies suggested it may not be the case. Studies in Austria (Wucherer & Reiterer, 2018) and Ethiopia (Menuta & Wubshet, 2019) reported that male learners outperformed female learners, while a study in Spain by Agudo (2022) found that there was no gender difference among the participants' L2 listening proficiency. These conflicting studies may suggest that the gender factor could not be well understood despite its possible influence on L2 learning.

Notwithstanding the possible contributions of the aforementioned previous studies, several aspects warrant further investigation. First, there seems to be a need to explore Indonesian L2 learners' attitudes towards cheating (AtC) in online learning contexts in a survey study to obtain a general picture of the phenomenon in this particular context considering such studies, to the best of our knowledge, have not been conducted previously. Second, investigating the possible influence of the combined factors, namely learners' AtC, absenteeism, and gender on their L2 achievement could be worthwhile as the existing studies were thus far somewhat overwhelmed with correlation studies unable to investigate whether the aforementioned constructs influence L2 achievement. Besides, in practice, these three variables may be intertwined. Moreover, considering the scarcity of studies on absenteeism and the inconclusive findings of studies on gender, conducting a single study involving these constructs in the Indonesian context, home to one of the largest L2 learners of English, may pave the way for further research investigating the combination of learner factors influencing the success of L2 learning.

In light of the aforementioned rationales, the present study seeks to answer the following research questions.

1. What are Indonesian English as L2 learners' attitudes towards cheating (AtC) in online English classes?
2. To what extent does the combination of three variables, namely learners' AtC, absenteeism, and gender, influence learners' L2 achievement in online English classes?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Academic Cheating

Though there seems to be no universally accepted definition of academic cheating among scholars; academic cheating is generally understood as academic dishonesty or deception to obtain certain favorable academic results (Bensaada, 2017;

Quaidy et al., 2018). Several typical cheating behaviors include copying someone's work and claiming it as one's own and using dishonest ways to complete certain tasks (Bensaada, 2017). In a rather old yet relevant publication, Anderman and Murdock (2007) stated that cheating, from the perspective of learning, is a strategy serving as a cognitive shortcut. Effective learning typically necessitates learners to employ complex cognitive and self-regulatory strategies. The need to employ such strategies could be precluded by cheating. Hence, cheating learners may not have effective learning strategies or not be willing to invest more time in their learning (Anderman & Murdock, 2007).

Learning an L2, including English, furthermore, is a tedious and challenging process involving trial and error (Dornyei, 2005), and in this process, learners may be tempted to look for shortcuts such as cheating. Cheating is a widespread phenomenon in English Language Teaching (ELT), and this can be seen from a plethora of research investigating cheating behaviors among English as L2 learners (Al-Darwish & Sadeqi, 2016; Asrifan et al., 2020; Bensaada, 2017; Doro, 2014; Fadila, 2022; Rahimi & Goli, 2016). The advancement of technology, despite being reported to enhance learning in many aspects, is also reported to help evolve learners' modes of cheating. In Japan, for example, "kopi-pe" – the Japanese term for "copy and paste" was arguably the most popular way of cheating using technology (Tacker, 2020). In this regard, plagiarism, the practice of taking someone else's ideas or works and passing them off as their own, which is often reported in L2 learning, especially in writing (Silfiani et al., 2018; Sulaiman, 2015), could also be considered a cheating practice. Other forms of cheating include preparing notes and asking or giving answers during closed-book examinations (Asrifan et al., 2020).

There are several factors reported to stimulate learners to cheat. Peers have been reported to affect cheating behaviors (Boysen, 2007; Fadila, 2022). Outside the ELT field, a study in a high school context by Boysen (2007) reported that learners cheated less if the classroom environment was more positive. In Asia, culture may also play a role in amplifying the effects of peers toward cheating behaviors. A study by Diego (2017) in a Philippines high school reported that sharing answers during exams was attributed to social acceptance and friendship. Those who did not share their answers may be labeled negatively by their peers. Another factor is the learners' lack of time management (Daif-Allah & Alsamani, 2013; Doro, 2014; Muluk et al., 2021; Silfiani et al., 2018). A quantitative study involving Indonesian learners from an English major by Silfiani et al. (2018), for example, found that lack of time management was one of four significant factors of committing plagiarism besides lack of understanding about the materials, efficiency gain, temptation, and opportunity. Furthermore, the nature of the assessment may also play a part in creating the temptation and opportunity to cheat, such as multiple-choice questions in online settings (Michael & Williams, 2013). They further mentioned that cheating practices could be minimized in online learning settings by teachers having more open-ended assessments and being familiar with learners' levels to determine whether these learners indeed write specific assignments. Perceived irrelevance and uselessness of the materials were also reported as factors triggering learners to cheat (Farah, 2021). A study in an Indonesian university context found that learners from non-English departments may be susceptible to having such perceptions as they may second-prioritize English classes compared to content classes in their respective departments (Subekti, 2020b). Furthermore, desperation to obtain favorable results was another contributing factor to cheating. A quantitative study

involving 102 Saudi Arabian L2 learners of English by [Daif-Allah and Alsamani \(2013\)](#) reported that although the majority of the participants were honest, several participants reported they cheated out of desperation due to fear of failure, parental expectations, pressure to obtain good grades and high levels of stress.

2.2 Absenteeism

Learners' absenteeism or lack of attendance in class is often believed to affect learning negatively. Studies primarily conducted in the Middle East could support this debilitating effect of absenteeism on learning ([Al-Mekhlafi, 2016](#); [Ancheta et al., 2021](#); [Karabiyik, 2016](#)). A study by [Karabiyik \(2016\)](#) involving 244 Turkish learners from various departments reported that learners with higher attendance tended to obtain higher grades in the language proficiency exams than those with lower attendance rates. Similarly, [Al-Mekhlafi \(2016\)](#), involving 140 Yemeni student teachers, found a statistically significant, positive association between the participants' final examination grades in the Morphology and Syntax course and their attendance rates in the class. A slightly similar finding was also reported by [Ancheta et al. \(2021\)](#) in Oman, in which learners at the undergraduate level accumulated poor attendance and performed poorly in class. A statistically significant negative correlation was found between these learners' absences and grades ([Ancheta et al., 2021](#)). Though a correlation does not signify cause and effect, the aforementioned correlation studies in various learning contexts reporting relatively the same findings may indicate the role of absenteeism in negatively affecting language achievement.

Furthermore, several studies reported possible contributing factors to learners' absenteeism. Teachers' performance and knowledge were the primary causal factors for (non) attendance in a study in Iran ([Niknezhad & Heidar, 2017](#)). Similarly, studies in Iran and Iraq by [Pishghadam et al. \(2019, 2021\)](#) reported that perceived teacher praise or stroke, credibility, and success could significantly predict L2 learners' attendance. In other words, when learners perceived their teachers as successful teachers who could provide relevant materials and build a trusting relationship with learners, they were more likely to attend the classes ([Pishghadam et al., 2019, 2021](#)). Besides teacher factors, learners and their environments may also be at play. A longitudinal study involving 300 Chinese university learners of English by [Yan and He \(2019\)](#) also reported an "obsession with employment, a series of curricular and pedagogical shortcomings" as well as limited self-discipline and management became contributing factors to skipping L2 classes (p. 1).

2.3 Gender in L2 Learning

Besides cheating and absenteeism, one variable that may affect L2 learning is learners' gender; however, several recent studies investigating gender differences in various L2 learning contexts seem to produce somewhat inconclusive findings ([Agudo, 2022](#); [Al-Saadi, 2020](#); [Menuta & Wubshet, 2019](#); [Wucherer & Reiterer, 2018](#)). In the Omani context, [Al-Saadi \(2020\)](#) aimed to investigate the sources of gender difference in English as L2 writing achievement among undergraduate learners. The study found that female learners outperformed their male counterparts in overall text quality, and L2 writing fluency became an essential explanatory variable accounting for female learners' superiority in text quality. In comparison, in Austria,

Wucherer and Reiterer (2018) involved sixty German native-speaker learners of English in their study and found that male participants outperformed their female counterparts in pronunciation while they were outperformed in grammar learning.

Furthermore, in a relatively under-researched Ethiopian context involving 200 High School learners from four different schools as the participants, Menuta and Wubshet (2019) found that male learners significantly outperformed female learners in both Sidamufo language (learners' first language) and English (learners L2). In comparison, a recent study in Spain by Agudo (2022) reported no substantial gender gap in L2 listening achievement among learner participants. All in all, from these studies, it can be seen that findings on gender differences thus far seem to be inconclusive, and further studies on this issue may still be necessary.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research design

The present study employed a quantitative method of distributing an online questionnaire. The eight questionnaire items on attitudes towards cheating (AtC) were adapted from a study by Carpenter et al. (2006) involving 643 learners at engineering departments from 11 institutions in the United States and abroad. In the present study, there were four possible responses: "Strongly Agree" equal to 5 points, "Agree" equal to 4, "Disagree" equal to 2, and "Strongly Disagree" equal to 1. The higher the points, the more positive the participants' AtC, indicating approval towards cheating, and likewise, the lower the points, the more negative their AtC, indicating disapproval. The eight selected items in the present study were modified to adjust the L2 learning context. These items produced .86 Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and .86 McDonald's omega coefficient, indicating high internal reliability. Furthermore, the data about absenteeism were obtained from the participants' total absences in class, whilst the data on the L2 achievement were taken from the participants' final grades in class obtained from the course secretary upon the participants' approval. The final grades were the cumulative grades from several progress assessments obtained during the second semester of the 2021/2022 academic year.

3.2 Research Setting and Participants

The setting of the present study was online General English (GE) classes at a private university in Java, Indonesia. GE classes were obligatory non-credited matriculation classes for learners from non-English departments at the university. There were three GE levels, Levels 1, 2, and 3. Depending on learners' language levels assessed through a placement test at the time of their registration at the university, learners were placed at a certain GE level. Only after passing GE Level 3 could they take the English for Academic Purposes class in their respective departments. At the time of data collection, some 500 learners were enrolling in the GE classes, with the majority being in Level 3. These GE classes typically had various communicative and collaborative activities, and the assessments were mainly in the form of group projects such as making video blogs, doing role-plays, writing infographics of business or project ideas, delivering a project presentation, as well as making business plan videos

and videos raising awareness about specific issues. The classes were conducted once a week for a total of 16 meetings in a semester for each level. Unless scheduled for certain assignment submissions, meetings were conducted synchronously through Zoom platform for a maximum of 75 minutes each.

The participants of this study were 164 English as L2 learners taking GE Levels 1, 2, and 3. Of these 164 participants, 118 (72%) were taking GE Level 3, 40 (24.4%) were taking GE Level 2, and 6 (3.7%) were taking GE Level 1. Of all participants, 79 (48.2%) were male and 85 (51.8%) were female. The mean of their age was 19.27, with 16 and 22 being the minimum and maximum, respectively. These participants were from eight departments. The data can be observed in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants' departments.

Department	Number of Participants	Percentage
Management	54	32.9
Informatics	33	20.1
Architecture	24	14.6
Accounting	23	14
Medical	10	6.1
Biology	9	5.5
Information System	6	3.7
Product Design	5	3
Total	164	100.0

At the time of data collection, these participants resided in various islands or regions in Indonesia, and the data could be observed in Table 2.

Table 2. Participants' domiciles.

Domiciles	Number of Participants	Percentage
Java	124	75.6
Nusa Tenggara	11	6.7
Sumatera	10	6.1
Kalimantan	8	4.9
Papua	5	3.0
Sulawesi	3	1.8
Bali	1	.6
Other islands/regions	2	1.2
Total	164	100.0

3.3 Ethical Consideration

The present study adhered to several principles of research ethics. First, autonomy, respecting the participants' rights to voluntarily participate in the study (Israel & Hay, 2006), was maintained through the use of a consent form in the first part of the online questionnaire. The consent form detailed the objectives of the study and the expectations from the participants if they agreed to participate. One hundred and one of the 164 survey participants indicated their disagreement to be invited to possible follow-up interviews, and this indicated that participation was voluntary (Oliver, 2003). Furthermore, monetary rewards were given to some selected participants, indicating the implementation of the beneficence principle (Beauchamp, 2008).

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

Before collecting the data, a permission letter was sent to the Head of the Language Centre, the organizer of the GE classes, to conduct research in the GE classes. After the permission was granted, the data were collected online for three weeks, from May 9 up to May 27, 2022, with the help of the GE class teachers. The GE teachers distributed the link to the Google Form questionnaire in their respective class WhatsApp groups. The obtained data were downloaded in an Excel file and moved to SPSS 25. The data on gender were recorded as a nominal variable where “0” signified female and “1” signified male. The participants’ total absences and their final grades in their respective GE classes were obtained from the course secretary at the end of the semester per the participants’ approval in the questionnaire. These data were recorded to SPSS 25. After all the necessary data were obtained and the AtC, absenteeism, and L2 achievement variables were found to be normally distributed ($p > .05$), we analyzed the SPSS data per the research questions. To answer the first research question on L2 learners’ attitudes towards cheating, descriptive statistics were employed to obtain findings in the form of means and percentages. To answer the second research question on the extent to which three variables, namely learners’ AtC, absenteeism, and gender, influenced their L2 achievement, multiple regression formula was employed. As gender is a nominal variable, when it was found that learners’ gender significantly influenced their L2 achievement, an independent sample t-test formula would be executed to assess female and male learners’ differences in L2 achievement. The sequence of data collection and analysis can be seen in Figure 1.

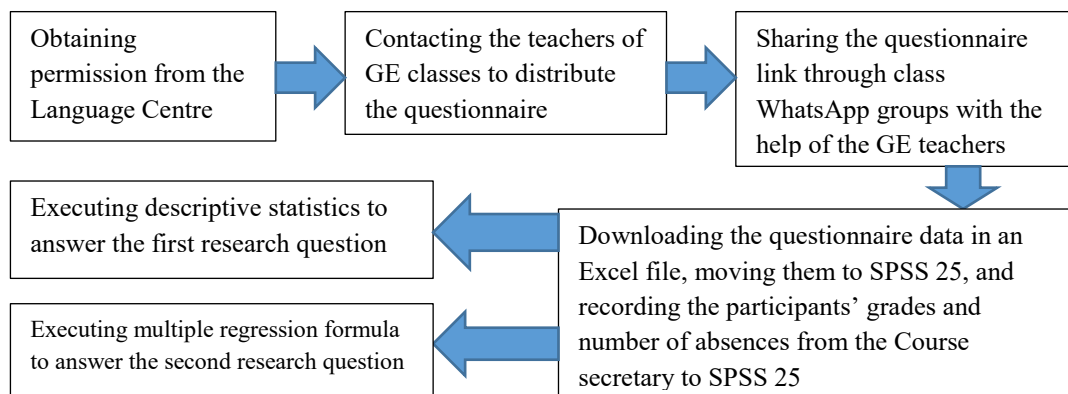


Figure 1. The sequence of data collection and analysis.

4. RESULTS

4.1 L2 learners’ Attitudes towards Cheating (AtC)

The present study found that the composite mean score of the participants’ AtC from the eight questionnaire items was 16.46, with the minimum being eight and the maximum being 35 ($SD=5.45$). This indicates the average mean score of 2.06 for all the questionnaire items, suggesting that the participants generally had negative attitudes towards cheating. The more detailed findings on each item can be observed in Table 3.

Table 5. The model summary of the multiple regression.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.587 ^a	.345	.332	14.36841	1.683
a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Learners' AtC, Learners' absenteeism					
b. Dependent Variable: L2 achievement					

Table 4 shows that overall, the three independent variables, namely learners' AtC, absenteeism, and gender, significantly influenced learners' L2 achievement, $F(3,160) = 28.04, p < .001$. Moreover, from Table 5, it was found that the $R^2 = .345$. This indicated that the model explained 34.5% of the total variance in L2 achievement.

Beta coefficients were further assessed to ascertain the influence of each of the three variables on L2 achievement. The results can be observed in Table 6.

Table 6. Coefficients with L2 achievement as the dependent variable.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	96.200	4.477		21.489	.000
	Learners' AtC	.079	.216	.025	.367	.714
	Learners' absenteeism	-6.587	.978	-.458	-6.732	.000
	Gender	-9.285	2.395	-.265	-3.877	.000
a. Dependent Variable: L2 achievement						

Several main findings can be drawn from Table 6. First, learners' AtC did not significantly influence their L2 achievement, $B = .08, t = 37, p = .71$. Second, learners' absenteeism significantly influenced their L2 achievement, $B = -6.59, t = -6.73, p < .001$. Based on the beta coefficient, the direction was negative, suggesting that as learners had more absences, they had lower L2 achievement. Furthermore, the study also found that learners' gender significantly influenced their L2 achievement, $B = -9.29, t = -3.88, p < .001$. As gender is a nominal variable, not ordinal, that can be ranked from high to low, the negative beta coefficient was disregarded, and an independent sample t-test formula was performed to further assess female and male learners' L2 achievement. The results can be observed in Table 7.

Table 7. Results of independent sample T-test of female and male learners' L2 achievement.

	Female (N=85)		Male (N=79)		T-test	Sig.
	M	SD	M	SD	T	p
L2 achievement	85.25	11.81	71.37	19.9	5.48	.001

As seen in Table 7, it was found that female learners significantly outperformed their male counterparts. Whilst the female learners' composite mean score was 85.25 ($SD = 11.81$), the mean score for the male learners was 71.37 ($SD = 19.9$).

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 L2 learners' Attitudes towards Cheating (AtC)

The present study found that the participants generally had negative attitudes towards cheating (disapproval), evidenced by the cumulative mean score of 2.06 on a scale of 1-5. This finding suggests that the learner participants were generally unlikely to cheat in GE classes. This finding was in line with a study by [Daif-Allah and Alsamani \(2013\)](#) in Saudi Arabia, which reported that learners with a cheating tendency were a minority. Further discussion on the findings of the present study could be elaborated on the results of each questionnaire item, as seen in Table 3.

Questionnaire items 1, 3, and 4 were about cheating behaviors affected by peers or classmates. Only 8.5% (14) up to 12.8% (21) of the 164 participants reported they would likely cheat due to factors related to peers. This finding contrasted with a study in the Philippines by [Diego \(2017\)](#), who reported cheating practices as widespread among high school learners during examinations. In general education, [Boysen \(2007\)](#) reiterated that a positive classroom environment makes learners cheat less. Regarding this, the GE classes may generally and to a certain extent have this quality, such as employing highly communicative and collaborative activities and project assessments, such as making infographics and videos, instead of doing some multiple-choice exams. As there may not be clear-cut right or wrong in completing such assessments, learners may not feel the need to find a 'shortcut' to obtain good grades. Besides, there was little room to cheat in such open-ended assessments ([Michael & Williams, 2013](#)).

Furthermore, items 2 and 8 were about cheating behaviors to avoid negative outcomes. Around 11% (18) of the 164 participants reported they wanted to cheat to avoid unfavorable outcomes such as getting bad grades, failing the class, and failing people around them. Some participants of the quantitative study by [Daif-Allah and Alsamani \(2013\)](#) also reported that they cheated due to parental expectations to perform well academically and fear of failure. In this case, some learners who saw a discrepancy between their ability and expected performance could resort to cheating as a shortcut out of desperation or lack of motivation.

Next, items 5 and 6 were related to cheating behaviors affected by class instruction. Compared to other items, these two items produced relatively higher mean scores (2.31 and 2.07, respectively). 15.8% up to 25% of the participants reported that they may cheat due to instructional factors, perceived irrelevance of materials, and being given too many materials. A study by [Farah \(2021\)](#) reported that being given exam materials not previously discussed in class could trigger learners to cheat. Besides, in a study focusing on the demotivation phenomenon among learners from non-English departments, [Subekti \(2020b\)](#) also found that learners seemed to second-prioritize English classes and may see English classes as remotely relevant to their immediate academic needs. The findings of these three studies suggest that the perceived relevance and usefulness of materials are crucial for learners to be sufficiently motivated to invest more time to learn them instead of resorting to cheating.

Finally, item 7 produced a mean score of 2.40, the highest of all. 31.1% (51) of the participants reported that they would cheat in their English classes if they did not have time to study or work on a specific assignment. This finding was expected because a lack of time management was also reported as a contributing factor to

cheating (Daif-Allah & Alsamani, 2013; Doro, 2014; Muluk et al., 2021; Silfiani et al., 2018). Though the issue of learners' lack of time management could be multifaceted, the position of GE classes as non-credited courses could be one of the reasons why some of the learner participants did not invest enough time in studying for the class. They may prioritize their credited content classes and do little to strive in GE classes. Rather than investing more time in studying, they may resort to cheating as a cognitive shortcut (Anderman & Murdock, 2007).

5.2 The Influence of Learner's AtC, Absenteeism, and Gender to L2 Achievement

The finding suggesting that learners' AtC did not influence L2 achievement was in contrast with the reiterations of the negative influence of cheating on L2 learning. This finding was different from that of a study by Rahimi and Goli (2016) in Iran, where learners with higher grades tended to agree that the instances mentioned in the questionnaire were dishonest behaviors or cheating. As suggested in their study, Rahimi and Goli (2016) asserted that learners who disapproved of cheating behaviors tended to get ahead in class. Nevertheless, the present study reported that learner participants' AtC barely affected their L2 achievement. In this case, the assessment types used in GE classes, such as role-play and video-making assessments, may not be prone to cheating behaviors. Some writing assessments, such as making infographics, could be susceptible to copy-paste cheating; however, there may have been scoring components that could affect their grades, such as the oral presentations of the infographics, even if cheating did happen.

Furthermore, the finding that learners' absenteeism negatively influenced L2 achievement may be a step further than the findings of several relevant studies primarily using correlations (Al-Mekhlafi, 2016; Ancheta et al., 2021; Karabiyik, 2016). They generally reported a negative association between absences and L2 achievement or a positive association between attendance and L2 achievement. Al-Mekhlafi (2016), for example, reported a moderate positive relationship between Yemeni L2 learners' attendance and grades, indicating that learners who were absent fewer tended to score higher ($r(133) = .44, p < .01$). A similar finding was also reported by Karabiyik (2016) in Türkiye ($r(242) = .51, p < .05$). Similarly, a study in Oman by Ancheta et al. (2021) reported a moderate negative correlation between learners' absences and their grades ($r(308) = -.52, p < .05$), indicating the more absences, the lower the grades. In this respect, furthermore, the finding of the present study could serve as an affirmation of the reiteration of the debilitating effect of absenteeism, whose empirical investigations were previously confined within a plethora of correlational studies.

Moreover, though the present study did not specifically investigate the predictive power of learners' absenteeism on L2 achievement, the overall model consisting of the three factors in this study could predict 34.5% of the total variance in L2 achievement, with L2 absenteeism being one of the two significant predictors. In line with this finding, a quantitative study in Iran by Rajabnejad et al. (2017) reported that learners' absences could only predict 8% of the total variance of learners' L2 achievement. In this case, the predictive power of absenteeism could vary from one context to another depending on several factors, including the different nature of the English classes, how compact the materials in each meeting, and the assessment types. These factors would

likely determine the extent to which skipping classes affects learners' understanding of materials or contents, eventually affecting their L2 achievements.

Furthermore, the study found that gender significantly influenced L2 achievement, with female learners outperforming their male counterparts. Whilst the overall mean score of female learners' L2 achievement was 85.25, their male students' mean score of L2 achievement was only 71.37. This finding contrasts with previous studies reporting that male learners outperformed their female counterparts (Menuta & Wubshet, 2019; Wucherer & Reiterer, 2018) or no gender difference in L2 achievement (Agudo, 2022). The context-specific factors in each of these studies may play a part in affecting the results. For example, the GE class in the present study was conducted online with synchronous *Zoom* sessions. Then, to obtain the grades, regarded as their L2 achievement in the present study, learners were required to complete several tasks and projects, such as making video blogs, doing role-plays, writing infographics of business ideas and presenting them, and showcasing multiple language skills. In comparison, studies by Wucherer and Reiterer (2018) in Austria and Agudo (2022) in Spain used different measures of L2 achievement, the first being pronunciation whilst the second being L2 listening. Furthermore, the study by Menuta and Wubshet (2019) was conducted in Ethiopian Senior High School contexts, which may be very different from the Indonesian undergraduate context of the present study. This includes different modes of typical instructions and types of tasks comprising their grades.

Despite the conflicting findings of this study with those of several previous studies on gender, it is essential to note that the finding of this study was in line with the findings of a study in Oman by Al-Saadi (2020). He reported that female learners outperformed their male counterparts in L2 writing. Considering that some of the tasks in GE class necessitated learners to write, for example, writing scripts for role-plays and writing infographics, the similarity of findings between this study and that of Al-Saadi (2020) may have found a certain degree of common ground. However, it is relatively premature to state that female learners outperformed their male counterparts in L2 writing considering the present study did not specifically investigate learners' L2 writing achievement, probably warranting further studies investigating skill-specific L2 achievement in multiple learning contexts.

The present study has several implications for L2 instruction. In light of the findings on the negative influence of learners' absenteeism on L2 achievement, teachers need to motivate learners to attend classes, for example, through instruction with the right amount of challenge in each meeting. Furthermore, though generally, the participants reported negative attitudes towards cheating, several participants, albeit the minority, reported that being given too many materials and their perceived uselessness of the materials may instill cheating. This could inform teachers of the importance of giving materials suitable to learners' needs and levels of proficiency. The findings also highlight the importance of facilitating learners' awareness of avoiding cheating behaviors regardless of the unfavorable situations learners may face. This could also be enhanced through such class policies as giving a zero mark to any works substantially resembling the works of others without proper citations, as checked in plagiarism checker applications. Besides, in the case of English classes taken by learners from non-English departments, relevant people beyond L2 classroom settings, such as the deans, the heads of departments, and the lecturers at which faculties learners study, should play a part. They can motivate learners to invest more

effort in L2 learning and avoid potentially detrimental practices such as absenteeism and cheating.

Generally, the present study contributes to providing a general overview of the influence of the combination of L2 learners' AtC, absenteeism, and gender on their L2 achievement at the undergraduate level, which may be rare considering the scarcity of such study in L2 literature which, as far as these variables were concerned, was somewhat overwhelmed with correlation studies. Besides, this study may also pave the way for further studies on the possible influence between combinations of various learner factors on L2 achievement in the Indonesian context.

6. CONCLUSION

In summary, the study reported the following main findings. Learners' AtC was reported to be low, suggesting the participants' negative attitude towards cheating. The combination of learners' AtC, absenteeism, and gender significantly influenced learners' L2 achievement, accounting for 34.5% of the total variance in L2 achievement. However, only learners' absenteeism and gender were found to be significant predictors. Absenteeism significantly influenced L2 achievement negatively, and female learners outperformed their male counterparts.

This study has several limitations. First, as the study employed a survey as the only method of data collection, all the data were based on the participants' self-report. Secondly, among some 500 learners enrolling in the GE classes, only 164 participated in the study, indicating a low participation rate. This could be due to some learners' inattentiveness toward information posted in the *WhatsApp* groups of their GE classes and their lack of interest in filling out an online questionnaire. Last, as the study involved three different levels of GE, the participants' final grades were also obtained from three different assessment components. This, to a certain extent, may have affected the findings of the present study in the second research question.

Furthermore, there were three suggestions for future studies. In future studies on gender and L2 achievement, L2 achievement could be categorized more specifically into achievement in four language skills to better map the general forte of L2 learners based on their gender. Furthermore, though the finding suggested that learners' AtC barely influenced L2 achievement, considering there have not been many previous studies investigating this issue, the finding should be treated as an exploration and interpreted with caution. Further quantitative investigations involving more participants may still be necessary. Moreover, it could be worthwhile to conduct qualitative studies involving macro-level policymakers as stakeholders of language management, teachers, and L2 learners on the issue of cheating and absenteeism in English classes with characteristics similar to GE classes. Such studies could better capture the complexities of these issues from multiple perspectives.

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Understanding Culture Shock and Its Relationship to Intercultural Communicative Competence

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Abstract

Culture shock has gained attention and been observed from multi-disciplinary perspectives in international education, such as from anthropology, psychology, cultural psychology, intercultural communication studies, linguistics, and many others. By synthesising the ABC's theory and intercultural communicative competence with their savoirs, the present study offers a perspective to analyse three international students' culture shock experiences. As an explorative case study, the data were collected through in-depth interviews to extract the sojourners' narratives, which were then transcribed in the form of text or quotations. It was found that the affective, behavioural, and cognitive dimensions were identified and emerged in each respondent. In the affective, overwhelming emotions, language limitation, and feelings of isolation were felt in various intensities. From the data, the respondents claimed to have lacked intrapersonal skills to prepare themselves for the culture of the host country along with the socio-cultural aspects. In addition, they found social support by individuals or officials essential for reducing negative feelings. In the behavioural dimension, these respondents started to adapt to the situation though they still found it challenging to confirm and clarify any unfamiliar encounters. Finally, in the cognitive dimension, the respondents mingled and integrated into the locals, both in their academic and social lives. It is suggested that elements of intercultural communicative competence, namely intercultural attitude,

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knowledge of the host culture, skills of relating and discovery, and critical cultural awareness may have the potential to manage culture shock effectively. It should be incorporated into international higher education and EFL pedagogy.

Keywords: Affect, behavioural, cognitive, culture shock, intercultural communicative competence, narrative study.

1. INTRODUCTION

In this contemporary world, a classroom of second or foreign language education seems to have been shaped by multilingual and multicultural settings. It is admittedly true that language education has changed dramatically not only the nature of language learners, the teaching contents, and the learning contexts but also the forms of language learning themselves (Kramsch & Hua, 2016). In other words, when these changes have implicated the nature of language education, language learning with culture has inextricably stimulated some debates on a plethora of issues and complexities.

There is no doubt that international education has increasingly soared massively to the extent that the interaction of international students from varied cultural backgrounds has flourished in Western and top-world universities, such as American, British, Australian, and European universities (Huang & Chang, 2011). Therefore, intercultural competence seems to have attracted the attention of experts in transdisciplinary disciplines, such as linguistics, social psychology, anthropology, and other relevant social sciences.

The present paper aimed to establish an interconnection between intercultural phenomena and intercultural communicative competence in which a sojourner may have experienced and honed his/her intercultural attitude as an integral part of his/her improved second/foreign language development and skills as an intercultural citizen (Byram, 1997, 2012). Language development and skills pertain to the ways an international student successfully interacts with another person in English regardless of their cultural backgrounds, and both interactants understand literally the meaning of utterance as well as the illocutionary acts of exchanging ideas. Also, a sojourner is aware of using his or her own lens or perspectives or values towards an intercultural encounter in the host country. These phenomena require beyond pragmatic competence or the so-called intercultural communicative competence (Byram et al., 2002).

In this regard, a learner as an individual and his or her experience are central to this issue. Liddicoat (2020) stated that both are mutually interacting as the former focuses on the processes of enhancing knowledge and understanding others' sociocultural aspects in the form of attitudinal development, whereas the latter focuses on how such knowledge is interpreted well and generates appropriate meaning-making, which can be operationalised when required in real interaction. They complement one another, especially when a new belief in conjunction with experience is recognised to be beneficial or successful, thus restructuring the block of mindset and leading to improvement of attitude. This is how human beings learn from the perspective of the Vygotskian sociocultural learning (1978).

One of the experiences is culture shock. It can be defined as an infinite loop where an international student faces an unfamiliar intercultural situation. If not managed well, this intercultural phenomenon can lead to strain, loss, rejection, confusion, anxiety, and impotence (Ward et al., 2020). Culture shock is also called intercultural contact where a sojourner needs to deal with stress and coping strategies to deal with, culture learning through observation, and social identification as well as adjustment in cultural identity (Zhou et al., 2008).

The urgency of the present paper is that culture shock is often perceived as both an intercultural experience and intercultural communicative competence, which are exclusively independent implicating the relationship between them. Moreover, such a synthesis has gradually differed and been understudied. In fact, these topics need comprehensive investigation as they are related to abstract psychological phenomena, such as acceptance, adaptability, and empathy in addition to concrete cultural products and practices (Schauer, 2021), in which the conceptualisation of intercultural competence can be internalised and embedded into one's repertoire through experiencing and encountering sociocultural practices (Dervin, 2020). Moreover, intercultural communicative competence is advocated to equip learners to be more intercultural in EFL pedagogy in addition to being adept at using English in a multicultural and multilingual context. All of these are based on context, emotion, interlocutor, moods, power relations, and other sociocultural aspects. Therefore, the present study synthesises all of the works of culture shock as part of intercultural communicative competence. Thus, the research question of the present article is:

1. How do international students face culture shock and resolve it?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Culture Shock Studies

There have been multiple studies about culture shock from varied disciplines; mostly dominated by anthropologist researchers. In these early studies, the culture shock was always connected to the conceptualisation of the nature of culture. One example is the study of Oberg (1954) who stated that culture shock is anxiety emerging as a result of being distant from familiar signs and symbols. Peacock (2001) stated that culture consists of shared practice codes that a newcomer must learn and adapt to as a new member of a cultural group. Unfortunately, their studies did not address which cultural behaviours and feelings had to be considered by an individual in a new culture. As if the intercultural phenomenon could be alleviated when one survived to remain in a cultural group's environment.

Throughout the years, the influence of psychology has been indicated by the studies of Chapdelaine and Alexitch (2004) who found that culture shock has some characteristics, and there are variables indicating the intensity of culture shock, such as cross-cultural differences, size of co-national group, family status, and previous cross-cultural experiences. Their study revealed that the interaction with the hosts would resolve any problems in students' culture shock. This perspective seems to shed light on how to cope with culture shock, and the criteria mentioned in the study are intertwined with an individual's status, such as socio-economic status, which could be unreliable in some conditions for an immature international student.

Over the years, culture shock has been analysed from transdisciplinary perspectives. From the perspective of social psychology, it was viewed as a social skill difficulty relating to cognition, emotion, behaviour, and psychology (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004). In 2006, an intercultural communication study by Lin (2006) emphasised that social support from others is highly crucial to cope with culture shock. The study stressed not only individual effort but also collective and organisational efforts that have to be encouraged to ameliorate the situation. This stance was proposed because the previous studies appeared to have not provided solutions collectively merely exclusively on an individual level to deal with the intercultural encounter.

Ward et al. (2020), over the years, developed an understanding that culture shock is an intercultural contact experience in which acculturation must be managed wisely through sociocultural and psychological adaptation. Still adopting the ABC's theory, affect, behavioural, and cognitive are thoroughly analysed. Most of the studies about culture shock have been presented in this sequence. Yet, the analyses of data remained sufficiently unanswerable about how to explore, compare, contrast, and build the links between statements and cultural categories.

Culture shock was initially analysed via the lens of intercultural competence by Guilherme (2000), who argued that culture shock can be mitigated by adjusted and contextualised communicative ability that is grounded by intercultural awareness and other multidimensional cultural knowledge and skills. A recent study by Lobytsyna et al. (2020) put forward the pivotal role of intercultural understanding as generated by intercultural communicative competence, that is, the ability "to engage with diverse cultures and capable of living and working together in an interconnected world that cultivates mutual respect" (p. 5). This recent stance is adopted in the present study as it covers more sociocultural aspects and encapsulates multidisciplinary views about culture shock.

2.2 Frameworks of Analysis

Upon the selection of the perspective of culture shock, the present study would like to discuss a framework for analysing culture shock. Since an intercultural phenomenon has been regarded as part of intercultural competence, the assessment or analysis of culture shock is suggested to adopt how the level of intercultural competence can be enacted and portrayed by an individual. Some methods were elaborated in the following sub-section. The best framework would then be selected based on scientific consideration and a strongly supported argument.

First, Chen and Starosta (1998) proposed that an individual must possess six affective elements to be interculturally sensitive, namely self-esteem, self-monitoring, open-mindedness, empathy, interaction involvement, and suspending judgment in order to resolve culture shock and become more intercultural. Their study used a 24-item questionnaire of self-cultural awareness comprising five categories of interculturality level, namely interaction engagement, respect for cultural differences, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment, and interaction attentiveness. It is unfortunate that there is a critique of the model, claiming it to be overly subjective. The outcome may not represent a genuine level of one's intercultural sensitivity as it results in overconfidence and the negative effects of culture shock.

Second, Hammer et al. (2003) also promoted Intercultural Development Inventory to measure intercultural sensitivity with a 60-item questionnaire on six

orientations: denial, defence, minimisation, acceptance, adaptation, and integration. It is claimed that, at the state of adaptation, one will be relatively ready for culture shock. It is because this individual has more empathy towards other cultures as the change is not only cognitive but also affective and behavioural through actual experiences. This tool inevitably receives scant critiques on the observers' perceptions towards some cultural categories harmonised with the orientations. To achieve commonalities, an interview guide was prepared, yet some individuals have complexities in their lifespan creating unique cultural categories.

Another framework was the Portfolio Assessment by [Jacobson et al. \(1999\)](#) relying on the individuals' reflections on their personal documents or work to measure intercultural competence evolution. This assessment was recognised to be the most selective compared to the others because it stems from a philosophical stance that learning may not be quantifiable. It also offers a very developing and interrelating response and criteria of cultural categories based on the reflections the respondents made. It is evident that [Rahimi \(2019\)](#) found insufficient validity in the tool and suggested the use of narratives as another alternative for assessing competence.

2.3 Narrative Study for Culture Shock

Narratives are claimed to be able to capture the complexities of one's positioning. [Harbon \(2014\)](#) argued that narratives do not only describe teachers but also all individuals who want to be acknowledged. Their experiences and histories become central to their intercultural profile development. Each person must have a unique and different story, which shapes how they view the world. Narratives must be collected properly through in-depth or semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Exploring, probing, analysing, and validating are predominant in the process.

One of the recent studies conducted by [Qun et al. \(2018\)](#) on Chinese-Indonesian students discovered that the respondents encountered psychological and social problems that made them feel inconvenient living in Indonesia. Then, intercultural communication was found to be the key to resolving their problems.

The studies above concluded that the selection of narratives as the method to analyse culture shock is recommendable. The presentation of data was also suggested to adopt [Ward et al.'s \(2020\)](#) ABC theory as it has conflated all aspects influencing the condition and the status of an international student.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Approach

The study adopted a qualitative approach with the design of an explorative case study. With the constructivist understanding of reality, the study wished to build realities of culture shock based on an individual's understanding of them ([Creswell, 2014](#)). In other words, the study would use the participants' understandings of feelings, sensations, emotions, and other factors related to culture shock, which were then narrated as part of their personal experiences.

The study was implemented in the westernmost province of Indonesia, namely Aceh, due to its distinctive characteristics, such as having a strictly religious community, thus offering a different living experience to international students compared to other cities in Indonesia. Universitas Syiah Kuala was selected as the research locus as it hosts a higher number of international students compared to other local universities. It also provides international scholarships that attract many foreign students.

3.2 Sampling

The study used purposive sampling. It involved three international students from African countries staying in Aceh Province, Indonesia, for several months. They originally come from Gambia, Sierra Leone, and the Republic of Mali. Due to ethical reasons, their names were made anonymous.

These African students were chosen to see whether or not the culture shock they experienced was partly due to narrativization about Africans in Aceh, and as [Kooria \(2020\)](#) said, stereotypes about Africans still need to be given a critical focus because there are still many racial discriminations to Africans due to the stereotypes. The respondents had taken at least two semesters of lectures. Their initials were BD, a male student from Gambia studying at the Economic Development department; MW, a male student from Sierra Leone studying at the Biology Education department; and TD, a female student from the Republic of Mali studying at the Department of Mining Engineering.

3.3 Data Collection

The instrument of this narrative study was an in-depth interview, which was recorded using a voice recorder. There were two sessions for each participant; each session took a maximum of one hour to avoid fatigue. The questions were open focusing on affective, behavioural, and cognitive dimensions. The interviews were audio-recorded, which were transcribed for analysis. The interview was conducted in English because the participants were comfortable expressing their opinions in English.

The interview followed a set of general guidelines. One of which is that it started from the most general inquiry to the most reflective one. However, some flexibility was allowed within the guideline to obtain a clear overview of the respondents' perceptions or accounts of a particular topic. The topics of the interview questions were college experiences (educational system, classroom environment), racial discrimination, perception of campus diversity, and cultural adjustment.

3.4 Data Analysis

The present study employed qualitative data analysis. It involved iterative analyses where data condensation, data display, data drawing, verification, and conclusion were carried out in a loop cyclic design ([Miles et al., 2014](#)). For verification, checking representativeness with the three dimensions mentioned earlier was performed. Then, the themes (affective, behavioural, and cognitive aspects) were compared across respondents.

4. RESULTS

This section elaborates on the findings following the ABCs theory presentation, namely affective, behavioural, and cognitive dimensions, to reveal the respondents' culture shock experiences.

4.1 Affective Dimension

Affective (or affect) is identified when anxiety appears and coping strategies are managed and enacted (Furham, 2012). In this phase, all respondents had positive and negative or overwhelming emotions, such as feeling happy, sad, confused, and anxious simultaneously. Each respondent experienced different culture shock symptoms. Yet, most of them developed feelings, just indifferent intensities. The following is an interview with one of the respondents, BD:

- (1) "When I was here, I was nervous and happy at the same time. It's my first time abroad for a long period of time. Although I also interacted with other international students, especially Gambian students, I still had never known them before. When I first came here, I didn't even know what to do except to study. So yeah... I'm just a foreigner". (BD–Gambia)

BD felt distressed when he first came to Aceh, Indonesia. He had never been abroad previously and settled for a long period. However, this was his own decision to continue his education overseas. Prior to living here, he never knew what Indonesia was like, especially Aceh Province, because he never thought of continuing his education here.

Unlike the first respondent, MW, the second respondent from Sierra Leone, had previously been to several countries and experienced different cultures. Hence, MW did not feel overwhelmed on his first day on campus. Even before coming to Aceh, he had lived in Jakarta for three months, which explained his low level of anxiety.

- (2) "I have travelled to the U.S. and Europe before I came here. I went to Malaysia. Then, before college began, I stayed in Jakarta for three months, and then in September, I went to Banda Aceh for my college. It was not so much difference at the time". (MW–Sierra Leone)

Meanwhile, TD as the third respondent revealed that she was happy to live and continue her education in Aceh even though she occasionally longed for her family.

- (3) "From the start, I was really excited about what it would be like to study abroad. But yeah...going to another country, especially different continents, and countries that I didn't think of before. Of course, I also miss my family and friends, but the environmental atmosphere is not too different from my hometown. So, yes, I enjoyed it even though yes...there are still things that make me stressed, too". (TD–Republic of Mali)

More interestingly, it was found that, at the beginning of the first semester, the three respondents chose to hang out or share stories with their fellow Africans and international students from other countries because they felt that they shared something in common. Doing so made them feel comfortable as they shared similar perspectives. In the interview, BD said that:

- (4) "Yup...I have a group chat with my friends who are from Africa too, so sometimes I hang out with them so I don't get too stressed alone". (BD–Gambia)

TD also shared the same opinion:

- (5) "...I was looking for friends who were fellow foreign students and fellow international students." (TD–Republic of Mali)

Secondly, culture shock can be more intense when the culture of a newcomer is far different from the culture of the host, mainly in terms of language difference. Based on the interviews, one of the major causes of the respondents' culture shock was the language barrier. It affected their life, especially campus life. All respondents agreed that this factor hindered them from interacting, as revealed in the excerpts below:

- (6) "I think the main problem is about language. Due to the language barrier, my relationship with local friends is not very good." (BD–Gambia)
- (7) "Ya, I had a difficult time in the first year I studied here. You know language barrier, hahaha (laughing), because I don't speak the Indonesian language". (MW–Sierra Leone)
- (8) "At that time, I could not speak Bahasa, and sorry maybe this is a little bit sensitive, but local students at that time thought I was a student from Papua. So, at that time they kept talking in Indonesia which I didn't understand what they said and I answered them in English and they were shocked." (TD–Republic of Mali)

Thirdly, drawing upon the interview results, all of the international students in this research developed a feeling of isolation, which is one of the common symptoms of culture shock, especially in daily activities. This feeling is characterised by a low interest in engaging with a new environment as well as an inability to carry out activities optimally in a new environment, as revealed in the following excerpts:

- (9) "If there's something we want to ask, we don't know who to ask. When I spoke to them, they always say 'I don't know' or with a gesture of shaking their head and waving their hand". (BD–Gambia)

TD also had the same experience. At first, TD felt that local students discriminated against her because she came from the black race. However, she later found out that local students actually avoided her because they were reluctant to speak English, and not because of her skin colour as she assumed.

- (10) "I often misunderstand what the local students mean. Like what I said earlier, they just smiled awkwardly and then they seemed to want to run away. After a while and I had made friends with the locals I asked, 'Why are they being like that? Is it because I'm black? Then my local friend immediately denied and said, 'No. It's not like that, we're not racist like you think, if you want to know from our point of view, we're actually like that because we avoid speaking English'". (TD–Republic of Mali)

More surprisingly, MW was avoided by his local friends, which seemed to be caused by the age difference. After his local friends knew he was much older, they seemed reluctant to interact with MW, as stated in the extract below:

- (11) "But unfortunately, my relationship with my classmates was like 'we are only classmates', nothing more outside of campus. Maybe it is because of the age gap? I think". (MW–Sierra Leone)

However, the feeling of isolation and age difference were no longer problems for the respondents. The three respondents could interact and engage with local friends later on. Based on the interview results, intrapersonal influences within individuals, such as communication skills, cross-cultural experiences and settings, social skills, and individual character traits (tolerance or independence from family members who play an important role in their lives as a support and supervision system), had a significant influence on the intensity of culture shock they experienced.

4.2 Behaviour

In this phase, the international students became more open and willing to accept the differences after assessing the ways to reduce the gaps and which aspects made them comfortable. Stress due to differences and the feeling of isolation began to disappear as their adaptability started to show results, as shown in the following excerpts,

- (12) “The point is that I just follow the local people’s habits here. What are the habits of local students? How is your lecturer teaching us in front of the class? And, if there is something that makes us uncomfortable, just ignore it because if you think about it too much, you will be stressed out”. (MW–Sierra Leone)

BD also revealed that he preferred reducing activities outside the class schedule to reduce stress in dealing with the culture shock,

- (13) “So, what I did every day to reduce this feeling is I just attended classes. After class, I went straight back to my room (dorm).” (BD–Gambia)

In contrast, TD joined her fellow international students to overcome her sense of culture shock, as stated in the following excerpt.

- (14) “So, my way to deal with it is to gather with fellow foreign students including African, Thai and other countries”. (TD–Republic of Mali)

It is evident from the excerpts above that the international students changed their behaviours to adapt to the locals’ cultures. They had also observed the ideal ways of adaptation and quit overthinking any thoughts that might stress them.

4.3 Cognitive

In this final phase, all international students were aware that a new culture was either better or worse. In the interviews, all respondents admitted that they had passed a period of culture shock.

- (15) “Just want to let you know, I’m also the type of person who wants to learn new things and you know...extrovert? I’m a person who likes to mingle with other people, so I think it’s not as difficult as I imagined. Maybe someone else...I mean other foreign students will join fellow foreign students, but I’m still trying to mingle with the local students even though it’s awkward and has language barriers, but I still want to be friends with local students”. (MW–Sierra Leone)

BD also revealed that he eventually had many local friends because he began to learn the local students' attitudes, learn Indonesian, and spend more time with other international students, as stated in the following excerpt:

- (16) "If I have something that I want to ask my classmate I prefer to ask via chat. Because yeah, as you know, if I asked directly, they would ignore me. So yes, I asked them through chat. But now I have a lot of local friends...hahaha (laughing)...you know, sometimes we hang out together like going to a coffee shop or playing football. I think I have started to adapt to the atmosphere here". (BD–Gambia)

TD also showed her adaptability through the following statement:

- (17) "At first, there were only two people. After a while, my friends became so many because I joined the students' association in my department. After I joined the students' association, the situation immediately changed to 180 degrees and I have a lot of friends. At first, they were shy with me, but when I tried to be nice to them, now they are close. They taught me Indonesian, I taught them English and French, so now I can speak Indonesian, even though I am not fluent." (TD–Republic of Mali)

When these respondents were asked about the ways they coped with culture shock in academic life, they answered that they just needed to adapt to the existing academic rules and system. They also learned new things that did not exist in their previous academic life. In other words, for the respondents, the behavioural phase is a phase where they begin to accept the situation, start learning about new things, and find ways to reduce the culture shock. In the cognitive phase, the data showed that respondents began to immerse themselves in their new environment, both in their academic and social lives.

5. DISCUSSION

The data showed that affective, behavioural, and cognitive aspects were saliently expressed in the respondents' extracts. This is in line with [Ward et al. \(2020\)](#) that sociocultural and psychological adaptation appear to be effective in dealing with culture shock. In the affective phase, the international students went through difficult times and showed symptoms of culture shock, such as overwhelming emotions, language limitation, and feelings of isolation. The study also found that intrapersonal factors, including communication skills, cross-cultural experience, and social skills were among the determining factors that prepare the sojourners ([Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004](#)). Furthermore, the researchers found that individuals lacking intrapersonal skills tended to be entrapped more easily into culture shock because they did not have any necessary strategies to cope with all the differences and discomfort.

Poor communication skills can also create many obstacles in social and academic lives. The respondents in the present study admitted that their problems mostly stemmed from a lack of traveling experience, knowledge of foreign cultures, and foreign language skills, which in this case was Indonesian they had never encountered previously in their respective countries. This is aligned with the statement of [Lobytsyna et al. \(2020\)](#) that experiences of living with people from different cultural backgrounds are decisive to the success of dealing with culture shock.

When the respondents felt isolated from their new environment, they tended to assume that they were not accepted by the local community, especially in the academic environment because they were 'different' from the locals physically, culturally, and linguistically. Many local students also avoided the international students, which was actually due to the locals' poor ability to communicate in English, and not because of racial factors as assumed by the respondents. This initially led to a misunderstanding among international students, triggering the symptom of anxiety of failing in the adaptation process.

All respondents agreed that social support is pivotal in dealing with stress and coping with problems. The situation would be harder if they had had insufficient capability to tackle the problem, as reported by [Lin \(2006\)](#) in her study as well. Finding sources of social support was challenging for the respondents because there were too many differences and only a few people could understand them. This affective aspect is likely to be influenced by one's intrapersonal skills, such as communication skills, emotional management, social skills, and individual character.

After passing through the affective phase, the international students entered the behavioural phase where they began to find ways to ameliorate the culture shock they experienced. They started to deal with the differences and changed their behaviours as coping mechanisms. Stress due to existing differences and feelings of separation slowly disappeared. However, the respondents had different adaptation techniques. One international student chose to follow the habits of the local people. He no longer focused on differences that might lead to discomfort. Overthinking was also perceived as an act that exacerbated the situation. Another international student chose to withdraw himself from social life and stay alone in his dorm room. He believed that reducing outdoor activities could help him eliminate the culture shock. The last international student, however, decided to hang out with her fellow international students to overcome culture shock, including with students from Africa, Thailand, and others. She said that by joining fellow international students, she felt more comfortable and that they were 'in the same boat'. All of these strategies have been advocated by [Guilherme \(2000\)](#) as heightened intercultural awareness and improved communicative abilities would have been gained and nurtured from their interactions with international students and their own responses.

The last phase is the cognitive phase. In this phase, all international students realised that the new culture they encountered was neither better nor worse than their own. Instead, they accepted it as it was so that they could feel familiar and confident in this new setting. All international students started to make friends with the locals and learn Indonesian. One of the respondents said that he started spending more time with his local friends, such as going to a coffee shop or playing football. Another respondent who was initially hindered from social life due to the age gap started to look for other friends from different majors, and even made friends with several lecturers. The last respondent said she became very confident and had many local friends after joining the student association in her department. She even taught French and English to her friends. Concerning the problems in academic life, the international students confessed that they only needed to adjust to the curriculum and teaching methods used by the host country. At this stage, the respondents had developed an intercultural understanding ([Lobytsna et al., 2020](#)).

To encapsulate, from the lens of intercultural communicative competence, all of the above-mentioned culture shock phenomena are caused by minimum attention to

the elements of intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997). Lacking *savoirs* (knowledge about the culture including the sociocultural aspects not limited to the language, the norms, and the habits) may lead to anxiety. The respondents' *savoir etre* (intercultural attitude) was also not developed prior to arriving in Indonesia; they were not equipped with a sort of understanding of how to relativise a cultural phenomenon from their own perspective to others' perspectives. Their *savoir apprehende* (skills of relating and discovery) or intrapersonal skills did not suffice yet, thus making it difficult to clarify and confirm any unfamiliar encounters in the host country with credible individuals or officials (social support). Finally, a critical cultural awareness can heighten and streamline the acculturation process in the cognitive phase. As a result, they became aware of not repeating the same mistakes and gained lessons from their daily interactional activities. All of these indicate the urgency for intercultural communicative competence to be incorporated into higher education and EFL pedagogy.

6. CONCLUSION

The respondents in the present study went through several phases of the acculturation process, which in this study, was linked to the ABCs phases (Ward et al., 2020) in conjunction with intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997) as a synthesis. In the affective phase, the respondents felt stressed in a new environment due to poor intrapersonal skills, resulting in symptoms of culture shock, such as overwhelming emotions, language barriers, and feelings of isolation. After passing through this phase, the respondents began to enter the behavioural phase, in which they became more open to new cultures and started to accept the differences. They also began to develop some adaptation strategies to survive in this new environment. Finally, in the cognitive phase, the respondents had the ability to adjust and interact with the local people, including in the academic setting. They also no longer felt stressed.

All of these culture shock experiences could have been alleviated if the international students were equipped with a set of *savoirs* elements such as the knowledge of the host culture, intercultural attitude, skills of relating and skills of discovery, and critical cultural awareness. This can prepare them and improve their intrapersonal skills, allowing them to access social support, observe, and learn from their surroundings.

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Speech Intelligibility of the Diastratic Varieties of Philippine English

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Abstract

The rise of English globalization has prompted speech production variations that reveal the cultural and social backgrounds of the different speakers. However, intelligibility issues of the different varieties have also become a concern. Thus, the present study attempted to assess the intelligibility of Philippine English (PE) diastratic varieties' speech recordings produced by local Cebuano speakers. Further, it aimed to specifically evaluate the speakers' production differences, rate the intelligibility of the language varieties, and determine the effect of language variety on the listener-evaluators in terms of intelligibility and distraction ratings. Using an exploratory sequential mixed method design, the speech participants in this study were carefully chosen through multistage sampling first by social class and then by phonological variations. The three final sample speakers out of the initial eighteen were finally categorized as acrolect, mesolect, and basilect. The evaluating groups included English language users from the USA, the Philippines, Korea, and Thailand, and each group represented a region in Kachru's concentric circle of the World Englishes model. The results identified acrolect as the most intelligible variety followed by mesolect. Basilect, on the other hand, was considered very distracting to the evaluator groups, resulting in a significantly low intelligibility score. Thai evaluators gave

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the lowest intelligibility ratings, which may be attributed to two factors, L1 interference and unfamiliarity of L2 variation. Finally, future directions and implications in the classroom and industry are stated to create a sense of cultural awareness and to promote a deeper intercultural understanding that comes with international intelligibility.

Keywords: Cebuano English, English varieties, intelligibility, language distraction, L1 interference.

1. INTRODUCTION

The English language generally serves as a medium or the primary bridge to link the linguistic division among hundreds of different speakers across the globe. The phenomenal dispersion of English in the international arena is what probably prompted Crystal (2003) to claim that, “nobody owns it [English] anymore (p. 2)”. To date, non-native speakers of the language (as a foreign or second language) far outnumber native speakers. Crystal (2003) further noted that this enormous number of non-native English users has developed a variety of speaking styles that they believe to be effective and convenient, hence, the emergence of English variations worldwide.

Along with the rise of English as a *lingua franca* all around the world, its variations can result in unintelligibility among speakers. Earlier and current scholars believed that these language variations or accents are the principal reasons that lead to poor speech intelligibility (Bent & Bradlow, 2003; Gruszka, 2013; Jenkins, 2000; Levis, 2018). Intelligibility is broadly defined by Munro and Derwing (2015) as the extent to which a listener understands a speaker’s message. Smith and Nelson (2019) listed the ways intelligibility is attained by listeners; they can identify the words spoken (intelligibility), understand the message (comprehensibility), and understand the intent behind the message (interpretability).

The linguistic area where English varieties generally diverge from each other is pronunciation, and due to these production deviations, intelligibility is primarily threatened (Jenkins, 2000). Gruszka (2013) commented that much of the content is lost if the speech is unintelligible due to an accent. When this happens, it will eventually result in frustration, withdrawal, or demotivation of both listeners and speakers. Therefore, Jenkins (2003) suggested that if we promote global communication, pronunciation demands careful consideration.

Philippine English, which will be henceforth referred to as PE, is phonologically distinct because of its heterogeneous nature. As a repercussion of the multi-linguality of the Philippines, various ethnic and local language groups adopted English as a second language differently in terms of phonology and accents. With over a hundred local languages in the Philippines, each with individual distinctions, the English language is assimilated according to the locality’s native language features. While Tagalog English or Taglish had been extensively represented as Philippine English in previous studies (Dayag, 2007; Dita & De Leon, 2022; Tayao, 2008), little is known about the intelligibility of Philippine English and its varieties spoken by Cebuanos or Cebuans. Cebuano is the largest local language group in the Philippines and is known for its hard accent. How English is used and understood in this region is the focal point of this study.

The current investigation aims to assess the level of intelligibility of Philippine English lectal varieties produced by Cebuano English speakers as evaluated by different international, local, native, and non-native listeners. The study specifically addresses the following research objectives:

1. Identify the phonological production differences of the PE varieties,
2. Assess and compare the speech intelligibility ratings of PE varieties,
3. Determine the effect of language variation on:
 - the intelligibility rating of the evaluators, and
 - the level of distraction.

The findings of the study could serve as a linguistic basis for Philippine language practitioners and other policy and decision-makers to improve the quality of Philippine English production in the light and interest of international intelligibility whether it be in academia or industry. [Philippine Statistics Authority \(2019\)](#) has reported that more than 2 million Filipino workers are internationally employed, and studies such as that of [Li and Chen \(2019\)](#) and [Leung \(2011, 2012\)](#) reported that linguistic factors are one issue that Filipino workers face in their workplace because their language is difficult to understand. Many of these Filipino foreign workers are Cebuano speakers. Thus, the results of this study are timely and could shed additional light on how to achieve successful communication that comes with intelligibility.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The global dispersal of the English language paved the way for English variations. These variants of English gave rise to the dispute as to whether to strictly abide by the standard norm or retain and tolerate the language variations ([Kirkpatrick, 2014](#)). [Milroy and Milroy \(2012\)](#) pointed out the difficulty of defining Standard English since General American English (GAE) or the Received Pronunciation (RP) of British English can be both identified as Standard English. Aside from what is believed to be standard, other English varieties globally are highly stigmatized and draw negative criticism. [Farrell and Martin \(2009\)](#) mentioned that non-standard varieties, which might include Taglish in the Philippines or Singlish in Singapore, are at times conceived to be illegitimate since they connote a failure in attempting to be standard.

Moreover, anything different from the standard is thought to be inferior, deviant, or deficient. Despite these heavy criticisms toward the new and emerging Englishes, Kachru's 'World Englishes' framework (1985, as cited in [Kirkpatrick, 2014](#)), originally posited in 1982, argued that all varieties of English are linguistically equal. This notion, where non-native speakers can also preserve their cultural and ethnic identity through their own distinct English language variety, has been widely accepted to date. In this model, the English language is used in three regions or three concentric circles that include inner, outer, and expanding circles. The inner circle covers the regions where English is used as the mother tongue (e.g., the UK, the USA, or Australia). The outer circle consists of the regions where the native language is not English but is used as the Lingua Franca between language and ethnic groups (e.g., Malaysia, Nigeria, and the Philippines). The expanding circle includes those regions where English is used for international communication or as a foreign language (e.g., Thailand, Korea, and China).

2.1 Philippine English and its Varieties

Culturally and linguistically rich, the Philippines has recognized over a hundred distinct local languages. [McFarland \(2008\)](#) identified 118 languages, while [Grimes \(2002\)](#) listed 163. The widely used local languages are Tagalog, Cebuano, Hiligaynon, and Ilocano, and they mainly signify the local regions they represent. Despite these language variations, Filipinos generally employ two languages, the Filipino language (alternately, Tagalog) and English, both serving as the lingua franca of the country.

The utilization of the English language has become an integral part of Filipino culture. It is the medium of public education, the media, and business ([McFarland, 2008](#)). It has also become an alternative medium of communication for the Filipino language in teaching specific subjects such as mathematics and English, and others in the classroom, and English has even become a vital source of Filipino vocabulary.

This state of complementing both Filipino and English aids the rise of the varieties of English in the country. Both languages influence each other. Filipino has been ‘Englishized’, and English has been ‘Filipinized’. The elite and the upper class maintain the English status quo, while the middle and the lower levels of the social ranks adopt English in a manner in which the native tongue or the local language of the region largely influences English use ([Tupas, 2004](#)).

There is not one specific type of PE, which thereby adds to its linguistic uniqueness. Several attempts have been made to classify PE. According to [Gonzales \(2008\)](#), English classification is geographically based, and the speaker can be easily identified as to what cultural community he or she belongs to. Suprasegmental features, such as intonation, stress, and tone, indicate one’s local cultural affiliations, such as Cebuanos, Hiligaynon, Ilocanos, and Maranaos.

The seminal and benchmark study on the variety of PE, which points back more than four decades ago, was proposed by [Llamzon \(1977\)](#). This was one of the first attempts to identify PE based on social class and the framework was subsequently expanded by [Tayao \(2004\)](#) incorporating phonological variations. [Llamzon \(1977\)](#) initially classified PE into three lectal categories—acrolect, mesolect, and basilect groups—based on their education levels, professions, and language use in different domains. The acrolects included educated professionals whose English usage involved both work and home, i.e., broadcast media, academia, religious services, and other professionals who specialize in speech, drama, linguistics, or mass communications. The mesolects comprised professionals whose English usage was within the bounds of work only and not at home. The last variety, which is labeled as basilect, consisted mainly of non-professionals, and it included those who had finished high school level and some who had even studied post-secondary vocational courses. They used English only occasionally at work.

In addition to [Llamzon’s \(1977\)](#) social distinctions, [Tayao’s \(2004\)](#) phonological descriptions created a clearer delineation among the phonological varieties. At the segmental level, acrolects generally resemble native speakers in most features. Some differences can be found, however. For example, the aspiration of the voiceless stops (/p/, /t/, /k/) was occasional in the language of acrolect but never in the mesolect and basilect varieties. For the mesolect and basilect groups, sibilants such as /ʃ/ as in ‘ship’, /ʒ/ as in ‘genre’, and /z/ as in ‘zoo’ are generally coalesced as /s/, and /r/ is rendered as a rolled or one-tap /r/ in contrast to retroflex liquid of GAE.

In the case of basilect, the labiodental fricative /f/ (voiceless) and /v/ (voiced) are absent from the consonant inventory and are realized by the bilabial stops /p/ and /b/, respectively. So as with the interdental fricatives /θ/ (voiceless) and /ð/ (voiced), the basilect variety realizes them as alveolar stops /t/ and /d/, respectively. The affricate /tʃ/ is realized as /ts/ for ‘check’, and /dʒ/ is realized as /dy/ for ‘jeep’. For consonant clusters, basilects do not pronounce them as such. There is an omission of the final consonant as in /pas/ for the ‘past’ and an addition of a vowel before the initial consonant, such as /iskul/ instead of /skul/ for ‘school’.

2.2 Philippine English intelligibility

There is a dearth of intelligibility studies of Philippine English in wider contexts. There are a few recent studies, however, that did venture into the topic. Dayag (2007) explored the 5 to 10 minutes recorded speech samples of five mesolect exemplars. The speech samples included an extended monologue, and sentence readings incorporating problematic areas for Filipino speakers. The researcher asked both six native and non-native highly educated listeners, with each Kachruvian circle represented, to assess the samples. The study resulted in an overall score of 70% intelligibility. The native raters could understand 80% of the speech samples, while the second language speakers and the foreign language speakers could comprehend 75% and 55%, respectively.

Similarly, Dita and De Leon (2017), in a lectal study of low proficient and high proficient university PE speakers, found the speech samples to be 60% intelligible to non-native speakers through cloze test evaluations of speech productions. Tonio (2019) also found that PE in the classroom as used by their teachers is highly intelligible to young international students. Between acrolect and mesolect PE, the latter showed higher intelligibility ratings using cloze tests due to a slower speech rate and a syllabic timed-adjusted speech.

Conversely, in Ghobain’s (2016) study of World Englishes’ intelligibility, 234 students and professionals rated Filipino English speakers’ speech samples as difficult to understand next to Indian English speakers, 30.6% and 8.1%, respectively. The study posited that familiarity with the language variation may have caused the comprehension rating. Nevertheless, the fact remains that some aspects of Filipino English are difficult to understand.

In all of these studies, two sets of participants were involved. The first set were exemplary Filipino speakers mostly from the acrolect and mesolect groups. The second set of participants were the listeners or evaluators who assessed the speech samples. The second set of participants constituted Filipino and non-Filipino English speakers. The present study revisited the intelligibility level of PE from the perspectives of the local Cebuano variations through the lens of local and international evaluators, and this time, with the inclusion of the basilect variety.

3. METHODS

The study employed an exploratory sequential mixed method design in which qualitative and quantitative data are collected and analyzed in a sequence of phases. Bringing the two methods together can help draw new insights beyond the information gained from the separate quantitative and qualitative results (Fetter et al., 2013).

3.1 Participants

Two groups of participants in three specific phases were generally involved in this study: the speakers for the speech production and the listener-evaluators for the speech perception or intelligibility. The speaker participants were chosen via multi-stage sampling. The first stage was lectal group clustering of the participants based on social and educational backgrounds. For the second stage, purposive sampling was used wherein a sample was chosen to represent the group incorporating the phonological features of each variety. Multistage sampling was used to reduce the massive time taken for the research, most specifically for the evaluators' part, and to find the right sample needed for the research.

Phase 1 was the speech elicitation and production from three different PE speech varieties based on social category or background. At the outset, there were 18 participants. During Phase 2, the participants were narrowed down to the selection of one sample speaker-participant for each variety. Lastly, Phase 3 was the evaluation of speech samples, and the different evaluators electronically accessed the data for assessment. Table 1 displays a summary of the participants, which includes both the speakers and the evaluators in all three phases.

Table 1. Participants' profiles.

		Participants' Description	Participants (N)	Total
Speakers	Phase 1 Speech Elicitation and Production– Initial Selection	Acrolect	5	18
		Mesolect	7	
		Basilect	6	
	Phase 2 Narrowing Down – Final Selection	Acrolect (A-PE)	1	3
		Mesolect (M-PE)	1	
		Basilect (B-PE)	1	
Evaluators	Phase 3 Evaluation	Inner Circle (USA)	20	80
		Outer Circle(PHL)	20	
		Expanding Circle(KOR)	20	
		Expanding Circle(THAI)	20	

3.1.1 Speakers

Considering Xia's (2013) stance that gender differences impact language use, only male participants were selected. One reason mentioned emphasized that females have better pronunciation than males. The initial 18 adult participants for Phase 1 were native speakers of Cebuano, which is the local language used by the most significant number of Filipinos next to Tagalog. It is known for its hard accent, which has vowels that originally and mainly consist of only /a/, /ɪ/, and /u/ (Tayao, 2008). Following Llamzon's (1977) and Tayao's (2004) categorization, five participants were classified as acrolect, seven as mesolect, and six as basilect based on their education and social status.

In Phase 2, the general criteria of the selection of samples were based on Tayao's (2004) phonological categorization of the different Filipino lectal speakers. The three samples that closely resembled Tayao's categorization were then selected. They had never lived or traveled to any native-speaking countries. The acrolect representative (A-PE), 44 years old, worked in an international English private institute whose job involved evaluating and rating the speech production of non-native

ESL learners. English was used in the house with his children. The mesolect exemplar (M-PE), 37 years old, was a school principal who had been an elementary school teacher. The basilect representative (B-PE), 42 years old, was a public transportation driver and had a vocational course in automotive technology.

3.1.2 Evaluators

The listener-evaluators, who responded randomly, were from the USA, the Philippines, Korea, and Thailand. They represented the inner, outer, and expanding regions of Kachru's concentric circles. Native-speaking evaluators should be adults, and the educational background of non-native-speaking evaluators should at least be college-level. The 20 inner circle evaluators (USA) were American adults and the outer circle evaluators were 20 university students from the Philippines (PHL). The expanding circle evaluators were also university students, including 20 from Korea (KOR) and 20 from Thailand (THA).

3.2 Instruments

Two general types of instruments were used in the study. The first is for speech production and the other is for the speech evaluation.

3.2.1 Speech production

Three modified speech elicitation instruments were employed while gathering the speech samples. The three activities included isolated word sounds, diagnostic reading, and free speech. The isolated word sounds list was adapted from the Goldman Fristoe Test of Articulation (GFTA), a systematic technique of assessing an individual's articulation of speech sounds (consonants and consonant clusters) of General American English by showing images that contain the target sound. In total, 60 individual pictures including word names were to be elicited from the speakers. For the diagnostic reading, a one-paragraph piece developed by Weinberger (2015) containing most of the consonant, vowel, and cluster sounds of GAE phonology was read by the speakers. Its readability score was 90.000 on the Flesch Reading Ease (FRE), which interpreted the reading piece as very easy to read, as it is generally understood by 11-year-olds. For free speech, Jones (1991) suggested a picture designed to elicit an unrestrained speech expression. The speakers were told to describe and discuss spontaneously what they saw in the picture. The speech productions were transcribed using the International Phonetic Alphabet.

3.2.2 Speech evaluation

The speech assessment samples were virtually accessed by the evaluators. The speech samples from the three language tasks produced by speakers were attached to the survey. The tasks included the production of isolated word sounds, diagnostic reading, and free speech. Another section of the speech evaluation added a researcher-made Likert-scale questionnaire for distraction rating of the PE varieties. The distraction assessments were placed at the end of each section in the speech production

of the speakers. The evaluators had to rate the degree of distraction for the utterance performed.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

Generally, the data was collected via speech recordings and had undergone two types of speech transcriptions, the Romanized transcription, and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) transcriptions to identify the phonological differences. The researchers had to organize individual sessions with the participants for the speech elicitation process in the Philippines. All the initial 18 Filipino participants were scheduled one at a time for speech elicitation of the three speech tasks. The adapted 60 GFTA words were presented in colorful pictures on a monitor screen for the speakers to identify the isolated word sounds. When the speakers failed to recognize the target words, word prompts appeared for reading without a time limit. For the diagnostic reading, the piece was given for free reading. The last task, free speech, was a one-minute picture description. After the careful selection to identify only one speech sample per variety, the speech production samples were then processed for evaluation. The researchers sought the assistance of online survey facilitators from the USA, Thailand, and Korea. The speech tasks were rated using a 6-index Likert scale grounded on [Morley's \(1991\)](#) speech intelligibility index evaluation of student communicability. The scores of the assessment were analyzed using statistical measures, specifically to analyze between-group ratings, multiple comparisons, and relationships between data.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion section are presented under three sub-headings that include the a) identification of the phonological production differences of the PE varieties, b) assessment and comparison of the speech intelligibility ratings of PE varieties, and c) determination of the influence of language variation to the intelligibility rating given by the evaluators and the distraction level to the evaluators. The headings of each subsection address the three research questions, respectively.

4.1 Phonological Production Differences of the PE Varieties

To answer the first research objective, the speech samples were analyzed through the speakers' phonological variations in the consonant and vowel levels. While A-PE closely resembled GAE, B-PE had shown the greatest deviance in both consonant and vowel productions.

Consonants in PE can be described as below:

- Firstly, for consonants, B-PE had an observable stopping deviation. Four main fricatives were replaced by stops /f/ to /p/, /v/ to /b/ as in the production of 'five' which became [paɪb]. The sound /θ/ for 'three' became [tɹɪ] and the /ð/ for 'they' became [dɛɪ].
- Secondly, the deaspiration of voiceless stops /p/, /t/, and /k/ was apparent. A-PE had been consistent in the aspiration or with a puff of air for these stops while M-

PE appeared inconsistent. B-PE, however, did not show signs of aspiration for these stops.

- Thirdly, is B-PE's depalatalization of /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ and substituted as /ts/ and /ds/ as in [lants] for 'lunch' and [dsar] for 'jar'. Similarly, 'brushing' was delivered as [brasɪn].
- Last is the fricative devoicing. A-PE similarly resembled GAE, while A-PE devoiced unspelled sounds. The /z/ in 'zebra' was pronounced. However, for 'rise' and 'please', /s/ was used. For B-PE, whether spelled or unspelled, the /z/ sound coalesced with /s/ as in [sɪbra] or [tsɪs] for 'zebra' and 'cheese'.

Meanwhile, for vowels, a few observations were found:

- First is M-PE and B-PE's tendency to substitute front vowels with back vowels. Thus, 'sack' was delivered as [sak] which rhymed with 'sock'. Similarly, 'rack' and 'cup' were heard as 'rock' or 'cop' by listeners.
- B-PE manifested limited vowel variations. Only [a], [ɪ], and [ʊ] were apparent. Other vowel sounds were hardly recognizable especially when produced at word level and where context was not included.
- Another vowel-related deviance was the unmaintained length of vowel sounds of M-PE and B-PE, such as [ɪ] and [u] for 'sheep' and 'fool', which sounded like 'ship' and 'full'.
- M-PE's schwa sound was present /ʌ/, but the unstressed /ə/ was absent. The word 'landed' and 'glasses' were pronounced in full front vowels as [landəd] and [glases].
- For B-PE, other vowels were replaced with [a], [ɪ] and [ʊ].
- Next is vowel simplification for B-PE, in which it was apparent where the diphthongs became monophthongs. 'Go' and 'plate' became [gʊ] and [plɪt].
- Lastly, vowel epenthesis or sound addition by B-PE was evident in unstressed vowels, such as [əs'tar] for 'star' or [ɪs'pɑdər] for 'spider'. Occasionally, M-PE joined B-PE in inserting a vowel in between consonants as [tʊ'wɛlv] and [tʊ'wɛlb], respectively.

4.2 PE Variety's Speech Intelligibility Ratings

The three PE lectal varieties were rated differently by the evaluators across three speaking tasks. The speakers' intelligibility ratings and other descriptive data are shown in Table 2. The data presented in the figures are based on the standardized *z* scores to add a more vivid visualization of how the scores deviate from or coincide with the general mean or median.

Table 2. Intelligibility scores of the three speakers in all three tasks.

	Descriptive Statistics					K-W Test		
	e	Eval. (N)	Mdn	M Rank	z	H	df	p
Task 1	A-PE (80)	240	5.98	173.82	0.877	160.323	2	.000*
	M-PE (80)		5.47	135.28	0.361			
	B-PE (80)		4.09	52.40	-1.186			
Task 2	A-PE (80)	240	6.0	170.00	1.299	132.851	2	.000*
	M-PE (80)		5.0	140.48	0.621			
	B-PE (80)		3.0	51.03	-0.734			
Task 3	A-PE (80)	240	5.0	169.04	0.758	88.810	2	.000*
	M-PE (80)		4.0	124.45	0.064			
	B-PE (80)		3.0	68.01	-0.631			

Table 2 continued...

Total	A-PE (80)	240	5.64	167.35	1.289	49.333	2	.000*
	M-PE (80)		4.62	139.03	0.564			
	B-PE (80)		3.0	55.13	-.0885			

It can be observed that the median scores and the mean ranks of B-PE, M-PE, and A-PE consistently moved in an ascending pattern for all three tasks, respectively.

It was also observed through the employment of the K-W test that there were statistically significant differences among the speakers in all three tasks. Moreover, the post hoc pairwise comparisons (Table 3) revealed a statistically significant pattern, which proved that A-PE was higher than M-PE [$H(2)=42.562$] and B-PE [$H(2)=131.400$]; and M-PE was higher than B-PE [$H(2)=88.838$] with a significance of $p=.000$ in each paired comparison of all three tasks.

Table 3. Pairwise comparisons of the three PE speakers.

	Speakers	H	Std Error	p
Task 1	B-PE – M-PE	76.750		.000*
	B-PE – A-PE	138.350	10.948	.000*
	M-PE – A-PE	61.600		.000*
	B-PE – M-PE	89.450		.000*
Task 2	B-PE – A-PE	118.975	10.750	.000*
	M-PE – A-PE	29.525		.000*
	B-PE – M-PE	56.438		.000*
Task 3	B-PE – A-PE	101.025	10.745	.000*
	M-PE – A-PE	44.588		.000*
	B-PE – M-PE	88.838		.000*
Overall	B-PE – A-PE	131.400	10.973	.000*
	M-PE – A-PE	42.562		.000*

Figure 1 represents the z scores of the speakers (indicated in Table 2), thereby giving a more precise visualization of the overall results of the speakers' production rating. Figure 1 gives a visualization that B-PE scores are below the mean in all three tasks, but the scores of both M-PE and A-PE are above the mean. It is also evident that even if M-PE's scores are above the mean, A-PE significantly shows the highest scores in all three tasks.

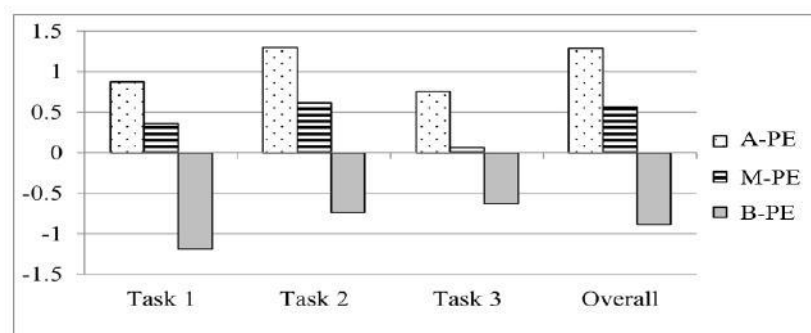


Figure 1. Speakers' general intelligibility z scores in the three speech tasks.

From these results, it can be inferred that the three sample PE speakers were significantly different from each other. In response to the second research objective regarding the speech production of the varieties of PE, the present study gave a

conclusion that the A-PE speaker, when it comes to intelligibility, had been rated as the highest among the three varieties, followed by the M-PE. The least-rated speaker was the B-PE. Using the overall median scores of all three tasks found in Table 3, B-PE had an index of 3 (Mdn=3.0), M-PE was inclined to an index of 5 (Mdn=4.62), and A-PE was leaning towards an index of 6 (Mdn=5.643). The different speakers' speech intelligibility indices are described in Table 4.

Table 4. PE speakers' speech description according to Morley's (1991) speech intelligibility index.

Speakers	Morley's Index	Description
A-PE	6	Speech is very clear, near-native, and only minimal features of difference from the native English speakers.
M-PE	5	Speech is fully understandable, and only occasional sound variance and other features are present but not seriously distracting
B-PE	3	Speech is reasonably understandable but significant listener effort is required due to the speaker's pronunciation errors, which hinder communication and cause listener distraction.

The matching indices confirmed Tayao's (2004) phonological categorization of the lectal varieties of Philippine English which are acrolect, mesolect, and basilect. The acrolect, which approximated A-PE in the present study, closely resembled those of GAE phonemes. Though displaying increased phonological differences from GAE, the mesolect or M-PE was still considered comprehensible and broadly represented general Filipino English. Basilect, which was equated to B-PE, was the variety that is greatly affected by the phonology of the local tongue.

4.3 Influence of Language Variation on the Intelligibility Rating and the Distraction Level to the Evaluators

This section discusses two subtopics: the intelligibility ratings of the evaluators and the distraction level caused by the language variation. Each is discussed separately.

4.3.1 Intelligibility ratings of the evaluators

The evaluators were composed of four groups from the different regions in Kachru's circle. The USA and the Philippines (PHL) represented the inner circle and the outer circle, respectively, while Korea (KOR) and Thailand (THA) represented the expanding circle. The descriptive statistics in Table 6 show the general rating of the different evaluators about the speakers in the three tasks and the K-W test results.

For Task 1, the results of the K-W test showed no considerable difference among the evaluator groups, but significant differences were found in Tasks 2 and 3. For Task 2, the evaluators, whose scores were arranged from the highest to the lowest, PHL, USA, KOR, and THA, were significantly different at $p=.000$ [$H(3)=28.060$]. Similarly, a significant difference of $p=.000$ [$H(3)=42.266$] for the evaluators' ratings was also apparent in Task 3 for PHL, KOR, USA, and THA, respectively.

The post hoc analyses for both Tasks 2 and 3, shown in Table 6, pointed to THA as having a relatively different and lower score when compared with each of the other evaluator groups. There was a significant difference between USA, PHL, and KOR

compared with each other in Tasks 2 and 3 except for THA, which gave the lowest rating for intelligibility.

Table 5. Intelligibility rating of the evaluator groups in the three tasks.

Descriptive Statistics						K-W Test		
	Evaluators	Eval(N)	Mdn	M Rank	Z	H	df	p
Task 1	USA (20)	240 (80x3)	5.5	127.15	.361	7.185	3	.066
	PHL (20)		6	126.58	.877			
	KOR(20)		5	119.48	-.154			
	THA (20)		5	108.80	-.154			
Task 2	USA (20)	240 (80x3)	5	130.93	.621	28.060	3	.000*
	PHL (20)		5	141.93	.621			
	KOR (20)		4	127.88	-.056			
	THA (20)		3.5	81.27	-.395			
Task 3	USA (20)	240 (80x3)	4	124.92	.064	42.266	3	.000*
	PHL (20)		4.5	146.99	.411			
	KOR(20)		4	138.37	.064			
	THA (20)		3	71.73	-.631			
Total	USA (20)	240 (80x3)	5	124.97	.565	39.458	3	.000*
	PHL (20)		5	145.72	.565			
	KOR (20)		5	133.93	.565			
	THA (20)		4	77.13	-.160			

Table 6. Pairwise comparisons of the four evaluator groups.

	Evaluators	H	Std Error	p
Task 2	THA – KOR	-27.450	7.196	.001*
	THA – USA	34.600		.000*
	THA – PHL	43.650		.000*
	THA – USA	28.825		.000*
Task 3	THA – KOR	-37.100	7.232	.000*
	THA – PHL	43.475		.000*
	THA – KOR	-32.025		.000*
	THA – KOR	-32.025		.000*
Overall	THA – USA	34.500	7.348	.000*
	THA – PHL	42.975		.000*

The *z* scores were then compared to assess the evaluator groups that fell above and below the mean for the intelligibility of the three speakers' productions, as shown in Figure 2. It appeared that the four evaluator groups' scores for B-PE were all below the mean, which signified that the evaluator groups rated B-PE the lowest. It is also noticeable that the THA group, which had a significantly lower score than each of the other groups, had consistent scores below the mean for all three speakers.

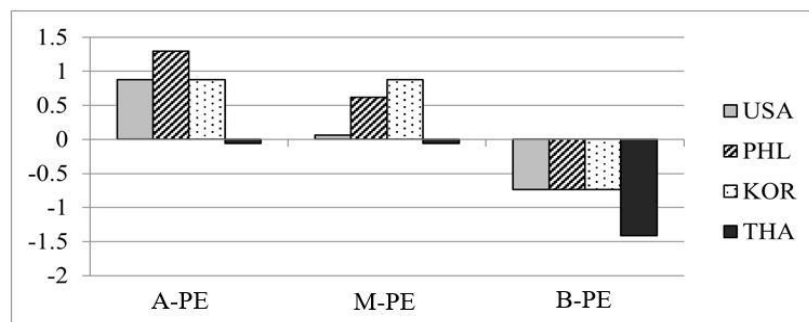


Figure 2. Evaluators' general rating for the three speakers.

The results in this section show from all three speech tasks, only the first task on word sound in isolation, had no significant differences among the evaluator groups. However, in the extended speech tasks, only the THA group had given a significantly low intelligibility rating to the production of the three speakers. Although Korea belongs to Kachru's expanding circle with Thailand, the level of intelligibility of Korean evaluators was comparable to the USA and the Philippines in this study. There was no significant difference in Korea's rating from the USA and the Philippines.

The significant difference between Thai evaluators from the other groups could be attributed to two assumed factors. The first was the type of language Thais use for their local language. Thai is a tonal language, which relies significantly on five different tones for meaning. Several studies mentioned by [Zhang et al. \(2008\)](#) described that the linguistic experiences and perceptual pieces of training were affected by the acoustic patterns of speech. Thai, being a tonal language, could be an interfering factor in intelligibly understanding language productions that might be different from its local language, and in this case, PE is considered an atonal language.

The second factor that might point to the intelligibility results of the evaluators was the familiarity with the language variation. Intelligibility is high when the interlocutors have the same linguistic background ([Smith & Nelson, 2019](#)) or when pronunciation is familiar ([Dita & De Leon, 2022](#)). Of the four evaluator groups, only the Thais were not closely linked to GAE. Even though Thailand was not a British colony, its neighboring countries, such as Myanmar, Singapore, and Malaysia were ([Baker & Phongpaichit, 2014](#)).

The English language in Thailand conformed to the King's English and was highly influenced by a colonial hierarchical standpoint ([Buripakdi, 2011](#)). Since Thailand has had a greater deal of negotiations with British English (BE) than American English (AE), it is highly possible that BE is widely used and has persisted in the country. [Cedar \(2006\)](#) also claimed that Thai and Americans use language differently, and having a background in the other language influences listening comprehension ([Sadighi & Zare, 2006](#)). With this assumption, Thai EFL evaluators may not be significantly accustomed to GAE or any similar variety to Korean EFL learners, who preferred GAE to any other variety. In Korea, AE was more preferred than other English varieties. Statistics in [Wagner's \(2009\)](#) study reported that 68.7% of the English teachers in Korea in 2005 were from the USA and Canada, and only 7.8% were identified as BE. In 2008, the percentage increased to 71.8% and 8.6% for Americans/Canadians and British teachers, respectively.

Based on the findings, the first research question regarding the evaluators was addressed. Of all the evaluator groups in this study, Thailand gave the lowest intelligibility rating by a significant margin. It suggests that the intelligibility rating of the evaluators cannot always be determined by the regions of Kachru's circles, whether the learners belong to ESL (outer circle) or EFL (expanding circle) regions. Some factors may have affected the intelligibility ratings of the listeners, and they may include the listeners' local language interference, and the type of English one is accustomed to.

4.3.2 *Speech distractions of language variety ratings*

To address the second part of the third research objective, a correlation analysis was first conducted to assess if there was a relationship between the overall

intelligibility ratings and the distraction ratings of the evaluators. Spearman's Rho test in Table 7 indicates a significantly moderate negative linear relationship between the two variables [$r_s(238)=-.67$ and $p=.000$]. This result suggested that the higher the intelligibility rating given by the evaluators to the speakers, the lower the equivalent rating of distraction.

Table 7. Correlation between intelligibility and distraction ratings.

		Intelligibility ratings	Distraction ratings
Intelligibility ratings	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.674**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	240	240
Distraction ratings	Correlation Coefficient	-.674**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	240	240

** . Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The description of the data presented in Table 8 shows that B-PE's production had been given the highest distraction rate from the evaluators ($Mdn=4.0$). M-PE followed ($Mdn=3.0$), and A-PE had the least distraction rating ($Mdn=2.0$). The result of the K-W test indicated a very significant difference [$H(2)=72.712$ and $p=.000$], which stipulated that the distraction ratings of the three PE speakers' production were statistically different.

Table 8. Distraction factor of the speakers' production.

Descriptive statistics			K-W test			
Speakers	Evaluation (N=240)	Mdn	MRank	df	H	p
B-PE	80	4.0	165.53			
M-PE	80	3.0	121.48	2	72.712	.000*
A-PE	80	2.0	74.49			

The post-hoc analysis results in Table 9 also give additional and specific information. When compared to each other with regards to distraction rating, each speaker had a significant difference of $p=.000$ [$H(2)=10.678$]. B-PE's production had been rated as 'very distracting', M-PE as 'rather distracting', and A-PE as 'slightly distracting'.

Table 9. Pairwise comparison of the distraction rate given to the speakers.

	Speakers	H	Std Error	p
	A-PE – M-PE	46.981		.000*
Distraction rating	B-PE – A-PE	91.038	10.678	.000*
	M-PE – A-PE	44.056		.000*

The data in this subsection indicated that the evaluators gave B-PE a high distraction rate, which consequently resulted in a very low intelligibility rating. On judgments of intelligibility to speakers with different foreign accents, the result of the current investigation seemed to agree with the studies of Bent and Bradlow (2003), Kennedy and Trofomovich (2008), Chen (2011), and Jacewicz and Fox (2014), which gave proof that accents or differences in production could affect the intelligibility rating of the different evaluators.

To answer the question of whether the speech production deviations had caused distractions and had affected the intelligibility of the evaluators, the results revealed a moderate negative relationship between the distraction rate and intelligibility rate, which could be explained such that the higher the distraction rate goes, the lower the intelligibility rating becomes and vice versa. B-PE's speech production, which had greatly deviated from M-PE and A-PE, had been considered very distracting to the evaluator groups, resulting in a significantly low intelligibility score.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to assess mainly the speech intelligibility of the three diastatic varieties of Philippine English Cebuano speakers as evaluated by local (Filipino) and international (American, Korean, and Thai) listeners. The results of the study attempted to legitimize the variety of Philippine English in the Cebuan region as A-PE, M-PE, and B-PE, which stood for acrolect, mesolect, and basilect PE. Among the three lectal varieties of Philippine English, acrolect PE, which approximates greatly GAE, received the highest intelligibility rating from the evaluators. Mesolect PE, which displayed some phonological variations from GA, was still rated as largely intelligible. On the other hand, basilect PE, which significantly deviated from GA and the other PE variations in phonological production, was rated as the least intelligible variety. A moderate negative relationship was also found between the intelligibility ratings from the evaluators and the distraction ratings due to the speech production variation. Thus, those varieties, which were rated higher in intelligibility, also gave the evaluators a more negligible distraction effect. In basilect PE, the production difference appeared to have significantly distracted the evaluators, thereby giving PE the lowest rating for speech intelligibility. The present results support earlier studies that argued that standard Philippine English, which was previously identified as mesolect PE, is comprehensible or intelligible in the international context. However, the previous studies did not include the intelligibility assessment of the other varieties. While acrolect-PE and mesolect-PE were generally described as intelligible in both local and international contexts, basilect-PE had been neglected and given less attention in the research field.

Furthermore, the present study found that Kachru's model of World Englishes did not define the level of intelligibility of English language learners. Both Korean and Thai evaluators belong to the expanding circle. However, the Korean evaluators showed no significant difference from the American and the Filipino evaluators. The Thai evaluators gave the lowest intelligibility rating to the PE speakers, and this can be attributed to two assumed factors, which included the local tonal language of the evaluators.

The findings of the current study could be beneficial to academia and industry. While content and grammar are essential in language learning, proper production is equally important if the goal is international intelligibility. In attaining accuracy and fluency, language teachers must also give appropriate learning interventions to all varieties of English speakers. Teachers and lesson developers must consider the standard levels of acrolect, mesolect, and basilect. Pronunciation in speech must also be given emphasis aside from the content if international intelligibility is pursued. To

become more globally accommodating and to develop familiarity and tolerance of varieties, the incorporation of English varieties in the classrooms is encouraged.

The study has also a significant value to a considerable number of overseas Filipino workers, which mainly represents basilect-PE in the fields of domestic, vocational, and skilled jobs abroad. Language practitioners in the Philippines should give attention to language improvement not only on the standard mesolect-PE but also with basilect-PE to avoid frustration, withdrawal, or demotivation of both listeners and speakers as the result of unintelligible speech. Even though the focus is not necessarily on the type of English patterned after the norm, the emphasis should be on the clarity of the message, to attain a working and successful communication. Overall, the results of this study are intended to construct a sense of cultural awareness about the current status of the ethnic varieties of Philippine English and promote a deeper cultural understanding that comes with international intelligibility. In general, the results of this study may be profitable in contexts where English is an international language, in English language teaching and learning in the Philippines, and in communities in any other region around the globe that enjoy the freedom of their English variety.

Part of the limitations of the study is the number and type of speech exemplars involved. Future research would benefit from using several participants of each language variety in the study as it could help provide viable data and results. Also, using different language samples from other Philippine local language varieties is suggested.

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Clickbait and Translation: Proposing a Typology of Online News Headline Transcreation Strategies

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Abstract

Clickbait has been widely studied within the online news headline context; however, it is still understudied under the umbrella of transcreation. By employing the theory of transcreation by Gaballo (2012) and news headline tabloidization/clickbaiting presentation by Reinemann et al. (2012) on a corpus of online news headlines in a qualitative research design, we argued that news headline is transcreated for a clickbaiting purpose through the use particular linguistic features as the strategies. Those linguistic features are bombasting, referencing, and bamboozling. The first refers to the use of high-sounding or hyperbolic expressions, the second to popular references, and the last to multi-interpretable expressions. Each of the three transcreation strategies has what we call the degree of transferability. Through the degree of transferability, whether or not a translated online news headline might fall into the category of translation, transcreation, or in between could be revealed. The degrees of transferability might also reveal how bombasting, referencing, and bamboozling influence the categorization. The findings of the study could be employed as a guideline for news translation scholars and practitioners in reviewing and assessing the translation of online news headlines regarding the tendency of the tabloidization use in the clickbait context. Future studies could address the issues of the identities of news

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sites, news sites, and news readers as a parameter in assessing the quality of news headline translation or transcreation.

Keywords: Clickbait, headline translation, news translation, tabloidization, transcreation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Research by Orosa et al. (2017) on the front-page headlines in 28 member countries of the European Union indicates that they used clickbaits through catchy, provocative, and sensational expressions to ensure that they received the desired clicks and that the visitors spend much time on their pages. This phenomenon indicates that clickbait has become a customary tradition in an online news context with headlines as the baits for the clicks. In the perspective of news translation, this phenomenon draws interest since news translation, as what Stetting (1989) stated, a ‘transediting’ emphasizes how translation in a news context is inseparable from information selection and editing. Whether or not the headlines of online news undergo a transediting when translated for different targets is an interesting topic to discuss.

Neutral source headlines might be transedited as such to adopt catchy, provocative, and sensational expressions to drive clicks when transferred for different targets. In the perspective of the Skopos theory that emphasizes on the purposes of the translation (Reiss & Vermeer, 2014), in the context of news headline translation, this phenomenon indicates that there is a negotiation of purposes between transferring unbiased news and garnering clicks from the visitors. This negotiation is executed through a portmanteau of ‘translation’ and ‘creation’ called transcreation. In transcreation, as suggested by Gaballo (2012), creativity or *carte blanche* in conceptual, linguistic, and cultural constructs is required in the translational process in regard to fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. These four concerns of transcreation as proposed by Gaballo (2012) are identical or share the same ground with clickbaits since clickbaits circumnavigate around these four concerns as well with creativity and productivity as the axis. The following example might elicit a comprehension of these four concerns:

Source text (ST):	Here are the 10 executive orders Biden signed to combat the Covid pandemic
Target text (TT):	<i>Kamehameha! Biden ‘Ngamuk’, Rilis Jurus Pamungkas Lawan Covid</i>
Back translation (BT):	Kamehameha! (referring to Toriyama’s <i>Dragon Ball</i> ’s Goku’s move) Biden Going Berserk, Releasing an Ultimate Move to Combat Covid

The TT employed transcreation by adding *kamehameha*, an iconic move from Toriyama’s ‘Dragon Ball’ comics and anime series, and hyperbolizing ‘executive order’ into ‘going berserk’ and ‘signed’ into ‘releasing an ultimate move’. This *carte blanche* reflected the use of the four concerns on transcreation. The first was fluency or the ability to generate ideas and meaningful purposes. Positioning Biden as Goku, the caster of ‘kamehameha’, showed that the translator was able to generate ideas and meaningful purposes since Biden and Goku held a key role in saving the world from certain doom. The second concern was flexibility or the ability to repurpose ideas. The ability of idea repurposing was seen from the dire gravity and impacts of Biden’s orders into the state of being berserk before engaging an enemy in combat. Third, the

originality or the capacity to produce rare and novel ideas was illustrated from the overall use of Dragon Ball's gimmick to represent Biden's action. The fourth was elaboration or the capacity to develop ideas, perceived from 'releasing an ultimate move' to 'combat covid' which was an additional message intended as a connector between *kamehameha* and the reason why it was released.

The presence of the four concerns showed that transcreation was in action—implying that the negotiation between the need to transfer stay-to-the-truth news and the need for clicks was maintained. Though the lingual expressions appeared to be sensational, the transcreation managed to transfer the source message accurately. Reinemann et al. (2012) called these sensational lingual expressions 'tabloidization'. They claimed that the effect of using tabloidizing expressions is rendering hard or serious news into soft or infotainment news. In the perspective of translation, this effect falls into the category of what Purnomo and Purnama (2019) called 'anamnesis shift', in which the branding carrying pattern of the source text shifts. This shift might occur due to different audiences. As implied by Holland (2007), different audiences have different ways of reading and interpreting news.

The studies of clickbait under the umbrella of online news headline transcreation are under researched. Previous studies about clickbaits and headline translation mull over around headlines as news translation from anomalous news translation (Valdeón, 2008), clickbaiting headlines typology and its influences (Scacco & Muddiman, 2016), significant discourse function in the news translation context (Károly, 2017), headline reproduction (Scammell, 2018), headline crowdsourcing (Potthast et al., 2018) and emotional language of clickbait (Li, 2019). This paper attempted to propose a typology of strategies in transcreating online news headlines in relation to clickbaits and the transcreation techniques induced degree of transferability. The stance we took in this study is to perceive clickbaits through a creative lens. As implied by Kanakagiri et al. (2017), though clickbaits tend to be negative, they are the products of creativity. These creative lenses are aligned with the essence of the Skopos theory that emphasizes on the objectives of the translators in translating texts from which freedom becomes one of the primary stances.

The objectives of this study encompassed the construction of news transcreation strategies in the clickbait context and the degree of transferability to reveal whether the source headlines were translated or transcreated. To achieve these objectives, the theories of transcreation by Gaballo (2012) and tabloidization by Reinemann et al. (2012) were implemented. The former was employed to indicate how fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration in transcreation were executed and exercised in transferring the messages accurately while creatively engaging in a clickbaiting-related endeavor. On the other hand, the latter was employed to point out how the transcreation might trigger the effects of tabloidization on the target news headlines.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Online News Headline Clickbait In The Light of Transcreation and Tabloidization

The transformation of paper-based news into e-news or digital news prompts the owners of digital news sites to strategize a plan to garner readers and revenues. One of

the commonly spotted strategies is clickbaiting. [Bazaco et al. \(2019\)](#) claimed that clickbaiting in a journalism context aims at ensuring virality that is exercised through story sensationalization and headline eye-catching-*ation*. These strategies indicate that emotive hold a key significance in baiting potential readers to snap the textual or visual lures.

In the context of news translation, the presence of the two strategies raises a question on how to translate news through clickbaiting the layer or the umbrella of the translation process. The question revolves around the translation of news headlines, which becomes the first news element that visitors click. That the translation of news headlines has to address and adhere to the clickbaiting purposes generates a consideration on whether or not the translation should be carried out in the Skopos perspective. Carrying the perspective of Skopos in translating the news headline, as implied by [Shi \(2014\)](#), pointed out the possibilities of meaning negotiation with concerns over gaining clicks and ensuring the level of accuracy. Whether the translation might lean more over meaning accuracy or clickbaiting proficiency is the focus or concern of this negotiation. From the perspective of translation as a negotiation which emphasizes on cultural negotiation ([Eco, 2013](#)), this online news headline translation discloses an understanding that what is being negotiated is online and offline cultures. These online and offline cultures of news headlines comprise different online news headline presentations, purposes, and virality. Translation needs to address these issues by negotiating accuracy and the necessity of being clicked.

The online and offline cultures of news headline negotiation in translation might lead to what [Seo \(2015\)](#) called news headline re-contextualization. Exercising this re-contextualization, clickbait-based headline news translation might be exercised through what [Reinemann et al. \(2012\)](#) called tabloidization. Through tabloidization, sensational and eye-catching headlines are possible to construct. Embedding tabloidization with translation further suggests that the translation applied to online news headlines might not be a translation in the sense of message transferring. Thereby, this click-driven and Skopos-generated translation might fit under the term transcreation since creativity is required to negotiate between the message accuracy and click garnering. That creativity, as implied by [Gaballo \(2012\)](#), becomes the defining point of transcreation, indicating an alignment with tabloidization which requires creativity to structure and construct clickable headlines.

2.2 The Creativity in Transcreating News Headlines

The creativity in transcreating news headlines faces challenges not only in the meanings of the textual aspects but also in the meanings evoked by the combination of textual and visual aspects. As studied by [Riggs \(2021\)](#), the nature of visual and textual aspects of news headlines is to translate the event being headlined. Due to the nature of function of visual and textual aspect relationships, creativity is urged when the event is transcreated. Creative decisions in translating headlines with transcreation as one of the options are in the nature of headlines. As suggested by [Orengo \(2005\)](#), headlines in the context of translation have two primary characteristics, namely a paraphrasing tool of the translated text and wide freedom for journalists. Transcreation responds comprehensively to paraphrasing and wider freedom of headline translation since transcreation emphasizes creativity in transferring the syntactic and semantic aspects of the headlines. Though creativity might end up in the impression of the

headlines as being a clickbait, as long as the news of the clickbait headlines conveys truth, the impression might lead to positive creativity than negative one.

The creativity of clickbait headlines is primarily perceived from the differences in stylistic elements of the headlines when transcreated. The differences in styles, as studied by [Kuiken et al. \(2017\)](#), statistically generate significant impacts on the performance of the headlines. This finding implies that creativity becomes the key factor in drawing potential readers in clicking the headlines. This click-and-consume objective further suggests that the functions of headlines in online news tend to shift. As studied by [Chen et al. \(2015\)](#), online headline news tends to function as a point of attraction for potential viewers. Due to the status of being a point of attraction, online news headlines require creativity that could alter the stylistic aspects of the source online news headlines for target markets.

3. METHOD

3.1 Research Design and Data

This qualitative research was delivered through a descriptive fashion. The sources of data were online news sites. The criteria in selecting the sites were international news sites which provided an Indonesian translation of the news in transcreation fashion for their headlines, news sites which translated news from other news sites in a transcreation fashion for the headlines, and news sites that transcreated news by compiling the same news from various news sites with transcreation fashion for their headlines. The data were English headlines and their Indonesian versions. The data forms mainly took verbal forms. Visual data in the form of images as part of the news were employed to signify the headlines.

The headlines taken as the data encompassed general, sports, and entertainment news. General news, as formulated by [Lehman-Wilzig and Seletzky \(2010\)](#), refers to news that requires not to be immediately or instantly reported. Sports news, as implied by [Lowes \(1997\)](#), deals with not only sports in general but also the commercial sides of sports, e.g., the life of the players and everyone plunging into sports. Entertainment news, as defined by [Petersen \(2011\)](#), revolves around structured discourse of public figures that circumnavigate around films, televisions, and recordings. These headlines were then presented as data in the forms of source texts (ST) and target texts (TT). The former refers to the English headlines and the latter to the Indonesian translation. To provide clear reading for international readers, we also applied back translation (BT), a gloss or literal translation from the Indonesian translation into English.

3.2 Data Analysis

Spradleyan analysis was applied to analyze the data. As implied by [Spradley \(2016\)](#), four phases were taken to conduct the analysis. The first phase was domain analysis. In this analysis, the tabloidization theories by [Gaballo \(2012\)](#) and [Reinemann et al. \(2012\)](#) were applied to reveal how the source online headlines were restyled in transcreation context. The focus of the analysis would be the morphosemantic elements, syntactic structures, and semantic features. The second phase, taxonomy analysis, emphasized on how to reveal the sensationalism elements of the transcreated

headlines. The sensationalism theory from [Otto et al. \(2017\)](#) was employed to address and reveal the sensationalism elements.

The next one was componential analysis. In this phase, the findings from the domain and taxonomy analyses were connected to reveal how transcreation, tabloidization, and sensationalism constructed clickbaiting journalism in the online headline news transcreation context. Clickbaiting journalism from [Bazaco et al. \(2019\)](#) was employed to reveal this construction. The last phase was cultural theme analysis. In this phase, departing from the findings of the domain, taxonomy, and componential analyses, a typology of clickbaiting-based online headline news was formulated.

4. FINDINGS

This section is divided into two. The first discusses the typology of clickbait-based online headline news transcreation strategies, and the second would discuss the transcreation techniques inducing the degree of transferability. The findings showed that the strategies were classifiable into bombasting, referencing, and bamboozling. Each strategy influenced the degree of transferability with bombasting leaning on translation, bamboozling leaning on transcreation, and referencing staying in the middle. The detailed discussion are presented in two sub-sections.

4.1 Clickbait-Based Online Headline News Transcreation Strategies

Three strategies were formulated from the findings of 40 online headline news transcreations, ranging from politics, economy, sports, and entertainment news. Those strategies were bombasting, referencing, and bamboozling. The first deals with employing high-sounding or emotive expressions, the second with adding popular or viral references, and the third with employing biased or ambiguous expressions in a mixture with hyperbolic expressions. Table 1 displays the characteristics of each strategy.

Table 1. The characteristics of clickbait-based online headline news transcreation strategies.

Tabloidization elements	Bombasting	Referencing	Bamboozling
Fancy expressions	+	+/-	+
Spoken languages	+	+	+
Onomatopoeic uses	+/-	+/-	+/-
Implication	+/-	+/-	+

Table 1 shows bombasting and bamboozling employed fancy expressions to attract the attention of potential clickers. These fancy expressions were delivered in spoken languages, which was the feature shared by the three strategies and might be expressed through the uses of onomatopoeia. Different from bombasting and referencing which might and might not use implication, bamboozling delivered the headlines in an implication fashion. All of these tabloidization elements were employed to generate ‘methexis effects’ in the form of clickbaits from potential users.

4.1.1 Bombasting

The first clickbait-based transcreation strategy and notably the most frequently used one is bombasting. In bombasting, emotive expressions are employed to draw the viewers' attention and garner clicks. In the English to Indonesian context, emotive expressions are delivered through Indonesian and English expressions widely used in everyday conversation. Emotive expressions are also generally delivered in spoken-styled words and slang. The findings on bombasting also suggest that the use of emotive words tends to be more freely used in sports and entertainment rubrics.

- (1) ST: China farm region becomes 'lingerie capital'
 TT: *Amazing! Desa Tani Cina Disulap Jadi Ibukota Pakaian Dalam*
 BT: Amazing! Farm Village in China Magically Transformed into the Capital of Underwear

The use of 'Amazing!' as an emotive exponent in the example spiced up the surprise point of the news. The use of the opposite words *desa* (village) and *ibukota* (capital), the use of poetic expression *disulap* (magically transformed), and the use of *tani* (farm) in allusive opposition to *pakaian dalam* (underwear) in tandem with 'Amazing!' strengthened the sensationalism that the transcreated online news headlines attempted to evoke. In the iconicity-conventionality scale by Kryk-Kastovsky (1997), which scales whether or not an expression is iconic or conventional, the expression 'Amazing!' tends to fall into the category of conventional due to its status as a non-onomatopoeia. When an expression is onomatopoeic, it is categorized into iconic. The following example is a transcreated online news headline:

- (2) ST: Gigi Hadid and Zayn Malik Break Up Nearly 2 Years After Rekindling Romance
 TT: *Jrengg...Gigi Hadid & Zayn Malik Dikabarkan Putus!*
 BT: (jreng is a musical onomatopoeia to indicate an opening of something surprising) Words on the Street Had It that Gigi Hadid & Zayn Malik Broke Up!

Jrengg positioned itself in an iconic scale and thus, in the perspective of clickbaiting, the addition of this onomatopoeia might have a greater degree of sensationalism from which clicks could be extensively garnered. The use of onomatopoeia as an opening expression on the news headline strengthens the entertainment nuance of the news which offers more flexibility in constructing the headlines. Based on the findings, light news like entertainment tend to exploit various interjections like *Jreng* to generate clicks from potential browsers. The use of interjections on news headlines might blur the nuance between heavy and light news, serious and trivial news, or headline news and non-headline news. The following example illustrates the statement:

- (3) ST: UPDATE 2-China Starts Baihetan hydro project, biggest since Three Gorges
 TT: *Gokil, China Mulai Operasikan PLTA Raksasa*
 BT: Insane, China Starts Operating a Gigantic Dam

The addition of *gokil* to express something crazy and out of the box eroded the message's serious informative nuance on the source news headline since *gokil* is not a written expression but a spoken one. This use of spoken expression, to some extent, deteriorated the nuance of the source text message since the transcreation evoked a chatting like-personal opinion fashion. The ethics of informativeness had deteriorated

through *gokil* since three key pieces of information (the status of being an update, the name of the hydro project, and the comparison with the other project) was lost.

4.1.2 Referencing

The second clickbait transcreation strategy for online news headlines is referencing. In referencing, popular, or viral names, terms, slangs, and events related to neologism were added onto the transcreated online news headlines. The following example illustrates referencing:

- (4) ST: Maguire warns Man Utd can 'brush aside' Liverpool humiliation and promises Response
TT: *Susah 'Move On' Setelah Dipermalukan Liverpool, Harry Maguire ajak Manchester United Bangkit*
BT: Hard To 'Move On' After Being Humiliated by Liverpool, Harry Maguire Asks Manchester United to Rise

The ST emphasized on 'brush aside' which refers to an action to ignore past events while the TT emphasized on 'move on' to indicate the importance to leave a bitter past behind and to continue to live. The phrasal phrase 'move on' is a teen talk-based slang familiar among Indonesians. The phrase is primarily associated to love-related problems, especially a condition in which a boy or a girl is dumped by their lovers. To employ 'move on' indicates that the transcreator attempted to accurately transfer the meaning behind 'brush aside' while adapting it to match with Indonesian tone. Since football news is to be consumed by teenagers, the use of 'move on' might disclose a chance for a click from teenagers. The usage of slang as seen in the example is not limited to slang which is popularly or widely used in general, but also slang which appears due to the virality of particular persons or events to which the slangs are associated.

- (5) ST: Man Utd fans want Solksjaer sacked for humiliating collapse against Liverpool
TT: *Ole Out!? Fans Manchester United Tuntut Pemecatan Ole Usai Digilas Liverpool*
BT: Ole Out!? Manchester United Fans Demand the Management to Fire Ole after being Run Over by Liverpool

'Ole Out' was a trending hashtag viral in the social media after poor performance by the Norwegian manager. This hashtag was unique in the sense that the word 'ole', besides referring to Ole Gunnar Solksjaer, the name of Manchester United's current manager, also referred to a football chant by fans which means 'bravo'. Selecting 'ole' in the perspective of virality signified how the word aimed at garnering tagging from football fans. The selection of 'out' over 'fire' was also unique in the sense that it followed the convention of hashtagging. When fans of a club voice their opinions regarding the resignation of their managers, the word 'out' tended to be selected for the hashtags. This adherence over convention pointed out that the transcreator attempted to gain and garner clicks from football fans by adding 'ole out' which was used in reference to #oleout.

4.1.3 Bamboozling

The third clickbait transcreation-based strategy for online news headlines is bamboozling. This strategy deals with online news headline transcreation which

creates ambiguity through biased and hyperbolic expressions, for example:. The following example illustrates bamboozling:

- (6) ST: Gone in 28 Seconds: De Ligt Disaster Condemns Netherlands to Shock Euro 2020 Exit
 TT: *Masa Gitu Saja Tak Bisa, Belanda?*
 BT: Oh, come on, Netherland

The ST's sub title was a reference to the Nicholas Cage starred car theft film *Gone in 60 Seconds*. This was narratively aligned with what the Oranje experienced. Their chance of winning was depleted once De Ligt, the defender, made a fatal mistake—touched the ball to prevent Czech from sacking a goal. It all happened just in 28 seconds from the kick off—just like Nicholas Cage and his gang who could steal a car only in 60 seconds. Though the headline writer fancied the title with a reference to the film, the content was unbiased. It still highlighted the disastrous defeat of the Netherlands due to De Ligt's fault. When the headline was translated into Indonesian, the information about the defeat and the cause of the defeat were not explicitly stated—they were implied. This impication through the slang *masa begitu saja tak bisa*, which is commonly used to express disappointment over not meeting an expectation, biases the information. All preserved was the fancy way of delivering the news. The use of an implied meaning-based sentence to deliver the intended meaning might also result from the source headline which was implicitly delivered and from the established meaning of particular phrases or clauses.

- (7) ST: Threats other than Covid are getting more real, there are lots of naked people in Israel
 TT: *Ada Ancaman Mengerikan, Orang Ramai-Ramai Bugil di Israel*
 BT: Grievous Threat, People Undress Themselves in Israel

The ST already indicates the use of implication in delivering the headline with assumption making as the purpose. The assumption built was that due to a threat more threatening than Covid, Israelis undressed themselves. This assumption was delivered in the TT; however, the use of *ramai-ramai* which means 'doing something together as a response implied that Israelis had a collective understanding about the threat, and as response consequence, they undressed themselves together. This implication was nonexistent in the ST, which implied that the already-biased information became more biased when translated.

4.1.4 Degree of Transferability

Translation and transcreation are two bipolarly opposing forces with the former being in the focus of transferring messages in a non-rewriting fashion and the latter being the opposite. The three proposed strategies trigger a significant influence over whether particular strategies fall into translation or transcreation. We call this issue 'the degree of transferability'. In the context of online headline news, revealing a degree of transferability might help indicate whether online headline news is a translation or a transcreation. Figure 1 illustrates the degree of transferability.

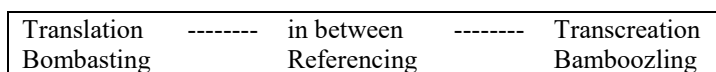


Figure 1. The degree of transferability.

As illustrated in Figure 1, bombasting tends to generate transferability in the fashion of a translation, bamboozling in the fashion of transcreation, and referencing in the middle of translation and transcreation or in possible tendencies for both. Bombasting, though embellishing the target headline with fancy words and tabloidization, is likely to stay faithful to the core messages of the source texts. Thus, we can say that bombasting, if applied, might still preserve the translational aspects in the transcreation context. In the trustworthiness or accuracy perspectives, the headlines delivered from bombasting might still preserve a high degree of accuracy. The following example illustrates the use of bombasting that still preserves the source messages though fancy tabloidizing expressions are applied.

- (8) ST: Cryptocurrency ether hits all time high of \$4,400
TT: *Cuan! Harga Ether Cetak Rekor Tertinggi, Tembus Rp. 62,5 Juta*
BT: Jackpot! Ether's Price Breaks the Highest Price Record, Reaching \$4,400

The example indicates that the use of *cuan* or 'jackpot' was employed to pump up the intensity of the message. Though the intensifier was not present on the source text, it preserved the core message of the source text without eroding the message itself. That \$4,400 was translated into Rp. 62,5 million in Indonesian currency—*rupiah*—pointing out that the translator attempted to keep the headline informative for the target readers.

Different from bombasting, bamboozling tends to generate a transcreated headline if implemented. This is possible due to the nature of bamboozling which triggers ambiguity in the message transferred. The presence of message ambiguity in the example indicates that the headlines were potentially vulnerable for confusion by the target readers. Thus, the trustworthiness of the message transfer and the accuracy of the message might be unreliable.

- (9) ST: The target of marriage at the age of 40, Shin Hyun Bin the target of Yoo Yeon Seok?
TT: *Yoo Yeon Seok Kondangan Bareng Shin Hyun Bin, Pacaran?*
BT: Yoo Yeon Seok Comes to a Wedding Party with Shin Hyun Bin, Dating?

Kondangan is a sacred Javanese feast occasionally performed to celebrate or commemorate particularly significant events like birthday, marriage, or death. The word was employed by Indonesian in a slang fashion—distorting its sacred nuance—to refer primarily to a wedding party. The use of this tabloidizing word hinted the assumed relationship between Yoo Yeon Seok and Shin Hyun Bin, and the fact that *kondangan* was employed as the verb of the headline led target readers to assume that the two celebrities had a romantic relationship. This was distortive in information since the source text focused on the target marriage age of Yoo Yeon Seok, not the wedding party they attended. The shift from the target marriage age to *kondangan* appeared to fall into transcreation since the focus of the message seemed different.

Meanwhile, what stands between translation and transcreation is referencing. Employing referencing in transferring the messages of the headlines might end up having the message being translational or transcreational. This condition is triggered by the fact that the references used might tend to be bombasting or bamboozling. The following comprehends the statement.

(10) ST: BTS Receives Three Nominations for 2021 American Music Awards Including Artist of the Year

TT: *Daebak! BTS Masuk 3 Nominasi di American Music Awards 2021!*

BT: Awesome (in Korean expression)! BTS Gets 3 Nominations in American Music Awards 2021!

Daebak is a popular Korean expression which gains lingual popularity outside Korea due the Korean wave of popular cultures. Those who are fans of Korean Pop (K-Pop) and Korean Drama tend to employ this expression to articulate their admiration toward a certain thing. The cultural lexical reference tends to be used on the similar fashion of bombasting where fancy tabloidizing expressions are employed to flavor and intensify the messages. In example (10), the use of this reference did not distort the message of the headline news since the focus of BTS receiving three nominations at American Music Awards 2021 was not lost. Though the message was not lost, the addition of *daebak* seemed to personalize the headline—leaving an impression that the translator might be a fan of BTS. The addition also pointed out that the translator attempted to align and synchronize the headlines with the entertainment rubric where the news appeared.

5. DISCUSSION

Translation, due to its Skopos nature (Reiss & Vermeer, 2014), might be treated based on the purposes of the translations, translators, clients, or policies. Therefore, implementing tabloidization as the fashion of translating a text might not be a negative decision since it might be driven by the Skopos of one of the four driving forces. Furthermore, when a news section like sports and entertainment is conventionally tabloidized, the use of bombasting, referencing, and bamboozling might be appropriate. Through the use of one or more of the strategies, from which transcreation appears, the conventional nature of the tabloid might be preserved. Thus, the *stimmung*, continuum mood (Gumbrecht, 2012), might not suffer from shift.

Transcreation can generate problems when the source news section is free of tabloidization like international news. Yet, when the news site's identity has the nature of tabloidization, transcreation might be acceptable. This identity to some extent is also reflected through the segment of the target readers. There are what Mullainathan and Shleifer (2005) called 'average readers' who read from one news source, and 'hypothetical readers' who read from multiple sources. If the consideration is that hypothetical readers might read the news from a particular news site, it implies that the identity of being a trustworthy news site is constructed. If this identity is constructed, the news site is likely to avoid the use of transcreation since it might be deemed to reduce the quality of news accuracy. Thus, clickbait might not evoke from the news sites which adopt this identity.

Translation and transcreation, departing from what is explained in the first and second paragraphs, are significantly influenced by the Skopos theory. In the context of click bait, we can comprehend that the convention and nature of news sections and segments from which identities are constructed might also be considered as the Skopos to decide whether translation or transcreation might be appropriately implemented. Thus, in assessing whether or not the message transfer is accurate and acceptable in the context of translation and transcreation, translation quality assessment has to

address the issues of the Skopos of the translating or transcreating process. In the study of news headline translation by Shi (2014), for example, the Skopos theory is implemented to generate four criteria to ensure that the translation of news headlines is quality-assured, namely fidelity, readability, adaptability, and rapidity. The presence of readability highlighting the necessity to raise the target reader's interests, adaptability emphasizing on adhering to the target readers, and rapidity focusing on the chrono-spatial dynamics of news headlines indicate how Skopos influences the quality assessment of particular translated or transcreated texts. The same-style paradigm of localization quality assessment as proposed by Wulandari (2021) and ludic adaptation by Purnomo et al. (2021) could be employed as a basis for the construction of the news translation quality assessment for future related studies.

6. CONCLUSION

Clickbaiting, viewed from the perspective of Skopos, might be one of the purposes of translation. The purpose of gaining and garnering clicks from potential visitors leads to the emergence of transcreation. Three strategies are commonly employed in dealing with this transcreation Skopos in the clickbaiting context. They are bombasting, referencing, and bamboozling. The implementation of high-sounding or hyperbolic expressions delivered through emotive expressions is the feature of the first. The second strategy, referencing, relies on the implementation of popular or viral names, terms, slang, and events related to neologism. The third strategy shares hyperbolic attributes as the first with the difference being on the function of the hyperbolic expressions as a confusion and bias inducer. These three strategies are applied to arouse the attention and attract clicks from potential visitors.

Bombasting, referencing, and bamboozling generate a degree of transferability. This degree deals with how each strategy might have a tendency to make the message transfers from source to target headlines fall into the category of translation or transcreation. The use of bombasting tends to label the transferability into translation, referencing into in-between translation and transcreation, and bamboozling into transcreation. Though bombasting generally falls into the category of translation, it does not mean that it is free of transcreation attributes. The same concern also applies for bamboozling which commonly generates transcreation.

This study did not address quality assessment as the limitation and thus, news translation quality assessment in transcreation context might be taken as a concern for future studies. In doing so, the degree of transferability might be employed by news translators or news translation scholars as an alternative parameter for news headline translation quality assessment. Concerns about the identities of news sites, news sections, and news readers can also be considered to complete the translation quality assessment. Future research could address this potential issue by addressing the elements of localization and ludicity of news translation in the context of transcreation.

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A Corpus-Assisted Discourse Study on the Construction of 'Obesity' in Indonesian News Media

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Abstract

Obesity is one of the health issues that is susceptible to discursive contestation and negotiation. The way it is portrayed in news media can affect public opinions and policymakers. This study aims to investigate the construction of 'obesity' in Indonesian online news media over a five-year period (2017-2021). The analysis was based on a corpus consisting of 1,418 news articles that mentioned the word 'obesitas' (obesity) by drawing upon corpus-assisted discourse study framework and legitimation theory. The findings showed that 'obesity' was predominantly constructed as a problem of personal responsibility, where individuals were viewed as solely responsible for minimising the risk of obesity and its associated health issues by losing or regulating their weight. This was frequently legitimised through expert authority by referring to medical experts' interviews, or through impersonal authority by referring to scientific research. Meanwhile, the societal responsibility discourse which focused on the role of government and the food industry in creating conditions that led to obesity was very scarce. It is argued that this may reflect the presence of prevailing neoliberal ideology in Indonesian society. More balanced reporting, therefore, is recommended to lessen the stigmatisation of people with obesity and to recognise the variety of determinants of and solutions to obesity, reflecting its complexity more accurately.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Obesity is considered a worldwide public health problem whose rates have surged steadily in most countries (Blüher, 2019). The prevalence of obesity is connected to other illnesses, such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer (Brookes & Baker, 2021). It also has been linked to various mental health problems, social isolation, unemployment, and decreased socioeconomic productivity (Blüher, 2019). Obesity is typically defined by using the body mass index (BMI) in which a BMI score that is equal to or more than 30 is classified as obese (“Obesity and overweight,” 2021). Although BMI has been questioned whether it is the most accurate diagnostic measure (Chooi et al., 2019), it is still employed to assess obesity prevalence and has become the standard measure of ideal body weight (Raisborough, 2016). Like the concept of BMI, determinants of and solutions to obesity are also contested. Obesity is regarded as a complicated health issue with multidimensional causes (Jenkin et al., 2011) and no simple solution (Puhl & Heuer, 2009). The discussions on the causes of and answers to obesity are commonly depicted in the news media, framed differently according to the competing interests of various stakeholder groups (Kwan, 2009). This indicates that the obesity issue is susceptible to discursive contestation and negotiation, making it worthy of analysis from the standpoint of discourse analysts (Brookes & Baker, 2021).

The rising obesity rates and the prevalence of competing obesity constructions in the press bring about a significant increase in the news coverage of obesity globally (Hilton et al., 2012). The news media play an essential role in defining a social problem including a health issue (Jarlenski & Barry, 2013). News coverage also affects policymakers, government, and the policy process (Happer & Philo, 2013) in the sense that issues that attract a great deal of media attention are typically prioritised in public and policy agendas and how they are constructed in the news can influence public opinions (McCombs & Valenzuela, 2020). In the context of health or obesity news, media can shape people’s perception of who is seen in society as responsible for causing and solving the problem (Gounder & Ameer, 2018). It can depict attributions of responsibility in individuals or it can emphasise structural factors, thus generating public support for societal-level reforms (Niederdeppe et al., 2013). In light of this, it is important to investigate how news media construct ‘obesity’ in order to acquire a better understanding of the issue, identifying popular discourses of obesity in society (Hilton et al., 2012).

There has been a growing body of research on how ‘obesity’ is represented or framed in the news (Atanasova et al., 2012). Most of these studies have focussed on the USA (Chiang et al., 2020) and the UK (Cotter et al., 2021). Other studies have also been conducted in Australia (Islam & Fitzgerald, 2016), Ireland (de Brún et al., 2013), and China (Sun et al., 2021). These studies used content and framing analyses, except Brookes and Baker’s (2021) and Cotter et al.’s (2021) research which applied conceptual metaphor and corpus-assisted discourse analysis (CADS) framework respectively.

In Southeast Asian countries, particularly Indonesia, despite an alarming rise in obesity in the last two decades, research has been scarce. According to the latest National Basic Health Research survey in 2018, the prevalence of overweight and obesity (classified based on BMI) in Indonesian reached 13.6% and 21.8% respectively (Sangaji et al., 2022) and compared to other Southeast Asian countries, Indonesia has the highest obesity rates in children aged below five (Hendarto, 2019). Obesity research in Indonesia generally focuses on its prevalence, risk factors, determinants, and policies, but little is known about the Indonesian media construction of 'obesity'. To date, there has been no research that examines how Indonesian news media portray 'obesity'. To fill this gap in the literature, the present study thus endeavours to answer the research question of how the Indonesian online news media represent 'obesity' over a 5-year period, from 2017 to 2021, by using CADS and van Leeuwen's (2007) legitimization framework. Most studies on media depiction of 'obesity' adopt content and frame analysis paradigms. Unlike these studies, the current study follows Brookes and Baker (2021) who applied CADS approaches (Partington et al., 2013) combined with van Leeuwen's (2007) legitimization theory.

The methodology adopted in the current research is expected to provide a foundation for future studies on the media construction of 'obesity' in Indonesian contexts and offers a methodological option for future research that examines portrayals of 'obesity' in news texts other than English. The findings of this research contribute to a better understanding of Indonesian news media frames of 'obesity' that can be utilised to improve practices of Indonesian news media coverage of 'obesity' issues. In particular, by bringing attention to the media's role in shaping public perceptions of obesity, this study can contribute to a broader societal shift in viewpoints. It has the potential to raise awareness about the way obesity is portrayed in the media, highlighting any biases, stereotypes, or stigmatisation associated with it. Shedding light on these issues can encourage individuals to critically examine the messages conveyed through media representations, and it may also prompt news media institutions to reevaluate their reporting practices and adopt more responsible and inclusive approaches in their coverage of obesity-related topics.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Representations of 'Obesity' in the News Media

Media framing of 'obesity' has been studied in various ways. Much research has focused on identifying discourses of 'obesity' in the news media published in a certain country and in a particular period of time. Sun et al. (2021), for instance, analysed how Chinese newspapers depicted 'obesity' from 1999 to 2018 and de Brún et al. (2013) examined 'obesity' portrayals in the *Irish Times* from 1997 to 2009. These studies largely identified three main representations of obesity (Atanasova & Koteyko, 2017). Firstly, obesity was portrayed as a biological disorder or genetic treatment that was beyond individual control and most effectively solved with medical or scientific solutions (Saguy, 2021). The next frame represented obesity as "a matter of societal responsibility" (Atanasova & Koteyko, 2017, p. 663), which emphasised the involvement of government and industry in generating conditions that led to obesity (Lawrence, 2004). Solutions in this frame require changes that must be legislated or

mandated, including regulations on food manufacturers and their advertising (Kim & Anne Willis, 2007). Thirdly, obesity was constructed as a problem of personal responsibility which foregrounded individuals' lifestyle choices as the cause of obesity and therefore they were entirely responsible for tackling it by making changes in their food consumption and physical activity (Shugart, 2013).

The last frame is identified as the most dominant in Western countries despite the increase in the societal responsibility frame (Atanasova & Koteyko, 2017). The dominance of personal responsibility discourse is associated with neoliberalism, which plays an increasingly significant role in the governance of Western society (Brookes & Baker, 2021). Neoliberalism is a modern political ideology that favours economic liberalisation, free trade, and open markets (Harvey, 2005), which gives individuals entrepreneurial freedom and competence (Kwan & Graves, 2013) and urges them to take responsibility for their lives and communities (Brookes & Baker, 2021). In the context of health issues, it sees people as health consumers responsible for keeping and improving their own health and economic productivity (Brookes & Baker, 2021), which provides governments with little drive to acknowledge health factors beyond people's behaviour and allows for treatments that burden individuals (Atanasova & Koteyko, 2017).

Several studies have also compared and contrasted media constructions of 'obesity' in different countries. Ries et al. (2011), for instance, conducted content analysis to compare newspaper coverage of obesity policy in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. They revealed that news articles in all three countries predominantly constructed obesity as a lifestyle problem, adopting a personal responsibility frame, but they differed in attitudes toward obesity and legal and policy efforts to combat the rising prevalence of obesity due to differences in structures of the economy and healthcare system. Similarly, a study of 'obesity' framing in news published in the United Kingdom and Germany conducted by Atanasova and Koteyko (2017) found the dominance of the 'self-control' frame in both countries, but there were also few occurrences of counter-frames of 'acceptance' and 'coming-out' (Atanasova & Koteyko, 2017). Bączkowska's (2020) recent study demonstrated marked differences in the way 'obesity' was represented in online British and Chinese newspapers. The former mostly blamed the cause of obesity on individuals, while Chinese news tended to inculcate external factors such as foreign companies, Chinese tradition, and the influx of foreign cultures. These comparative studies show that media constructions of 'obesity' may not be uniform in all countries, affected by differences in cultures and public health policies, which is one of the reasons why the present research is worth conducting.

2.2 Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS)

This study adopts a corpus-assisted approach to discourse analysis or CADS (Baker & McEnery, 2015) to investigate Indonesian media representations of 'obesity'. Discourse is viewed as a "set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events" (Burr, 1995, p. 48). CADS integrates corpus linguistic techniques which are more quantitative with qualitative discourse analysis (Baker, 2006). It aims to unearth non-obvious meanings in a text that may be difficult to identify by the naked eye (Partington et al., 2013). The synergy has been considered powerful and fruitful

(Baker et al., 2008) with each method able to derive benefits from one another and reinforce some of the limitations of the other (Chalupnik & Brookes, 2021). Corpus linguistics offers techniques for examining linguistic patterns in a large collection of language data or corpora, while (critical) discourse analysis can provide methods that consider features beyond texts such as historical, social, and political contexts. In the context of media discourse, Fairclough (1989, p. 54) pointed out that “a single text on its own is quite insignificant; the effects of media power are cumulative, working through the repetition of particular ways of handling causality and agency, particular ways of positioning the reader, and so forth”. Hence, corpus linguistics that can show quantitative linguistic patterns may assist (critical) discourse analysts to reveal that repetition or what Baker (2006, p. 13) called “the incremental effect of discourse”.

CADS has been effectively used to investigate discourses of several contested health problems. Baker et al. (2020) employed it to investigate changes in ‘obesity’ frames in the British press based on a corpus of news published from 2008 to 2017. They found that there was a rise in the personal responsibility frame while the emphasis on social or environmental determinants reduced over time. In a study on the portrayals of ‘obesity’ in news coverage of COVID-19, Brookes (2021) found that the pandemic setting has led to a variety of ‘obesity’ discourses that were more stigmatising than usual in both British tabloids and broadsheets. People with obesity, for instance, were often seen in a fatalistic manner and held accountable for the difficulties facing the UK National Health Service. He argued that the corpus linguistic technique, keywords, could enable the researcher to focus the analysis on the terms and discourses which were the characteristics of the news corpus. The present study differs from the previous research in that it examines ‘obesity’ discourses in news texts in a language other than English and published in a developing country, Indonesia, thus providing different contexts to this body of research.

3. METHODS

This research used mixed methods to analyse the way Indonesian news media portrayed the ‘obesity’ discourse from 2017 to 2021. The quantitative part refers to the use of corpus linguistic techniques which involves statistics and frequency of language patterns, while the qualitative refers to the application of analytical discourse methods entailing a closer critical analysis by taking into account various contexts. Data collection and data analysis procedures are described in the following sections.

3.1 Data Source and Data Collection

The data of this study was a corpus of Indonesian online news articles containing at least one mention of *obesitas* ‘obesity’, published in Kompas.com and Detik.com in a 5-year period, 2017-2021. The online version of the news media is selected since it is still under-researched (Atanasova et al., 2012). More importantly, Kompas.com and Detik.com are the two most frequently accessed Indonesian news websites with more than 150 million monthly average visits (“Top websites ranking,” 2023). Both news sites are owned by the Indonesia major media groups which may represent the dominant Indonesian press reportage. The Kompas newspaper is also considered “Indonesia’s most prestigious and largest-selling daily newspaper” and renowned for

its analytical depth and refined manner (Sen & Hill, 2007. p. 57), while Detik.com is regarded as a standard for Indonesian digital news media due to its credibility and speedy news updates (Nugroho et al., 2012).

To build the corpus, BootCat software (Baroni & Bernardini, 2004), which is “a suite of perl programs implementing an iterative procedure to bootstrap specialized corpora and terms from the web” (Baroni & Bernardini, 2004, p. 1313) was employed. It automatically extracted news texts in reference to obesity from news URLs in both news sites from January 2017 to December 2021. The duplicated URLs were removed before the texts were mined to ensure that the replicated articles were not included in the corpus. This resulted in 1,418 news articles with 599,152 words (see Table 1 for the details).

Table 1. Breakdown of the corpus by online news media.

News media	Articles	Words
Kompas.com	682	336,437
Detik.com	736	262,715
Total	1,418	599,152

3.2 Data Analysis

The current study drew on Baker and McEnery's (2015) CADS framework that divides the methods of analysis into four stages. The first step involves identifying and describing linguistic patterns by utilising a corpus linguistic technique. In this phase, the keyword analysis was employed. Keywords are terms that appear more frequently in one corpus than in another corpus (Bączkowska, 2020). Keywords are important in (critical) discourse analysis because they can serve as entry points for analysing discourses (Love & Baker, 2015). Keyword analysis was carried out by comparing the 'obesity' corpus against the Leipzig Corpora Collection (LCC) of Indonesian corpus, which is a general reference corpus available in CQPweb (Hardie, 2012) consisting of 232.853.664 words taken from a wide variety of genres of Indonesian written texts (Goldhahn et al., 2012). The keyword analysis therefore was conducted by using the CQPweb corpus tool with the log-likelihood significance metric. The frequency threshold was set at 3 and only the top 100 keywords (excluding grammatical words, descending order by their keyness score) that occurred at least in 5% of the total number of news articles were considered to avoid focusing on keywords simply used densely by few articles (Brookes, 2021). Then, quick analyses of 100 random concordances (a list of the occurrences) of each keyword were employed to classify them thematically in order to determine which category they belonged to.

The second stage of analysis involved interpreting the identified language patterns. Collocation analysis of frequent keywords (with more than 100 occurrences) was applied to understand their context-specific usage and how they supported particular discursive constructions. Collocates are co-occurring words in close proximity to one another in the texts (Brookes & Baker, 2022). They were calculated through CQPweb (Hardie, 2012) using the Dice Coefficient statistical metric. The collocation window was set at 5 on either side of the node word and collocates occurring fewer than five times were omitted. In addition, keywords and their collocates were also examined through concordance analysis which allowed more qualitative forms of study and to acquire better interpretation of the keyword list. A close reading of concordances was also used to identify how news writers legitimated

their claims based on van Leeuwen's (2007) legitimization categories. van Leeuwen (2008, p. 20) defines legitimization as the "reasons that either the whole of a social practice or some part of it must take place, or must take place in the way that it does". He distinguishes legitimization into four main groups, namely "authorisation (legitimation by reference to the authority), moral evaluation (by (often very oblique) reference to value systems), rationalisation (by reference to the goals and uses of institutionalized social action), and mythopoesis (conveyed through narratives whose outcomes reward legitimate actions and punish non-legitimate actions)" (van Leeuwen, 2007, p. 92).

The third phase of the analysis was explanation. It included situating the descriptive and interpretive findings in a broader social and political context in Indonesia. The last stage was critical evaluation, "pointing out the consequences of such uses of language (asking 'who benefits?' or 'who is potentially disempowered?'), perhaps making recommendations for good practice" (Baker & McEnery, 2015, p. 3).

4. RESULTS

On the basis of the parameters of keyword analysis described in the previous section, 91 keywords were generated. Table 2 presents keyword lists generated from the analysis after being thematically classified, signifying the first stage of analysis.

Table 2. Keyword lists.

Category	Keywords
Food	<i>lemak</i> 'fat', <i>makan</i> 'eat', 'diet', <i>makanan</i> 'food', <i>gula</i> 'sugar', <i>kalori</i> 'calorie', <i>mengonsumsi</i> 'consume', <i>asupan</i> 'intake', <i>tinggi</i> 'high', referring to high protein/calorie, <i>rendah</i> 'low', <i>kadar</i> 'rate', <i>minuman</i> 'drinks', <i>konsumsi</i> 'consumption', <i>karbohidrat</i> 'carbohydrate', <i>pola</i> 'patterns', 'protein', <i>gizi</i> 'nutrition', <i>manis</i> 'sweet', <i>minum</i> 'drink', <i>nutrisi</i> 'nutrition', <i>serat</i> 'fibre', <i>mengandung</i> 'contain', <i>susu</i> 'milk', <i>kenyang</i> 'full', <i>lapar</i> 'hungry', <i>dikonsumsi</i> 'consumed'
Lifestyle	<i>tidur</i> 'sleep', <i>olahraga</i> 'exercise' (as a noun), <i>berolahraga</i> 'exercise' (as a verb), <i>sarapan</i> 'breakfast', <i>kebiasaan</i> 'habit', <i>aktivitas</i> 'activity', <i>berlebihan</i> 'excessive'
Medical	<i>obesitas</i> 'obesity', <i>sehat</i> 'healthy', <i>kesehatan</i> 'health', <i>gemuk</i> 'overweight', <i>kegemukan</i> 'overweight', <i>dr</i> 'doctor', 'insulin', <i>dokter</i> 'doctor', 'BMI', 'ideal'
Illness	<i>diabetes</i> 'diabetes', <i>jantung</i> 'heart', <i>penyakit</i> 'disease', <i>kolesterol</i> 'cholesterol', 'stroke', <i>hipertensi</i> 'hypertension', <i>stress</i> 'stressful', <i>tekanan</i> 'blood pressure', <i>kanker</i> 'cancer'
Body	<i>tubuh</i> 'body', <i>darah</i> 'blood', <i>perut</i> 'belly', 'hormone', <i>metabolisme</i> 'metabolism', <i>otot</i> 'nerve', <i>usia</i> 'age', <i>lingkar</i> 'size', <i>pembuluh</i> 'artery', <i>pinggang</i> 'waist', <i>fisik</i> 'physique'
Research	<i>studi</i> 'study', <i>peneliti</i> 'researcher', <i>penelitian</i> 'research', <i>persen</i> 'percentage'
Weight	<i>berat</i> 'weight', <i>badan</i> 'body, referring to body weight', <i>menurunkan</i> 'decrease', <i>kg</i> 'kilogram', <i>badannya</i> 'body, referring to body weight', <i>gram</i> 'gram'
Other	<i>risiko</i> 'risk', <i>anak</i> 'child', <i>berlebih</i> 'over/too much', <i>menyebabkan</i> 'cause', <i>meningkatkan</i> 'increase', <i>mengurangi</i> 'reduce', <i>mengalami</i> 'experience', <i>rata</i> 'average', <i>kelebihan</i> 'excess', <i>berisiko</i> 'risk', <i>bisa</i> 'can', <i>faktor</i> 'factor', <i>penurunan</i> 'reduction', <i>Karawang</i> 'a city in West Java, Indonesia', <i>orang</i> 'person/people', <i>membantu</i> 'help', <i>memicu</i> 'trigger'

The following subsections describe three wide themes of recurring constructions of obesity found in the corpus.

4.1 Obesity as Personal Responsibility

The first set of keywords scrutinised revealed a discourse that constructed 'obesity' as the repercussion of an individual's consumption of unhealthy or nutrient-poor foods or practice of an unhealthy lifestyle. Such representation was evident in the uses of keywords related to food or drinks (including substances inside them, such as carbohydrates and fibre) and eating and exercise habits (lifestyle) which accounted for more than 36% of the keywords. Concordance analysis of keywords like *makanan* 'food', *makan* 'eat', *karbohidrat* 'carbohydrates', *kalori* 'calories', *serat* 'fibre', 'protein', *gula* 'sugar', *minuman* 'drinks' showed that they were exercised in news articles discussing food or eating practices that could raise or reduce levels or risks of 'obesity', as exemplified in the following excerpt.

- (1) *Mengonsumsi makanan tinggi gula dapat menyebabkan obesitas, peradangan dan kadar trigliserida, gula darah dan tekanan darah tinggi, yang merupakan faktor risiko penyakit jantung.* [Eating a high-sugar food can lead to obesity, inflammation and high levels of triglycerides, blood sugar and blood pressure, which are risk factors for heart disease] (Kompas.com, 2020)

Other keywords, *tidur* 'sleep', *olahraga/berolahraga* 'exercise', and *sarapan* 'breakfast', indicated individual choices pertaining to 'lifestyle' that led to 'obesity'. The keyword *sleep*, for instance, predominantly demonstrated that people who lacked sleep were likely to be overweight, while the keyword *exercise* also suggested that lack of exercise tended to make people obese. These articles also frequently featured findings from a scientific study to assign credibility to the discussion, obtaining legitimation by referring to impersonal authority (authorisation) (van Leeuwen, 2007), which is *Riset yang dipublikasikan dalam Science Advances* 'Research published in Science Advances'.

- (2) *Riset yang dipublikasikan dalam Science Advances juga membuktikan kurang tidur bisa meningkatkan risiko obesitas dan diabetes tipe 2.* [Research published in Science Advances also showed that sleep deprivation can increase the risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes] (Kompas.com, 2020)

Another keyword that contributed to the discourse of personal responsibility was 'diet', which also appeared among the top ten keywords in both media. Since 'obesity' was mostly portrayed as the effect of unhealthy eating habits, 'diet' seemed essential to be investigated in order to know the way news media presented the efforts to lose weight. The analysis started by considering the top 100 collocates of 'diet' that were relevant to its representation. The finding suggested that the majority of the collocates referred to types of diet, such as *keto/ketogenik* 'ketogenic' which occurred 99 times, *sehat* 'healthy' (88 times), *Mediterrania* 'Mediterranean' (68 times), *rendah karbohidrat* 'low-carbohydrate' (45 times), and *plaeo* 'paleo' (22 times). All types of 'diet' were depicted positively, which was also evidenced by the collocate *efektif* 'effective', and they frequently featured in news describing a particular 'diet' or how to do it successfully. Concordance analysis also showed that 'diets' were frequently legitimised through the use of the voices of experts such as a doctor, which is called by van Leeuwen (2007) as *expert authority*. 'Diet' was sometimes evaluated negatively when the news reported on *Cinderella*, *tinggi gula* 'high-sugar', and *ekstrim* 'extreme' diets, which were also collocates, but it was a tiny minority.

Another crucial collocate was *olahraga* ‘exercise’, occurring 73 times. The presence of the word may be expected as it is also related to the way to lose weight or avoid ‘obesity’. The collocate mostly occurred in the phrase *diet dan olahraga* ‘diet and exercise’, which may suggest that it takes a secondary role in the personal responsibility discourse (Brookes & Baker, 2021). Its concordances suggested that the combination of ‘diet and exercise’ to lose weight was constructed positively as a successful strategy. In a few cases, ‘diet and exercise’ was depicted as the preferred or first-choice method to lose weight, compared to *Bariatrik* surgery. The word *Batriarik* was, however, only mentioned 152 times in 63 articles in the whole corpus. Additionally, a closer reading analysis indicated that although the surgery or people after having the *Bariatrik* surgery were portrayed positively such as being able to significantly decrease death risks caused by obesity and diabetes, the news articles also presented that the surgery must be given cautiously to people with extreme obesity only or those that failed to lose weight after performing healthy diets and regular exercises.

The last keyword that belonged to the personal responsibility discourse was *risiko* ‘risk’, occurring in 1998 times. The keyword ‘risk’ can be cultural and significant to the way we understand health and illness (Brookes & Baker, 2021). As Lupton (2013, p. 15) pointed out, “news and lifestyle media reports of risk, as well as citizen activist literature and social marketing campaigns, represent it as something to be avoided in the interests of preserving good health and well-being”. Concordance analysis of ‘risk’, when collocated with ‘obesity’ (occurring 433 times), suggested that around 55% of instances depicted the risk factors connected with the development of obesity and/or other health problems, rather than obesity heightening risks of other diseases, which echoes the finding of Brookes and Baker (2022) in the British broadsheets. It also demonstrated that the determinants of obesity risks were focused on an individual’s eating patterns and exercise habits, propagating individual responsibility discourses related to obesity risk.

4.2 Obesity as a Medical Problem

A number of keywords indicated that ‘obesity’ was portrayed as a medical problem. The keywords included *obesitas* ‘obesity’, *kegemukan* ‘overweight’, and ‘BMI’, as well as the names of specific diseases like *hipertensi* ‘hypertension’, ‘cancer’, and ‘diabetes’. The terms *obesitas* ‘obesity’ and *kegemukan* ‘overweight’ are the medical terminologies resulting from the calculation of the BMI. *Kegemukan* ‘overweight’ frequently collocated with *obesitas* ‘obesity’ and they were mostly linked with connectors *atau* ‘or’ and *dan* ‘and’. However, *atau* ‘or’ was largely used in both news media which suggested that the press predominantly considered that overweight and obesity meant the same.

The keyword ‘BMI’ (*Indeks Masa Tubuh* (IMT) in Indonesian) was employed to explain a measure to determine whether a person’s weight was considered ‘normal’, ‘healthy’, or ‘ideal’. Ideal weight was represented as weight that was viewed as ‘normal’ according to BMI scores. BMI scores were also constructed as one of the indicators of the vulnerability of people to certain diseases connected to obesity. IMT and ‘BMI’ were largely employed in an uncritical way in the whole corpus. Of 134 articles that mentioned IMT and/or ‘BMI’, only 6 articles acknowledged the criticism of BMI/IMT. These articles depicted that the BMI/IMT score was not really accurate,

particularly for athletes or people carrying a lot of muscle and it also could not signal the cause of health problems.

'Obesity' was also portrayed as a medical problem by discursively associating it with other diseases such as diabetes, cancer, stroke, and heart disease, which [Brookes and Baker \(2021, p. 44\)](#) defined as "more established and less contested diseases". Collocation analysis of each disease suggested that when they collocated with 'obesity', they were mostly grammatically linked together through the use of coordinated nominal groups, which may suggest that they were equivalent or shared the same value ([Ledin & Machin, 2015](#); [van Leeuwen, 2008](#)). However, concordance analysis of the co-occurrences showed two types of representations. The most frequent pattern was that the grouping of obesity with other diseases was constructed as the potential implication of (over) consumption of certain types of food and the lack of physical activities, while the second pattern constructed obesity as increased susceptibility to other health problems (particularly diabetes, cancer, and hypertension).

The next keyword that contributed to the portrayal of 'obesity' as a medical problem was *penyakit* 'disease'. The investigation of right collocates of 'disease' showed that it was more frequently used to refer to health problems other than 'obesity' such as *jantung* 'heart' which occurred 775 times, 'diabetes' (320 times), and *kardiovaskular* 'cardiovascular' (116 times), which corresponds to [Brookes and Baker's \(2021\)](#) finding. Nevertheless, while their research demonstrated that when 'disease' was used in reference to 'obesity', which was unlikely and it tended to feature in articles contending that 'obesity' was not a disease, the present study indicated that there was no news article arguing obesity's disease status. Of the 72 uses of *penyakit* 'disease' that referred to 'obesity' in both news media, all construed 'obesity' as a disease, indicating that the societal debates about obesity disease status were not reflected in the discourses of 'obesity' in the Indonesian online news texts. The concordance analysis revealed that the constructions of 'obesity' as a disease were predominantly presented in the form of lists.

- (3) *Makanan yang tinggi indeks glikemik mampu menambah nafsu makan dan telah dikaitkan dengan peningkatan risiko banyak penyakit seperti obesitas, jantung, diabetes tipe 2.* [Foods that have a high glycaemic index can raise appetite and have been linked to an increased risk of many diseases such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes type 2] (Kompas.com, 2019)

Hence, the presence of this medicalising discourse of 'obesity' may not necessarily mean that the press framed people with obesity as being exonerated from responsibility for their obesity as it was a disease and they had no control over it. Nevertheless, it was likely used to portray 'obesity' as threatening human health by being equivalent to other (more severe) health problems or heightening risks of other diseases. Moreover, framing 'obesity' as a medical progress or a biomedical disorder entails endorsing solutions from the medical domain such as consuming drugs or conducting surgery ([Atanasova & Koteyko, 2017](#)). However, no keyword in the top 100 referred to remedies for obesity in that frame. Hence, to examine this further, we conducted investigations into other words that may contribute to the medicalisation of obesity, as found by previous research ([Atanasova & Koteyko, 2017](#)). The words included *obat* 'drugs/medicines', *operasi* 'surgery', and *genetik* 'genetic'. However, the analysis focused on *obat* and 'genetic' since *operasi* which referred to *Bariatrik* surgery had been discussed in the previous section. Collocation analysis of *obat*

showed that it mostly referred to medicines for other health problems, with collocates like *kolestrol* ‘cholesterol’ and ‘steroid’. When it collocated with words in reference to obesity drugs, which was scarce, such as *pelangsing* ‘slimming’ which occurred 12 times in 6 articles, and *penurun* ‘weight-loss’ (11 times in 4 articles), the majority of articles, 8 of 10, constructed obesity drugs negatively including as the cause of death.

- (4) *Kejadian tragis dialami oleh seorang wanita yang berprofesi sebagai guru di Thailand sehari setelah mengonsumsi obat pelangsing.* [A tragic incident was experienced by a woman who worked as a teacher in Thailand after taking slimming drugs the day before] (Detik.com, 2019)

The next word *genetik* ‘genetic’ occurred 160 times in 95 articles, but only 38 articles associated obesity with genetics or acknowledged that genetics was one of the causes of obesity. These articles generally reported that genetics could influence the body’s metabolic rate which affects an individual’s eating habits. However, it was frequently constructed as not the main factor and the solutions to obesity were still a change in dietary, not mentioning drugs or surgery. Obesity therefore seemed to be portrayed in somewhat contradictory terms as, on the one hand, it was a medical or genetic problem but, on the other hand, its remedy was individual willpower to diet or exercise.

4.3 People with Obesity

Keywords related to people with obesity such as *orang* ‘person/people’ and *anak* ‘child/children’ were also crucial in the current study. Unlike English which has nouns for referencing obese people that can reduce people’s identity into a single trait, such as ‘the obese’, ‘the overweight’, ‘fatties’, and ‘lardies’, the Indonesian language does not have such nouns. It requires words like *orang* to refer to persons with obesity, which may explain why *orang* became a keyword. The most frequent phrase used to refer to people with obesity was *orang dengan obesitas* ‘person/people with obesity’ which occurred 66 times. It is the preferred term suggested by professional, scientific, and medical groups (Wittert et al., 2015), compared to *orang obesitas* ‘obese person/people’ (occurring 53 times) and *orang yang obesitas* ‘person/people who are/are obese’ (40 times). Concordance analysis of these phrases suggested that the Indonesian news media recurrently represented them negatively. The most frequent pattern found was the representation of obese people as having higher risks of suffering from other health problems, especially diabetes (32% of concordances), and being more likely to receive advanced levels of treatment or die from COVID-19 (16%), which corroborates Brookes’ (2021) research. Several instances showed that they were passivated, depicted as ‘recipients’ of a healthy diet and exercise, and as ‘receivers’ of suggestions about what to do to decrease their weight. However, in terms of doing exercise and losing weight, few concordances indicated that people with disabilities were presented as lazy and ashamed to start exercise and unable to maintain their weight after losing it respectively, which may perpetuate weight stigma and demotivate them to lose weight. This representation was also legitimised through ‘expert authority’ (van Leeuwen, 2007).

In regard to the keyword *anak* ‘child’, unlike *orang* ‘people’, the most common phrase employed was *anak obesitas* ‘obese child/children’ which occurred 59 times, compared with *anak yang obesitas* ‘child/children who is/are obese’ (9 times) and *anak dengan obesitas* ‘child/children with obesity’ (7 times). Their concordances generally

demonstrated similar portrayals of people with obesity. The difference was that children with obesity were represented as facing increased risks of being obese in their adolescence. Also, of 44 articles that mentioned those phrases, 23 (52%) constructed *orangtua* 'parents' as responsible for managing the health and risk of obesity of their children, which is congruent with Bastian's (2011) and Brookes et al.'s (2016) research. Collocation analysis of 'parents' also showed that it frequently collocated with the word *harus* 'must', referring to the parent's obligation to manage their children's health and parents were represented as 'bad' when they failed to control their child's risk of obesity.

- (5) "*Kelas 2 SD aja dia udah nggak sekolah karena udah 90 kilo dan udah malu ke sekolah. Dan menurut ibunya itu nggak papa. Padahal kalau memang orang tua yang bener justru bisa mengontrol anaknya*". ... kata dr Diana. ["When he was in the second grade of elementary school, he already did not go to school as his weight was 90 kg and ashamed to go to school. And according to his mother, it is okay. In fact, if parents were good, they could actually control their children". ... said dr. Diana] (Detik.com, 2019)

Additionally, two news reports that mentioned children with obesity acknowledged the societal responsibilities of obesity such as the lack of education about healthy nutrition at home and school, and the dearth of areas with space for exercise, which was absent in the discourse of people with obesity. This, therefore, may indicate the scarcity of the societal responsibility frame in Indonesian news articles. Indeed, the keyword lists did not contain any word that refers to societal aspects of 'obesity'. To investigate it further, the analysis of several words that may reveal societal representations, as identified by Brookes and Baker (2021), was carried out. The words included *pemerintah* 'government' which occurred 78 times, *industri* 'industries' (45 times), *ekonomi* 'economic' (43 times), and *kebijakan* 'policy' (28 times). The words *pemerintah* 'government' and *kebijakan* 'policy' mostly occurred in news reporting government initiatives, programs, and policies to prevent obesity including the proposal by the Indonesian Ministry of Finance to impose a tax on sugary drinks or soft drinks. They were generally evaluated positively, but two articles, one of each news media institution, featured a view that the proposed tax imposition would increase the burden and potentially reduce the company's sales.

This was similar to the analysis of the word *industri* 'industry'. Eight of eleven articles that contained 'industry' in relation to 'obesity' foregrounded the contribution of food and drink industries towards 'obesity', while three articles represented soft drink industries as victims of a number of negative accusations about soda and sweetened drinks, which caused the decrease of their sales. These contrastive stories may reflect the debates in society that may affect the policymakers. To date, at the time of writing this article in 2022, the regulation of tax on sugary soft drinks has not been enacted.

In the case of the word *ekonomi* 'economic', 33% of articles that mentioned it recognised that the socio-economic status of a person was one of the risk factors of obesity, in that, people who lived in a low-income family were more likely to undergo obesity. What should be noted from the investigation of these words, nevertheless, was that the majority of the articles did not take a critical stance on the role of the policymakers or government in addressing the societal factors of obesity, such as the lack of policies on food and drink industries and advertising, and on urban planning that allows more physical activities including exercise, walking, or cycling.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of the study showed the dominance of the personal responsibility discourse of ‘obesity’ in Indonesian news articles, whereby individuals were constructed as fully responsible for reducing risks of obesity and other health problems connected with it by losing or controlling their weight. Such discourse is associated with the neoliberal approach to obesity and health in general (Baker et al., 2020). This may suggest that the pronounced emphasis on personal responsibility discourse of ‘obesity’ is not necessarily confined to Western societies, but is also prevalent in a developing country governed by neoliberalism such as Indonesia. The Indonesian government has been considered as supporting and preferring neoliberalism (Al-Fadhat, 2022), which can be seen in a variety of indicators, such as deregulation, privatisation, eradication of the notion of public goods, the enactment of omnibus law on job creation, decreased public spending (Saputra & Emovwodo, 2022) as well as recent policies on COVID-19 pandemic (Mietzner, 2021). The ubiquity of personal responsibility in the Indonesian news, thus, may reflect the present prevailing neoliberal ideology in Indonesian society, in which people are accounted responsible for ensuring that they are healthy and economically productive so as not to impose a financial burden on the state. Also, this construction was recurrently legitimised through ‘expert authority’ (van Leeuwen, 2007) by referring to experts’ interviews and impersonal authority by reference to scientific research, which is congruent with Sun et al.’s (2021) findings that medical professionals’ quotes and statistics were the most cited types of evidence in obesity news.

Keywords denoting medical concepts were also identified and these serve to depict obesity as a threat to human health by equating it to other health issues or by increasing the risk of other diseases, instead of constructing it as a disease beyond an individual’s control. Within this frame, we also found several cases where one article contains different constructions, which corroborates Boero’s (2007) and Baker et al.’s (2020) findings. Obesity is presented as a medical or genetic problem, but its solution still relies on changes in an individual’s lifestyle, while taking medical remedies, such as drugs and surgery, are discouraged.

Unlike Brookes and Baker’s (2021) study which revealed several societal responsibility frames in the British press, the findings of the current study reveal that Indonesian news articles hardly represent ‘obesity’ as a societal responsibility. Articles that do acknowledge the societal determinants tend to take an uncritical stance on the role of government, food manufacturers, and advertising in contributing to obesity. These articles generally give a cursory amount of attention to socioeconomic variables when discussing obesity solutions. For example, while some articles report that the economic status of people can be a risk factor for extreme obesity, no article is critical about the role of government in reducing socioeconomic disadvantage. There is also no discussion about the effectiveness of Indonesia’s obesity-related policy which puts emphasis on individual responsibility, although it has been considered ineffective in reducing obesity rates in Indonesia (Dewi et al., 2020).

The prevalence of personal responsibility discourse and the less engagement with societal responsibility may also be influenced by newsworthiness. News informing food or eating practices and physical activity including diet that can raise or decrease levels or risks of obesity may be more newsworthy. The online news media, thus, tend to publish it to increase visits, earning more advertising revenue. However,

they should be aware of the implications of such a predominantly individualised portrayal of 'obesity'. Research on people with obesity's perceptions of and responses to personal responsibility framing points out that such representation contributes to a culture of weight bias and stigma (Couch et al., 2015). In addition, the success of public health policies emphasising individual behaviour and responsibility is typically limited because of their disregard for the societal causes of individual's health (Atanasova & Koteyko, 2017), which is also evident in Indonesian contexts (Dewi et al., 2020). Given this, news media must strive for greater balance in its coverage of the possible determinants of and solutions to obesity, incorporating both individual and societal responsibility discourses more equally. This in turn will help improve public awareness and understanding of obesity and encourage more discussions of societal responsibility-related policy, mirroring more clearly the complexity of obesity.

6. CONCLUSION

This study examined how Indonesian online news media represent 'obesity' in a 5-year period, from 2017 to 2021. The findings reveal that the personal responsibility discourse of 'obesity' is predominant in Indonesian news articles, while the societal responsibility discourse is the least frequent, which may reflect the prevalence of neoliberal ideology in Indonesian society. More balanced reporting, therefore, is suggested to alleviate the stigmatisation of people with obesity and to recognise the variety of conceptualisations and approaches to obesity, reflecting its complexity more accurately.

The limitation of this current research is that it only utilised news texts from the two most frequently accessed news sites and focused on the textual aspect of news articles only. Hence, future studies may consider widening the scope of the data by including different online news websites and employing multimodal analysis. A diachronic analysis that tracks changes in obesity representations in the Indonesian press, and a comparative analysis on the construction of obesity and other contested health problems are also possible areas of research that can contribute significantly to the discourse of 'obesity' in Indonesia.

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Exploring the Experiential Meanings of the COVID-19 Survivors' Expressions

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Abstract

Language transforms experience into meaning. Grammar, which can be metaphorically construed as its powerhouse, enables such a transformation. One of the linguistic approaches utilised to understand the linkage between the semiotic and material world is Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). SFL argues that the experiential meaning of a clause can be investigated through its transitivity structures in terms of Process, Participant, and Circumstance. This study carries out a transitivity analysis of expressions shared by COVID-19 survivors from different parts of the world in an attempt to learn how they construe their experience of illness. The data were obtained from online newspapers published in different countries and conveniently developed into a corpus from which COVID-19 survivors' expressions were extracted. All texts under examination were reported in English regardless of their original language. This study examines the survivors' direct expressions through their transitivity structures using the SFL framework. The results show that these individuals frequently used relational and abstract material Processes in describing their illness, meaning that they tended to express their physical or psychological experiences metaphorically as beings and actions. This suggests that they abstractly construe their experiences with this viral disease. Constructing experiences abstractly is likely driven by the need to distance themselves from experience as a way of coping with an event perceived as potentially life-threatening.

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1. INTRODUCTION

At the time of writing this article (the end of 2021), the world was still facing the tragic reality caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. Johns Hopkins University's website reported that 234,257,265 people contracted the virus, and 4,791,475 of them lost their lives (Johns Hopkins University & Medicine, 2021). One year later, in the middle of September 2022, CNN reported that WHO (World Health Organization) released an update stating that COVID-19 cases continued to decline and the end of the pandemic was just around the corner (Thomas, 2022). In general, while survivors of the virus significantly outnumber the casualties, the number of fatalities remains concerning. Considering the suffering caused by the virus, it is necessary to look at it from various perspectives for explanatory purposes. The present study aims to examine the pandemic from a linguistic angle.

A number of studies have examined and suggested measures against COVID-19 from various disciplines in the medical and educational domains (e.g., Danese et al., 2020; Donitsa-Schmidt & Ramot, 2020; Huang et al., 2020; Roche et al., 2020). There is also research that addresses the issue from a linguistic perspective. Such studies are, however, few in number, likely because the COVID-19 outbreak represents a new and ongoing reality. Luporini (2021) examines how journalists of China Daily and The Wall Street Journal wrote their headlines and subheadings concerning the COVID-19 outbreak. Alkhawaldeh (2021) studies the linguistic strategies the Jordanian government employed to ensure public compliance and cooperation regarding their COVID-19 policies. Furthermore, using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Al-Mwzaiji (2021) examines speeches by American and Chinese politicians and diplomats debating the origin of the coronavirus. More recently, Mo and Heng (2022) study the anti-pandemic slogans in China, focusing on the types of pragmatic presuppositions of these slogans and their functions.

The present study applies the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach to investigate the experiential meaning of expressions used by COVID-19 survivors. In particular, these expressions constitute descriptions of what they experienced during and after recovering from the coronavirus. The study aims to provide refined descriptions of the coronavirus experience, in the hope that what survivors have expressed about their experience can contribute to public narrative and collective memory. These experiences may also add to public understanding of the magnitude of the suffering caused by this novel virus. Also, members of the public may become more vigilant in their approach to infectious diseases if they are more aware of what others have experienced. Such awareness would be instrumental in efforts to address outbreaks of COVID-19 or other emergent diseases in the future.

While SFL has been fruitfully applied in examining political texts (Fowler, 1995; Lukin, 2019; O'Grady, 2019), such is not the case in texts related to human suffering. Halliday (1998) has written a paper discussing the grammar of pain expressions in English. He explains how pain is expressed through grammar, namely, as Thing ('I have a headache'), Process ('My knee hurts' or 'is hurting'), and Quality ('My throat is sore'). Each meaning category corresponds to a noun, verb, and adjective,

respectively. [Hori \(2006\)](#) conducted a study on pain expressions in Japanese. Like [Halliday \(1998\)](#), he also finds that Japanese speakers categorize pain as Thing, Process, and Quality. While [Halliday \(1998\)](#) and [Hori \(2006\)](#) analyse pain expressions in the context of common symptomology (such as fever, sore throat, headache, etc.), the present study considers the context of a pandemic (COVID-19). Such a contextual difference can be regarded as the novelty of this study.

This study poses two research questions:

1. What are the transitivity systems of the COVID-19 survivors' expressions?
2. What can these transitivity systems inform us about how the survivors construe their experiences with COVID-19?

To address these questions, the study begins by looking at the grammar of expressions of suffering through their transitivity structures before continuing with an analysis of the semantics of the COVID-19 survivors' expressions as a lens to observe how they construe their experiences. Our study examines the expressions shared by the 'true' experiencers of the COVID-19 outbreak. This is different from studies by [Alkhawaldeh \(2021\)](#), [Al-Mwzaiji \(2021\)](#), and [Luporini \(2021\)](#). While these studies examine the COVID-19 pandemic by looking at texts used by the government and media, our study focuses on the expressions (texts) of individuals who suffered from COVID-19. This study expands the literature of discourse or text analysis using the SFL framework and add to public narrative and collective memory in terms of how humans describe their agonising experiences. In what follows, we provide further information about SFL in general and experiential meaning in particular.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Experiential Meanings

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) introduces theories of meaning and grammar. Both are closely related in that the grammar helps to reveal the meaning. In SFL, language construes experience, enacts social relationships, and creates discourse. These three functions (so-called metafunctions) occur simultaneously in a clause and correspond to ideational (further divided into experiential and logical) meaning, interpersonal meaning, and textual meaning, respectively (see [Halliday, 1978](#); [Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014](#); [Thompson, 2014](#)). The experiential meaning is analysed through its transitivity structure, interpersonal meaning is examined through its mood structure, and textual meaning is investigated through its thematic structure. This study focuses on experiential meanings or metafunction; therefore, references to the other metafunctions are only made if necessary. For more detailed explanations of the three metafunctions, see, for example, [Eggins \(2004\)](#) and [Halliday and Matthiessen \(2014\)](#).

Through experiential meanings, we specifically attempt to pursue the linkage between the semiotic and material world. Such a linkage departs from the assumption that speakers use language as an instrument to express their construal or point of view of the real world. Every time a speaker speaks, s/he expresses his/her understanding of what is happening in his/her surroundings. However, it has to be kept in mind that, in this sense, when reality is expressed through language, it becomes virtual. This means that reality is mediated through meaning (one of the resources of language). In other

words, our understanding and construal of reality, so-called knowledge, is virtual (Halliday, 1998). Meaning or knowledge can be understood as symbolic or representational experience if the term 'experience' is to be used at all. In this sense, meaning is understood as a theory about the human experience of reality (Webster, 2015).

Language is responsible for transforming experience into meaning. Halliday (1998) says that the property of the language that makes this transformation of material into a semiotic world is its grammar, or lexicogrammar, to be more exact. In SFL, grammar is seen as the powerhouse of language (Halliday, 1998; Webster, 2015). With the lexis of a language, grammar provides language speakers with endless resources in any act of meaning or attempt to make sense of the world. Such unlimited language resources are why language is seen as paradigmatic or ideological.

2.2 Transitivity Structure

As mentioned above, this study limits itself to examining the experiential meaning of the sampled expressions. These experiential meanings were examined by analysing the transitivity structures of the survivors' expressions. Webster (2015, p. 15) states that speakers or writers "talk about their experience of the world in terms of processes, along with those participants and circumstances that accompany them". In SFL, these three constituents (Process, Participant, Circumstance) symbolize an experience—where indeed the functional labels in SFL are capitalised to avoid confusion when they are used as common terms). Each corresponds to a grammatical class: Processes are typically realized by verbs, Participants by nouns, and Circumstances by adjuncts. For example, in the event of driving, as in 'John drove Jane home', the event involves a Process ('drove'), two Participants ('John and Jane'), and a certain Circumstance ('home'). Participants and Processes occur compulsorily, while Circumstance does not. Naturally, the absence or presence of these elements affects the information entirety in a clause. More explanation about the concept of transitivity structure and its utilization to reveal experiential meanings are as elaborated below.

SFL scholars have offered explanations of how transitivity structure works (e.g., Bloor & Bloor, 2014; Eggins, 2004; Fontaine, 2013; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Thompson, 2014). Processes are divided into major and minor types. The major types include material, mental, and relational Processes, while the minor ones include behavioural, verbal, and existential Processes. Halliday (1994) provides a graphic that can help us understand the relations among these types of Processes. His graphic is adapted by Fontaine (2013) from which Figure 1 is slightly adapted.

Figure 1 includes the six types of Process (realized by a verb in the clause). The three major types are separated from each other by one minor type. The position of each Process is meaningful. One type of Process is semantically close to the other type of Process placed around it. For example, the material Process is semantically closer to the behavioural and existential Processes than the other Processes. While such categorizations can be made, they are not meant to offer clear-cut distinctions (Fontaine, 2013). This indeterminacy rightly reflects the complexity of human experience reflected through language.

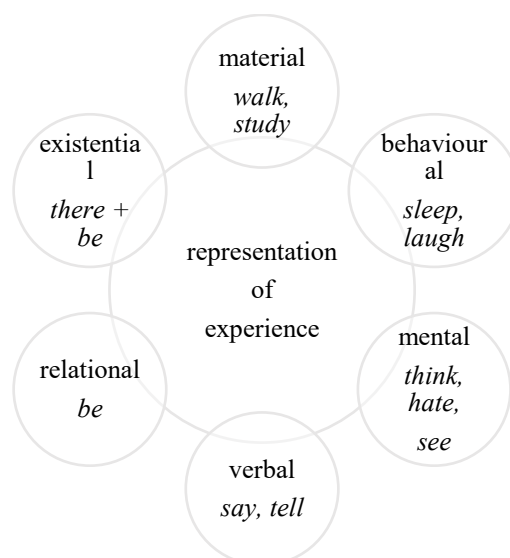


Figure 1. Process types.

As we move clockwise from the material, mental to relational Process, we might realize that Process moves from a more tangible to a less tangible type of function. The idea of tangibility can be confronted with the nature of its Participants. Material and mental Processes involve specific actions or events. However, while the former implicates objective events that can change the physical world, the latter engages in the subjective, inner world. Unlike material and mental Processes, a relational Process does not depict actions or events but merely states of being. In other words, while the Participants in material and mental Processes are related externally or internally, “relational Processes relate two participating entities in a more abstract way” (Fontaine, 2013, p. 75).

The presence or absence of a Participant(s) is important as it may help denote the degree of abstractness of a proposition or expression. For instance, a material Process, as in ‘It’s raining’, has no Participant at all, and an existential Process, as in ‘There is a virus’, has a Participant (‘virus’). For this, ‘There is a virus’ is arguably more concrete as a proposition than ‘It’s raining’. In the former, there is an inclusion of a Participant (Existent), and we know that it exists or is located somewhere (realised by ‘is’ as the existential Process), while in the latter we are only given information about the Process (‘raining’). However, it should be noted that while the English dummy subject ‘it’ in ‘It’s raining’ does not refer to a particular participant, it suggests a ‘contextual’ participant; it might be understood as representing the whole situation, implying the abstractness of expressions.

As for the Participants, SFL further refines their functional labels into more specific ones. A Participant can be an Actor, Sayer, Goal, Carrier, Behaver, Attribute, Beneficiary, Phenomenon, and so on. As a rule of thumb, each Process, being the essential element of a clause, type involves a specific Participant type (Butt et al., 2000). The relationship between Process type and Participant is shown in Table 1.

The examples in Table 2 are intended to illustrate how a different Process (Pr) type takes different Participants as a company in terms of the transitivity system. This system of transitivity enables us to look at the grammar of each clause that in turn informs its experiential meaning (Eggins, 2004). For a more complete explanation,

refer to, for example, [Halliday and Matthiessen \(2014\)](#). In Table 2, the Processes and Participants are given in the examples.

Table 1. Relationship between Process and Participant.

Process	Meaning	Participant
Material	doing, happening	Actor-Goal
Mental	feeling, thinking	Senser- Phenomenon
Relational	classifying, identifying	Carrier- Attribute Token-Value
Verbal	saying	Sayer-Verbiage
Behavioural	behaving	Behaver
Existential	being	Existent

Table 2. Process types and their examples.

Process type	Example
Material	I _[Actor] touched _[Pr:Material] death _[Goal]
Mental	John _[Senser] loves _[Pr:Mental] Jane _[Phenomenon]
Relational	My morale _[Carrier] is _[Pr:Relational/Intensive] rock bottom _[Attribute]
Verbal	He _[Sayer] told _[Pr:Verbal] them _[Receiver] a lie _[Verbiage]
Behavioural	I _[Behaver] couldn't sleep _[Pr:Behavioral]
Existential	There is _[Pr:Existential] some microscopic battle going on _[existent]

Like Process and Participant, Circumstance can be further refined into more specific functional terms. They include Circumstance of extent, location, manner, accompaniment, cause, matter, condition, direction, and role (see [Eggins, 2004](#); [Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014](#)).

3. METHOD

This study collected news stories related to COVID-19 survivors' experiences from eight online news platforms, including Vox, The Japan Times, Times Herald, BBC, Global News, Today, The Age, and The Australian published between April 19, 2020 and September 20, 2020. These sources were chosen as they included stories related to COVID-19 from many parts of the world. The selected news stories were then developed into a corpus ([de Beaugrande, 2001](#)). The articles ranged from 498 to 3481 words. In total, the corpus was 12.970 words long.

While all the collected texts were in English, it is uncertain whether some were originally in this language or were translated from other languages. Some survivors depicted in the news articles came from non-English speaking countries. The nations represented were the UK, South Korea, Canada, Italy, Spain, Iran, Nigeria, China, South Africa, France, Argentina, the USA, and Australia. Considering their origins, some of the collected expressions were likely translated from their original spoken language. Even though the translations of the texts matter because they may have been so domesticated ([Rafael, 2016](#); [Venuti, 2008](#)), this study took this for granted. More information is shown in Table 3.

As seen in Table 3, Vox had the longest article while The Age and The Australian were the two shortest. However, the articles from The Age and The Australian also included videos featuring patients sharing their experiences with the COVID-19 virus that were also selectively presented by the journalists in the article.

Table 3. Information of data source.

Source	Word Count	Retrieval Date
Global news	1619	April 19, 2020
BBC	1698	April 22, 2020
Times Herald	1902	May 24, 2020
Today	1272	May 29, 2020
Vox	3481	July 1, 2020
The Age	531	July 25, 2020
The Australian	498	August 10, 2020
The Japan Times	1969	September 20, 2020
Total	12970	

As is the nature of journalistic texts, the texts are composed of reports by the journalists/interviewers, long monologues and quotes (direct speech) from the survivors or others. Some survivors told quite a long story, while others were shorter. This resulted in an uneven number of expressions from each article. The texts were closely read to extract the direct speeches of the COVID-19 survivors. While the survivors spoke of varied information in the collected texts, only their utterances, written as monologues or quotes in the data, that were directly quoted in the data and that specifically described their experience of suffering and surviving the coronavirus were taken into analysis. In this sense, the study applied a purposive sampling method (Dörnyei, 2007; Saldanha & O'Brien, 2014).

There were 23 expressions either in the form of clause complex or clause simplex. However, since the analysis was carried out at finite clause rank, the number expanded to 32 clauses (see Appendix). This means that a dependent clause was analysed if it was finite only. Every clause was analysed following the SFL's transitivity analysis. This allowed us to figure out the occurrences of Participants, Processes, and Circumstance and their more specific subcategorisations (Actor, material Process, Circumstance of manner and so forth). These functional terms were coded and tagged in the form of a subscript in each clause. We provide the distributions of the functional elements in descriptive statistics to identify general trends of the data more easily. The statistics are not intended to be taken in a quantitative sense. Rather, they are used adjunctively in our effort to draw conclusions and implications of the study.

4. RESULTS

This section presents the distributions of Process, Participant, and Circumstance in the data. Process are presented first, followed by Participant and Circumstance.

4.1 Process

A Process is an obligatory part of a clause, and for this reason, it occurs in every clause in the data. Table 4 shows the distributions of the Process type found in the expressions shared by the COVID-19 survivors. As shown in Table 4, the relational Process occurs the most frequently, 18 times in total or equal to 56% of the total occurrence of Process in the corpus. The material Process comes second (nine times or 28%). The other processes only occur two or three times and are less significant.

Table 4. Distributions of Process.

Type of Process	Frequency (%)
Relational	18 (56%)
Material	9 (28%)
Behavioural	3 (9%)
Existential	2 (6%)
Total	32 (100%)

Thus, two of the six Process types are missing: mental and verbal Processes. This is perhaps because the corpus under examination is relatively modest. The other reason is likely because the sampled expressions were purposively selected in that only the direct quotes were examined. For example, in Excerpt 1 below:

[Excerpt 1]
It was like a roller coaster.

Part of the expression taken into analysis is only the first half of 'It was like a roller coaster' (dependent clause or direct quote), while the other second half of 'he said' (main clause) was ignored. As seen, the clause complex is paratactically related. If the expression were analysed as a clause complex as a whole, it would then contain the verbal Process, which is realized by the verb 'said'. The corpus contains examples of this kind either employed by the journalists or the survivors. In general, this language style is expected to occur in news stories.

Interestingly, the verb *feel* occurs frequently in the corpus. It occurs five times in total, preceded by an impersonal subject *it* and the personal subject 'I'. An example is shown in Excerpt 2 where the verb occurs after the personal subject:

[Excerpt 2]
I still feel alone.

The verb 'feel' in Excerpt 2 might be ambiguous at least for non-native English speakers. For one thing, it is tempting to categorize the verb *feel* in the sentence above as a mental Process as the subject is personal and, therefore, can occupy the functional label of *Senser*. On closer examination, however, 'feel' falls into the category of relational Process in which 'feel' is synonymous with 'be'. The other reason is that a mental Process needs to be followed by another nominal-type participant called *Phenomenon* (Eggins, 2004). Therefore, Excerpt 2 is categorized as a relational rather than a mental experience. The other constituent in the clause ('alone') functions as an *Attribute*, not a *Phenomenon*.

Relational Processes of the possessive type also occur, as illustrated in Excerpt 3:

[Excerpt 3]
I_[Carrier/Possessor] was getting_[Pr:Relational/Possessive] splitting headaches_[Attribute/Possessed].

The event of possession is shown by the verb *getting* and the *Attribute* or *Possession* by 'splitting headache' as a pain caused by COVID-19. In this expression, the survivor construes the experience as a possession. However, such a possession is not a typical form of possession that someone wants to keep. Instead, it is a possession that the survivor does not want to have but cannot get rid of.

The other relational Process type is the Identifying clause (as in Excerpt 4). This type only occurs once when one Participant is labelled Token, and the other is labelled Value. Fontaine (2013) refers to these labels as Identified and Identifying, respectively.

[Excerpt 4]

It_[Token] almost resembled_[Pr:Relational/Circ] having a little monkey on his back_[Value].

In Excerpt 4, the survivor identifies the experience of being afflicted with COVID-19 as having ‘a little monkey on his back’. It is obvious that the survivor means it metaphorically.

The material Processes need further explanation. Five out of nine material Processes in the data carry a metaphorical sense. One of them is shown in Excerpt 5:

[Excerpt 5]

I_[Actor] touched_[Pr:Material] death_[Goal].

The Process ‘touched’ meets the grammatical requirements of a material type in that it has a participating Actor (‘I’) and Goal (‘death’). Semantically, however, it is a metaphorical expression. Death is not a thing that can be touched. SFL categorizes this kind of abstract material Process in opposition to a concrete material Process. While an abstract material Process means metaphorically, a concrete one means literally. Berry (2019) argues that analysing an abstract material Process gives us a hint of what kind of metaphor it is. However, Berry (2019) does not say what kind of metaphor it is; this particular example can be categorized as a metaphor for a material Process that carries a stronger or more vivid meaning. A metaphorical expression as in Excerpt 5 is generally useful in facilitating communication despite its imprecise comparisons (Knowles & Moon, 2006; Lakoff & Johnson 1980, 2003; Larson, 1984).

4.2 Participant

Like a Process, a Participant occurs compulsorily in a clause. However, certain types of Process require the presence of more than one Participant. For instance, a material Process requires an Actor and a Goal. Thus, Participant can outnumber Process, which is a natural consequence. Table 5 shows the distributions of Participants in the COVID-19 survivors’ expressions.

Table 5. Distributions of Participant.

Type of Participant	Frequency (%)
Carrier	16 (32%)
Attribute	16 (32%)
Actor	6 (12%)
Goal	4 (8%)
Behaver	2 (4%)
Existent	2 (4%)
Agent	1 (2%)
Token (Identified)	1 (2%)
Range	1 (2%)
Value (identifier)	1 (2%)
Beneficiary	1 (2%)
Total	50 (100%)

Table 2 demonstrates the type of Participants. Carrier, Attribute, Actor, and Goal occur more frequently than the other participants. This is in accordance with the frequency of Process shown in Table 1. When the Process is of relational type, one Participant will be labelled Carrier and the other Attribute. This type of relational Process is referred to as the Attributive clause.

There appear to be two reasons why Carrier and Attribute top the chart. The first reason is related to the functional label given to the dummy subject *it*. In this study, '*it*' is labelled as Carrier, a participating Participant in a relational Process. The status of '*it*' is, however, inconclusive. The dummy subject is not anaphorical or cataphorical in reference to most sentences in the data (except the clause in Excerpt 5). Therefore, it has no experiential meaning as far as the data is concerned. However, it certainly refers to information shared by the survivors and the journalist (interlocutors). In this case, the dummy '*it*' refers to the survivors' experiences after having been afflicted with and surviving COVID-19. Secondly, the transitivity analysis was carried out at the clause level. Consequently, a survivor's expression that forms a clause complex can have two clauses (one is the main clause, and the other is the dependent clause) and the Process types are often relational. This is shown in Excerpt 6:

[Excerpt 6]

It felt like my body was on fire.

The expression above is a clause complex consisting of two finite clauses; one includes the expression as a whole, that is, '*It felt like my body was on fire*', as analysed in Excerpt 7, and the other is '*my body was on fire*', as shown in Excerpt 8. Consequently, the dependent clause was analysed twice; as a constituent of the clause complex and on its own as a clause simplex. In Excerpt 7, '*like my body was on fire*' was labelled as Attribute as a whole, while in Excerpt 8, it has its own Carrier and Attribute.

[Excerpt 7]

It_[Carrier] felt_[Pr:Relational/Intensive] like my body was on fire_[Attribute/Circ:Manner].

[Excerpt 8]

My body_[Carrier] was_[Pr:Relational/Intensive] on fire_[Attribute/Circ:Manner].

Similarly, when the Process is material, one Participant will typically be realized by an Actor as the subject, while the others are Goal, Range, and Beneficiary as a complement. The data show that the complement of the material Process is realized, in order of frequency, by Goal, Range, and Beneficiary.

4.3 Circumstance

A Circumstance is an optional element in a clause. It is not surprising that Circumstances occur the least in the data. Table 6 shows their distributions in the data. As seen in Table 6, they infrequently occur in the data. The four types of Circumstances found are Manner, Condition, Location, and Direction. This is not surprising given that Circumstance does not occur compulsorily in a grammatical sense, resulting in its infrequent occurrences. The Condition type is realized by a

hypotactic clause, as shown in Excerpt 9, and the Manner type is realized by a nominal group, shown in Excerpt 10.

Table 6. Distributions of Circumstance.

Type of Circumstance	Frequency
Manner	1 (25%)
Condition	1 (25%)
Location	1 (25%)
Direction	1 (25%)
Total	4 (100%)

[Excerpt 9]

When you are at a high altitude [Circ:Condition], you struggle to breathe.

[Excerpt 10]

Coronavirus is an illness which is lived in solitude, in total solitude [Circ:Manner].

The data show other instances that carry circumstantial meaning. In these instances, the circumstantial meanings occur with relational Process with Attributive and Identifying types. In the Attributive clauses, the circumstantial meaning is expressed through Participant (the example is as in Excerpt 11), while in the Identifying clause, it is encoded through Process (as shown in Excerpt 12).

[Excerpt 11]

It[Carrier] was[Pr:Relational/Intensive] like drowning[Attribute/Circ].

[Excerpt 12]

It[Token] almost resembled[Pr:Relational/Circ] having a little monkey on his back[Value].

5. DISCUSSION

In most cases, the COVID-19 survivors construe their experiences of being afflicted by the virus in abstract or less tangible ways. The choices of Process types and figurative speech hint at such abstractness. While the first includes the frequent use of relational Processes, the latter involves metaphors and similes. Each is elaborated on further below.

Firstly, when the survivors were asked to describe their experience with COVID-19, the journalists likely asked them questions such as ‘How did it feel to be contracted with COVID-19?’ or ‘How did you feel to be contracted with COVID-19?’, and other questions of the kind. The expected answer would likely be formed in a descriptive, attributive, or identifying clause. A relational Process does just that where one Participant (Carrier or Token) is attributed to the other Participant (Attribute or Value). In some expressions, the Attributes are of the Circumstantial type (Circumstance of Manner), which describes or classifies the Carrier’s experience. When one speaker describes his experience with the virus as ‘It was like a roller coaster’, he tries to attribute or identify his COVID-19 experience to riding a roller coaster. In other words, using a relational Process, something is said to be related to something else (hence relational Process) although the relationship is not fully explainable.

The relation of both entities linked by a relational Process tends to be more abstract, as Fontaine (2013) suggested. This is because a relational Process only

demonstrates the state of being of two entities, and they are simply stated to exist in relation to each other (see [Eggins, 2004](#)). This particular assertion of abstractness is amplified by the fact that some Carriers are realized by dummy it. As noted above, its status as a Carrier is dilemmatic because, textually speaking, the dummy subject 'it' does not carry experiential meaning (see [Thompson, 2014](#); [Webster, 2015](#)). In fact, even though the dummy subject 'it' is anaphoric, the expressions it introduces carries an abstract sense as it refers to the situation as a whole, hinting at the magnitude of pain caused by the virus.

Secondly, the COVID-19 survivors' use of metaphors contributes to their abstract experience. The data show that they frequently use metaphors and similes. While the metaphors, as noted above, are of material type (realized through Process), the similes are of circumstantial type (realized through Attribute of Manner Circumstance introduced by the preposition 'like' as in Excerpt 11. Metaphors and similes differ slightly in that metaphors make direct comparisons between two domains while similes provide a less direct comparison, usually introduced with lexical markers such as 'as' and 'like'). Both, however, cannot be taken literally as they do not mean what they say ([Knowles & Moon, 2006](#); [Lakoff & Johnson 1980, 2003](#); [Larson, 1984](#); [Simpson, 1993](#)). Metaphors and similes can facilitate understanding, enough of a reason to understand their ubiquity in many texts, including pain expressions. Similes, in particular, grammatically suit such a descriptive aim, given that they can describe how an entity (Participant) behaves. Nevertheless, metaphors (and similes) create a fuzzy relationship between the two entities being compared. The two entities compared in a metaphorical expression are never totally similar meaning that they have similarities and differences. However, when using a metaphor, the speaker puts emphasis on their similarities and at the same time overlooks their differences. In other words, metaphorical expressions always result in information inaccuracy.

Furthermore, using metaphors can be considered an indirect way of communication. This is in contrast to a direct or literal way of communication where information is delivered literally. In this sense, one could argue that we argue that metaphorising is abstracting. The survivors in this study likely used such metaphorical expressions and abstractness to reflect their unfathomable experience of being afflicted and surviving the COVID-19 malady. In other words, they may find that telling their stories in literal expressions is insufficient; literal words fail them. After all, it was their (or others') first experience of being afflicted with and surviving COVID-19, and as such, they had no prior experience with comparable afflictions. If they had, they could have expressed their pain more literally by describing common symptomatic illnesses. The metaphors spoken by the survivors' metaphors also result in affective rather than informative communication (see [Hayakawa, 1968](#)). This is not surprising given that affective connotations of words, rather than informative connotations, stand out in discourses of pain or expressions of painful feelings. The affective meanings derived from these metaphors may be useful for members of the public who read the survivors' stories. This is because affective language can elicit strong emotions in readers and listeners and, in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak, they can imagine the traumatic experiences of survivors. Such imagination can persuade them to follow health protocols related to COVID-19 prevention and control measures in the community.

The survivors' expressions can be related to the notion of conceptual metaphor first introduced by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 2003). The conceptual metaphor (way of thinking) builds on the survivors' linguistic expressions (way of talking). In the data, expressions such as 'There is some microscopic battle going on', 'Anxiety invaded the room', 'Death prowled', and 'It feels like coronavirus has attacked every single one of my body systems' are loaded with metaphors that suggest fighting COVID-19 is just like fighting in a real battle ('COVID-19 is war'). This is shown by the choice of words like battle, invaded, prowled, and attacked. In addition, the strong metaphorical expressions such as 'I touched death', and 'I went to the gate of hell and came back' amplified such a construal. They construed their COVID-19 experience as a matter of life and death, like getting involved in a war. It is not surprising that the survivors take their survival as a benefit, miracle, or being given a second life. This reflects the seriousness and magnitude of the misery the virus can afflict humanity and their immense gratitude for having been cured of it.

The COVID-19 survivors also hint at the severity of their COVID-19 experience through the choice of the subject Participants in their expressions. Most of the subject Participants are realized by the pronoun 'I', dummy 'it', and possessive pronoun 'my' followed by a noun such as 'my body' or 'my morale'. This suggests that the pain experience caused by the virus affects the survivors' being as a whole rather than only a certain part of their body as in 'I was getting splitting headaches' or 'My throat is sore'. The possessive pronoun 'my' is slightly different in that it distinguishes a physical being ('My body was on fire') from a psychological being ('My morale is rock bottom'). Despite so, both still evoke the severity of pain the survivors experienced.

COVID-19 costs the survivors physically and psychologically. Physical pain is attributed to burning pain, breathing difficulty as they were drowning, living at a high altitude, persisting pain, or being pressed by a thick plate and being poked with needles on the chest. The psychological impact is related to unpleasant life such as living in solitude, despair, instability, and isolation, not only because they are required to keep physical and social distance from others as an epidemical precaution but also because they are isolated by front workers or community members, fearing of being contracted by the virus. One survivor reported that she felt like she was being treated as a pariah.

6. CONCLUSION

The human experience is transformed into meaning through language. This study has attempted to describe the experiences of people who had contracted and survived COVID-19 by examining their expressions within the SFL framework. Most of the survivors express their experiences by using relational Processes and abstract material Processes. The use of relational Processes suggests that they describe their painful experience as a state of being in which they assign their pain existence with attributes or other identities. The COVID-19 survivors also express their tragic experiences using abstract material Processes, carrying a metaphorical sense. Both the relational and abstract material Processes contain abstract descriptions. Such an abstract description suggests that, while they tried to describe their experiences, the survivors found them so unfathomable that they could only convey them in abstract meanings. This also

suggests that they tend to distance themselves from the pain afflicted by the virus. Such manners of expressions imply how dreadful COVID-19 had afflicted them.

This study limits itself to looking at COVID-19 survivor expressions from a comparatively small corpus. Also, even though all of the texts examined in this study were written in English, some were likely translated from other (source) languages. It is important to consider the texts' translations because the original texts' initial foreignness may have been lost in their domestication.

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APPENDIX

The Expressions of the COVID-19 Survivors

1. It_[Carrier] felt_[Pr:Relational/Intensive] like my body_[Carrier] was_[Pr:Relational/Intensive] on fire_{[Attribute/Circ:Manner][Attribute/Circ:Manner]}.
2. I_[Carrier/Possessor] was getting_[Pr:Relational/Possessive] splitting headaches_[Attribute/Possessed].
3. I_[Actor] touched_[Pr:Material] death_[Goal].
4. I_[Beneficiary/Recipient] have been given_[Pr:Material] a second chance_[Goal].
5. I_[Carrier] still feel_[Pr:Relational/Intensive] alone_[Attribute].
6. There is_[Pr:Existential] some microscopic battle going on_[existent].
7. It_[Carrier] was_[Pr:Relational/Intensive] like a roller coaster_[Attribute/Circ:Manner].
8. I_[Carrier] was feeling_[Pr:Relational/Intensive] like there is_[Pr:Existential] a thick plate pressuring my chest_[Existent] and needles poking my chest_{[Existent][Attribute/Circ:Manner]}.
9. It_[Token] almost resembled_[Pr:Relational/Circ] having a little monkey on his back_[Value]
10. I_[Behaver] couldn't sleep_[Pr:Behavioral].
11. Anxiety_[Actor] invaded_[Pr:Material] the room_[Goal].
12. Nightmares_[Actor] came_[Pr:Material].
13. Death_[Actor] prowled_[Pr:Material].
14. I_[Actor] went_[Pr:Material] to the gate of hell_[Circ:Location] and came_[Pr:Material] back_[Circ:Direction].
15. When you_[Carrier] are_[Pr:Relational/Intensive] at a high altitude_{[Attribute/Circ:Location][Circ:Condition]}, you_[Behaver] struggle_[Pr:Behavioural] to breathe_[Pr:Behavioral].
16. My morale_[Carrier] is_[Pr:Relational/Intensive] rock bottom_[Attribute].
17. Coronavirus_[Carrier] is_[Pr:Relational/Intensive] an illness which_[Range] is lived_[Pr:Material] in solitude, in total solitude_{[Circ:Manner][Attribute]}.
18. The mental drain of that_[Carrier] has been_[Pr:Relational/Intensive] just as tough, if not more so, than the virus itself_[Attribute/Circ:Manner].
19. They_[Agent] made_[Pr:Causative] me_[Carrier] feel_[Pr:Relational/Intensive] like a pariah_[Attribute/Circ:Manner].
20. It_[Carrier] was_[Pr:Relational/Intensive] like drowning_[Attribute/Circ:Manner].
21. It_[Carrier] feels_[Pr:Relational/Intensive] like coronavirus_[Actor] has attacked_[Pr:Material] every single one of my body systems_{[Goal][Attribute/Circ:Manner]}.
22. It_[Carrier] was_[Pr:Relational/Intensive] horrible_[Attribute].
23. We_[Carrier] feel_[Pr:Relational/Intensive] like we_[Carrier/Possessor]'ve had_[Pr:Relational/Possessive] a miracle_{[Attribute/Possessed][Attribute/Circ:Manner]}.



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Kupi Gayo: Deixis in Ervan Ceh Kul's Song Lyrics

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Abstract

Deixis, the linguistic phenomenon of words pointing to specific entities in discourse or situational context, has been explored in various forms of expressive arts. One interesting example of deixis in expressive arts is the use of deixis in song lyrics. In this present study, Gayonese local songs from Aceh, Indonesia, in the Kupi Gayo album by Ervan Ceh Kul, are studied by examining the deictic terms he used to construct the cultural context of ten songs. For this goal, the descriptive qualitative method was used to analyze the songs' deixis using the framework of Grundy (2000). The results revealed that the songwriter used more first and second personal deictic terms, suggesting that he tried to add a layer of emotional connection between the artist and the listeners, allowing for a more immersive and relatable musical experience. Nevertheless, he used place and temporal deixis less frequently, indicating that he tried to create rich and immersive experiences for the listeners. The results showed that using deictic terms in the vernacular language facilitates effective communication and understanding within a specific community or culture. By understanding the function and purpose of deixis in the vernacular language, researchers and linguists can gain insights into how individuals in a society navigate their social interactions.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language learners face many challenges when acquiring a new language, and one of these challenges is understanding deixis in the target language. Hurford et al. (2003) define deixis as expressions that derive some of their meaning directly from the context of the utterance in which they are used. It refers to the phenomenon in a language where words or phrases rely on contextual information for interpretation. Accordingly, Grundy (2000) explains that “the uses of language pick out a person, a place, and a time which can only be determined by someone either present when the exchange occurs or informed of the context in which it took place” (p. 22). The expressions, such as pronouns and adverbs like ‘this,’ ‘here,’ ‘now,’ or ‘yesterday,’ function as linguistic pointers that guide the listener or reader to interpret the intended meaning in relation to the surrounding context. The context as a constantly changing setting enables interlocutors in the process of communication to interact and make their use of deictics intelligible, thus, giving them the intended pragmatic meaning (Alkhawaldeh, 2022).

Song lyrics often make use of deixis, a linguistics phenomenon that involves the reference to specific persons, objects, or places within a given context (Stapleton, 2017). The singers or the songwriters often employ deixis to evoke special meanings to create emotions with listeners. However, multiple interpretations are often found in song lyrics. These interpretations can vary depending on the listener’s perspective and may be influenced by personal experiences, cultural background, and individual interpretation skills. Sometimes, the listener can easily be confused about the meaning of the lyrics because the songwriters usually write lyrics using figurative language, which is not in literal meaning.

Songs play a crucial role in human culture and communication, expressing emotions, conveying messages, and evoking certain moods or memories (Fata et al., 2018). The lyrics in songs often involve deixis as they convey the emotions and sentiments of the singer or songwriter through expressions that reflect human thoughts, ideas, and perspectives (Rahmadany & Husein, 2021). The lyrics aim to create an immersive experience for the audience by taking them on a journey to the world created by the songwriters’ imagination, prompting them to think and react. Songwriters use personal pronouns or words that are location-specific, whether they can help the reader or the listener to understand the context or can become more confused because of it. These deictic expressions can be a powerful tool for connecting the audience and conveying complex emotions through specific language and personal perspective.

A number of researchers have attempted to investigate the use of deixis in song lyrics. Khairuddin and Zaraini (2022) found that the deictic expression in song lyrics can provide meaningful context and details that help the audience understand the situation being sung about. In the same way, Nisa et al. (2020) also revealed that using deictic in terms of song lyrics plays a crucial role in conveying emotions and messages to listeners. In contrast to other researchers who investigate English songs, Anggara (2016) found that in *keroncong* (a small ukulele-like instrument and an Indonesian musical style) songs in Indonesia, deixis is used to create a sense of nostalgia, evoke

memories of the past, and establish a connection between the singer and the listener. The use of *keroncong* songs is particularly important as it reflects the cultural identity and history of the genre. Anggara's (2016) study highlights the significance of understanding the use of deixis in different languages and cultural contexts, as it helps deepen our understanding of how language is used to convey meanings and emotions in various forms of expressive arts. Meanwhile, M'Rithara et al. (2023) uncovered that deixis plays a significant role in engaging the audience and structuring the discourse in KamaNu and Karimi's Kimeru songs and dance lyrics in Kenya. In particular, deixis actively involves the listeners and organizes the narrative structure of the performance. These findings demonstrate the importance of understanding the function and purpose of deixis in various forms of expressive arts, as it sheds light on how language is used to convey meaning and emotions in cultural contexts.

This current research on deixis in song lyrics takes a different approach from previous studies that mainly focused on Western and *keroncong* songs. The researcher chose to examine the *Kupi Gayo* (literally translated as 'Gayonese coffee') album songs from Ervan Ceh Kul, a mix of ethnic and modern music written in the Gayonese language, spoken in the area of central Aceh, Indonesia. The choice is particularly interesting because the Gayonese language has not received much attention in recent studies, making it a unique and important target for investigation. By analyzing the deictic term used in these songs, this study aims to provide insights into the cultural context and nuances of the Gayonese community and how their language is used in expressive arts. This study underscores the significance of examining indigenous languages and their incorporation into song lyrics, as it reveals the intricate linguistic diversity and cultural richness found within various societies. Thus, the research questions for this research are as follows:

- What types of deixis are found in the *Kupi Gayo* album written and sung by Ervan Ceh Kul?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that focuses on how people use languages in different situations and contexts (Dylgjeri & Kazazi, 2013). It considers the social, situational, and textual factors that influence communication. In pragmatics, it is crucial to consider these factors to understand how people perceive and use communicative acts or speech acts in concrete situations. According to Paltridge (2006), people may have different backgrounds and knowledge contexts about each other and the world, which can affect communication. In this context, deixis is a domain in pragmatics that deals with expressions that rely on contextual information for interpretation, such as personal pronouns and adverbs.

Grundy (2000) defines deixis as expressions in language that pick out a person, place, or time that can only be determined by someone present during the exchange or informed of the context in which it took place. These expressions, such as pronouns and adverbs, function as linguistic pointers that guide the listener or reader to interpret the intended meaning in relation to the surrounding context. Levinson (1983) views deixis as how languages encode or grammaticalize features of the context of an utterance or speech event, and thus also concerns ways in which the interpretation of an utterance is dependent on the analysis of that utterance. He further writes it also

concerns ways in which the interpretation of an utterance is dependent on the analysis of that utterance. Accordingly, Elizabeth (2002) condenses the meaning to pointing function of words influenced by context. It is a technique for individuals to comprehend the context of an utterance's reference (Cumming, 2005).

Deixis plays a vital role in conveying meaning in languages, but it can also be ambiguous or misunderstood if the context is unclear (Glover & Al-Tekreeti, 2018). Grundy (2000) divides deixis into three categories: person deixis, place deixis, and time deixis. Therefore, when a context is unclear, for example, the word 'you' can refer to different people depending on the context, and 'here' or 'there' can be relative to different locations depending on the speaker's perspective. Similarly, words like 'yesterday' or 'tomorrow' can be ambiguous without a clear reference point. Thus, it is important to study what deixis is to understand better what is conveyed in a phrase or sentence.

2.1 Person Deixis

According to Horn and Ward (2006), the grammatical category of a person directly represents the various roles that individuals play in the speech event: speaker, addressee, and other. Saeed (2009) states that the information of person deixis can be grammaticalized by pronouns; the first person singular pronoun is used for the speaker, the second is to the speaking and hearing participants, and the third is to the non-speech or narrated participant pronouns ('I', 'you', 'him', 'mine', 'yours', 'hers', 'myself', 'yourself', 'herself', 'himself'), possessive adjectives ('my', 'your', 'her', 'his', 'their'), and verb inflections ('I like', 'you like', 'she likes' or 'he likes'). There are singular and plural pronouns, and their use depends on who is speaking that produces an utterance. To comprehend the use of person deixis, the roles of the speaker must be comprehended first, as the source of the utterance, and the target. For example:

- (1) "I remember when we broke up the first time". (From the song 'We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together' by Taylor Swift)

The lyric from the song 'We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together' in Red album by Taylor Swift in excerpt (1) is an example of personal deixis in song lyrics (Wati, 2014). It can be seen that the songwriter uses singular first-person, 'I' to refer to the speaker, which also refers to the songwriter herself. She also uses the plural first-person, 'we' that identifies the speaker with the hearer (De Cock, 2011).

Cruse (2006) informs that person deixis consists of three categories: they are first person ('I', 'me', 'my', 'we', 'us', 'our'), second person ('you', 'your'), and third person ('he', 'him', 'his', 'she', 'her', 'they', 'them', 'their'). There are singular and plural pronouns, and their use depends on who is speaking that produces an utterance. To comprehend the use of person deixis, the roles of the speaker, the source of the utterance, the target of the utterance, and the hearer who does not belong to the addressee or the targets must be known. And so, the person deixis is the speaker currently speaking in utterance, representing both the speaker and the reference.

2.2 Time Deixis

According to Cruse (2006), a temporal deictic word indicates the timing of an event concerning the time of speaking. It is used to locate points or intervals on the

time axis by utilizing the point of utterance. ‘Now’, ‘tomorrow’, ‘today’, ‘yesterday’, ‘then’, and so on are time markers in the deixis of time. It includes functions for locating points or intervals on the time axis based on the moment of utterance. Grundy (2000) also provides a list of deictic items that can only be determined in connection to the moment of the utterance in which they appear, such as ‘this/last/next Monday/week/month/year’, ‘ago’, ‘now’, ‘then’, ‘later’, ‘before’, ‘soon’, ‘yesterday’, ‘today’ and ‘tomorrow’. For example:

- (2) “All I knew this morning when I woke is I know something now”. (From the song ‘Everything Has Changed’ by Taylor Swift)

The lyric in excerpt (2) is from the song ‘Everything Has Changed’ in Red album by Taylor Swift. These lyrics consist of two data of time deixis, ‘morning’ and ‘now’. ‘Morning’ refers to the temporal deictic expression when she woke up that ‘morning’ and knew something, and ‘now’ as time deixis refers to the present tense (Wati, 2014).

Using time deixis is not as easy as it seems; some deictic words are based on whether or not a proper name refers to the period. Cruse (2006) distinguishes three types of time deixis: before the moment of utterance, during the moment of utterance, and after the moment of utterance. Those are also called primarily tense, such as past, present, and future.

2.3 Place Deixis

Yule (2000) states that spatial or place deixis concerns the concept of distance. According to Cruse (2006), a spatial deictic word denotes a location in space relative to the speaker. Renkema (2004) said that in place of deixis, the speaker can refer to something further away: ‘this’, ‘there’, ‘as opposed to that’, and ‘those’. Place deixis can also be realized by using demonstrative pronouns and adverbs of place, such as ‘here’ and ‘there’. Adverbs are the most basic spatial deictic words found. For example:

- (3) “I’m glad we moved here, I was melting over there”. (Saeed, 2009)

The deictic expressions ‘here’ and ‘there’ select locations based on their proximity to the speaker’s location. The interpretations of the deictic expressions will change if the speaker moves. When the speaker and addressee in the preceding example move, they can refer to the shade as ‘here,’ and their original location as ‘there’. Besides words of ‘here’ and ‘there’, Grundy (2000) also mentions the other places of deictic words, such as ‘left’, ‘right’, ‘up’, ‘down’, ‘above’, ‘below’, ‘in’, ‘front’, ‘behind’, ‘come’, ‘go’, ‘bring’, and ‘take’. Another example of place deixis in a song lyrics is:

- (4) “Spread peace on the earth”. (From the song ‘Salam Alaikum’ by Harris J.)

These lyrics come from the song *Salam Alaikum* in Salam album by Harris J. The words ‘on the earth’ in this context refer to the earth where the people live, which will be spread by peace (Hasanah, 2016).

3. METHODS

3.1 Design

This research applied a qualitative approach. [Ary et al. \(2010\)](#) suggest that qualitative research focuses on understanding social phenomena and providing a rich verbal description of settings, situations, and participants. This approach was chosen to obtain further in-depth information on the contextual meaning of the song lyrics.

3.2 Instrument

The research employed the document analysis method. It is a qualitative research method examining existing records or documents to gather data ([Bowen, 2009](#)). The document analyzed in this research was song lyrics. The lyrics were obtained from the *Kupi Gayo* album by Ervan Ceh Kul. He is a musician, singer, writer, and music arranger of the Gayonese ethnic in Aceh, Indonesia. He is a talented artist known for his extraordinary efforts in preserving the Gayonese cultural heritage ([Adelia, 2023](#)). The album consists of ten songs:

1. *Renggali* ('a type of flower')
2. *Teluk Nate* ('lover'),
3. *Gere Musampe* ('not accomplished')
4. *Sirnem* ('very much missed/unexpressed longing')
5. *Amik-Amiken* ('holding on (to each other)')
6. *Lut Belang* ('a wide lake')
7. *Berijin* ('thank you')
8. *Seranting Tajuk* ('a flower')
9. *Kupi Gayo* ('Gayonese coffee')
10. *Pemanis* ('sweetener')

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection process involved several steps. First, the researchers listened to the songs and the lyrics are the data. Second, the researchers made a spreadsheet for further analysis in Excel. The data were analyzed using the qualitative content analysis method ([Gay et al., 2012](#)). It involved several steps, i.e., coding, categorizing, and interpreting the data. In coding, the lyrics were studied to identify the person, time, and place deixis. The instances of deixis were then coded based on their type and frequency. The second step in the data analysis process was categorizing; this is where the deixis was categorized based on their function and context. The categories were based on [Grundy's \(2000\)](#) theory. The third step was interpreting the data.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research aimed to reveal the types of deixis in the *Kupi Gayo* album written by Ervan Ceh Kul. The album consisted of 10 songs. All three types of deixis by [Grundy \(2000\)](#) are found in this album and are elaborated in the next sub-sections.

4.1 Person Deixis

Grundy (2000) states that most languages have two forms: an informal one for use when talking to friends and a more formal one for showing respect to the person addressed, typically because they are older or more important than the speaker. Table 1 presents the overview of the results of person deixis found in the *Kupi Gayo* album. It shows 62 data of the person deixis in the songs; the first person (*kami* 'we, us', *aku* 'I', *ku* 'me, mine', *kite* 'we, us') and the second person pronouns (*ko* 'she, he', *kao* 'you', *mu* 'your'). The highest occurrences are found in the *Pemanis* song with 13 data. The second frequent occurrence of personal deictic words is in *Gere Musampe* which consists of 9 data. The third is *Lut Belang* which consists of 8 data. *Renggali* and *Amik-amiken* songs note the same number of personal deictic words, with 6 occurrences. *Teluk Nate* and *Seranting Tajuk* are also alike in the number of occurrences with 4 data of person deixis. The lowest occurrences of the person are deixis found in the *Sirnem* song, which only consists of 2 data of the first person. Table 2 further shows that the songwriter does not use the third-person pronouns.

Table 1. The result of the person deixis in *Kupi Gayo* album by Ervan Ceh Kul.

No.	Song	Number of words	Personal deictic words		
			First-person	Second person	Third person
1.	<i>Renggali</i>	6	<i>kami</i> 'we, us'	<i>ko</i> 'you' <i>mu</i> 'your'	-
2.	<i>Gere Musampe</i>	9	<i>aku</i> 'I' <i>ku</i> 'me, mine'	<i>ko</i> 'you' <i>mu</i> 'your'	-
3.	<i>Teluk Nate</i>	4	<i>ku</i> 'me, mine'	<i>ko</i> 'you'	-
4.	<i>Pemanis</i>	13	<i>ku</i> 'me, mine'	<i>ko</i> 'you' <i>kao</i> 'you'	-
5.	<i>Amik-amiken</i>	6	<i>ku</i> 'me, mine' <i>kite</i> 'we, us'	<i>kao</i> 'you' <i>ko</i> 'you'	-
6.	<i>Seranting Tajuk</i>	4	<i>ku</i> 'me, mine'	<i>ko</i> 'you'	-
7.	<i>Kupi Gayo</i>	3	<i>ku</i> 'me, mine'	<i>ko</i> 'you'	-
8.	<i>Berijin</i>	7	<i>aku</i> 'I' <i>ku</i> 'me, mine'	<i>ko</i> 'you' <i>mu</i> 'your'	-
9.	<i>Sirnem</i>	2	<i>ku</i> 'me, mine' <i>kite</i> 'we, us'	-	-
10.	<i>Lut Belang</i>	8	<i>aku</i> 'I' <i>ku</i> 'me, mine', <i>kunaku</i> 'for me, to me'	<i>ningko</i> 'your' <i>kao</i> 'you'	-
Total		62			

The following excerpts are taken from *Pemanis*'s song:

D1 *Betotor gelah pane ko bebujang* [speak wisely, you young men].

D2 *Si tue umure talu ko abang* [call 'brother' to people older than you].

In this song, the first-person deixis (*ku* 'me, mine') refers to the singer (in this case, the songwriter as well) advising the young generation. The second-person deixis (*ko* 'you', *kao* 'you') refers to the listeners or the young generation being advised. The

Pemanis song talks about the messages for the young generation of Gayonese on how to behave nicely and politely and work hard so that society respect and love them.

The results indicated that person deixis appeared the most frequently compared to the other types. This is in line with the studies of Anggara (2016), Nisa et al. (2020), Khairuddin and Zaraini (2022), and M'Rithara et al. (2023), who also had similar findings to the lyrics of the songs they researched on. It was also observed that the person deixis in the *Kupi Gayo* song album was limited to the first and second personal pronouns. This happens because the information of person deixis can be grammaticalized by pronouns: the first-person singular pronoun is used for the speaker, the second is for the speaking and hearing participants, and the third is for the non-speech or narrated participant (Saeed, 2003). The absence of third-person deixis in the songs may stem from the singer's/songwriter's intention to address the listeners directly, hence by using second-person deixis *ku* 'me, mine' or *ko* 'you'. The third-person deixis is not found here because, in this context, the writer or the singer deemed that he is talking or singing only to the second-person, which are the listeners. The most used words in person deixis are *ku* 'me, mine', and *ko* 'you'. *Ku* 'me, mine' refers to the singer and can refer to the listener, while the singer uses *ko* 'you' to refer to every subject or object as 'you'.

4.2 Place Deixis

Grundy (2000) says that for most English speakers, there is a 'proximal' demonstrative ('this', 'these', 'here', etc.) and a 'distal' demonstrative ('that', 'those', 'there', etc.) which can be used as a pronoun or in combination with a noun. Table 2 illustrates the results of place deixis found in the song lyrics.

Table 2. The result of the place deixis in *Kupi Gayo* album by Ervan Ceh Kul.

No.	Song	Number of words	Place deictic words
1.	<i>Renggali</i>	3	<i>wan ni uten</i> 'in the forest' <i>atan ni bumi</i> 'on Earth' <i>ku bumi</i> 'to Earth'
2.	<i>Gere Musampe</i>	1	<i>i atengku</i> 'in my heart'
3.	<i>Teluk Nate</i>	3	<i>ulen</i> 'moon' <i>bumi</i> 'Earth' <i>dene</i> 'road/street'
4.	<i>Pemanis</i>	-	-
5.	<i>Amik-amiken</i>	-	-
6.	<i>Seranting Tajuk</i>	1	<i>atan ni ulu</i> 'di kepala'
7.	<i>Kupi Gayo</i>	10	<i>Gayo</i> 'name of an ethnic in Aceh' <i>Takingen</i> 'Takengon; the name of a city in Gayo highlands' <i>taon ni belang mulie</i> 'a glorious and happy place' <i>arul</i> 'river' <i>pematang</i> 'embankment' <i>jarak</i> 'distance' <i>denie</i> 'world' <i>ku ate</i> 'to the heart' <i>bumi</i> 'Earth'
8.	<i>Berijin</i>	1	<i>serge</i> 'heaven'
9.	<i>Sirnem</i>	5	<i>ku ranto</i> 'to wander to a place for work' <i>i elem-elem</i> 'front yard' <i>umah ni sidem</i> 'ant house'

Table 2 continued...

			<i>i genereng mu kulem</i> 'an area next to a pond' <i>i cabang nunem</i> 'stopover place'
10.	<i>Lut Belang</i>	9	<i>ari laut</i> 'from the lake/sea' <i>ku langit</i> 'to the sky' <i>ku bumi</i> 'to Earth' <i>masjid</i> 'mosque' <i>kuen kiri</i> 'right and left' <i>laut</i> 'lake/sea'
			<i>belang</i> 'field' <i>Laut Tawar</i> 'name of a lake in Gayo highlands' <i>empus kupa</i> 'coffee farm'
Total		33	

From Table 2, 33 occurrences of place deixis are found in the album. The highest data of place deixis is the *Kupi Gayo* song, which consists of 10 data where 2 data is the word *Gayo*, which refers to where the *Gayo* coffee comes from.

D3 *Gayo lues mubentang* [Gayo is a wide region].

Another data, *Takingen*, well-known as Takengon, name of a city in the Gayo highlands, which is also one of the places where the *Gayo* coffee comes from. Subsequent data, *i atas taon ni belang mulie* 'on this glorious wide region', refers to the Gayo highlands. *Ari arul ku pematang* 'from the valley to the mainland' refers to where the singer's/songwriter's parents, as coffee farmers, look after their coffee garden. Some of the locations are in the valley and also on the mainland. The deixis of *denie* 'the world' means the place where Gayo coffee has spread across the world. Next, *ku ate* (to the hearts), refers to all the hearts of people who hear this song. Last, *bumi* in the lyrics *tawar basa ni bumi nge ku heme* 'the Earth's languages have been antidoting for humans' refers to the earth, where all humans live.

The second highest data of place deixis used is found in the *Lut Belang* song, which consists of 9 data of place deixis (see Table 2), that is *ari laut* 'from the lake/sea', *ku langit* 'to the sky', *ku bumi* 'to Earth', *mesjid* 'mosque', *kuen kiri* 'right and left', *laut* 'lake/sea', *belang* 'field', *Laut Tawar* 'name of a lake in the Gayo highlands', and *empus kupa* 'coffee farm'. *Sirnem* song consists of 5 data of place deixis, *ku ranto* 'to wander to a place for work', *i elem-elem* 'front yard', *umah ni sidem* 'ant house', *i genereng mu kulem* 'an area next to a pond', and *i cabang nunem* 'a stopover place' (see Table 2). The next song is *Renggali*, which consists of 3 data of place deixis: *wan ni uten* 'in the forest', *atan ni bumi* 'on Earth', and *ku bumi* 'to Earth'. Another song consisting of also 3 data of place deixis is *Teluk Nate*: *ulen* 'moon', *bumi* 'Earth', and *dene* 'road/street', while *Gere Musampe*, *Seranting Tajuk*, and *Berijin* songs only consist of one data of place deixis, that is *serge* 'heaven'. The songs that do not consist of place deixis are *Amik-amiken* and *Pemanis*.

The second frequent occurrence is place deixis. Ervan Ceh Kul's *Kupi Gayo* album features instances of place deixis that allude to particular locations (Cruse, 2004). Some of these locations pertain to the Gayo culture. In contrast, others are more universal, like *laut* (sea/lake), *dene* (road/street), and *bumi* (earth). Cruse (2000) says that the determination of place deixis is based on location in space about the speaker. It encodes spatial locations related to the interlocutors (Jaszczolt, 2002). Therefore, using specific place deixis in Ervan Ceh Kul's *Kupi Gayo* album can be seen as a

deliberate artistic choice, as it alludes to particular locations that hold significance for the artist and the Gayonese culture. Culturally specific and universal locations contribute to the work's overall impact, creating a sense of connection and universality that transcends cultural boundaries.

4.3 Time Deixis

Grundy (2000) explains that the use of time deixis such as 'this', 'last', 'next week', 'now', 'then', 'ago', 'later', 'soon', 'before', 'after', 'yesterday', 'today', 'tomorrow', etc., is not always straightforward because the context is usually not clear enough to understand, and sometimes there are so many contexts that are related to the utterance. Table 3 provides the result of time deixis found in the song lyrics.

There are 11 occurrences of time deixis. The highest occurrences of time deixis are found in *Gere Musampe* (*pejer* 'dawn' *kelem* 'night'), *Pemanis* (*lao terang* 'sunny day' *soboh* 'morning'), and *Berijin* songs (*wan tengah kucak* 'childhood times', *i sinten munerje* 'at a wedding party') which consists of 2 data of time deixis. While other songs such as *Amik-amiken* (*uren* 'rain'), *Seranting Tajuk* (*i wan ni lodeng senye* 'drizzling rain in the afternoon'), *Renggali* (*terjadi* 'happened'), *Teluk Nate* (*pejer* 'dawn'), and *Sirnem* (*berlangkah* 'making steps') only consists of 1 data of person deixis. *Kupi Gayo*, and *Lut Belang* have no time deixis at all.

Table 3. The result of the time deixis in *Kupi Gayo* album by Ervan Ceh Kul.

No.	Song	Number of words	Time deictic words
1.	<i>Renggali</i>	1	<i>terjadi</i> 'happened'
2.	<i>Gere Musampe</i>	2	<i>pejer</i> 'dawn' <i>kelem</i> 'night'
3.	<i>Teluk Nate</i>	1	<i>pejer</i> 'dawn'
4.	<i>Pemanis</i>	2	<i>lao terang</i> 'sunny day' <i>soboh</i> 'morning'
5.	<i>Amik – amiken</i>	1	<i>uren</i> 'rain'
6.	<i>Seranting Tajuk</i>	1	<i>i wan ni lodeng senye</i> 'drizzling rain in the afternoon'
7.	<i>Kupi Gayo</i>	-	-
8.	<i>Berijin</i>	2	<i>wan tengah kucak</i> 'childhood times' <i>i sinten munerje</i> 'at a wedding party'
9.	<i>Sirnem</i>	1	<i>berlangkah</i> 'making steps'
10.	<i>Lut Belang</i>	-	-

Time deixis is the least commonly used deixis in the *Kupi Gayo* album. As noted by Dylgjeri and Kazazi (2013), every language has a frame of reference around the speaker, and temporal deictic words indicate the timing of an event concerning the time of speaking. Cruse (2006) further explains the time axis by utilizing the point of utterance. Interestingly, in songs and creative writing, time deixis is often minimal (Anggara, 2016; Khairuddin & Zaraini, 2022; M'Rithara et al., 2023; Nisa et al., 2020). Singers and writers do not use time deixis extensively because even a single deictic expression can convey the period in a song. For example, the song *Berijin*, *wan tengah kucak*, which means 'when I was a kid/childhood times', refers to the time of the singer's childhood. Additionally, the use of time deixis in songs can be seen as less important than the use of person and place deixis, which are often used to create a sense of identity and location in the narrative of the songs.

6. CONCLUSION

This study aims to identify the types of person deixis, place deixis, and time deixis used in the *Kupi Gayo* song album by Ervan Ceh Kul. The findings demonstrate that the songwriter predominantly utilizes person deixis in all songs, emphasizing first and second personal pronouns. This highlights the singer's/songwriter's viewpoint and his endeavor to steer the song and his audience. Although not present in all songs, time and place deixis were also found in some songs.

These findings suggest that deixis is crucial in pragmatic studies, particularly in aiding the listener's comprehension of literary texts such as songs. Understanding the context of utterances and the structure of language can assist English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in expanding their students' comprehension of pragmatics, enabling them to analyze literary and non-literary texts. This development can help learners better grasp the intended meaning of literary works and improve their overall language skills.

This research is limited to only deixis found in the song lyrics written by a Gayonese musician, Ervan Ceh Kul. There are also other Gayonese musicians who write their songs on the Gayonese life and culture. Future research is recommended to collect more song lyrics from other Gayonese musicians to further understand the use of deixis by Gayonese speakers in songs. To understand the substantive meaning and implications of using deixis in the lyrics, the deixis meaning can also be examined from a semantic perspective. Analysis of song lyrics also depends on the listeners of the lyrics. These aspects can be investigated through direct interviews with the Gayonese people in future related research.

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Variations in the Use of Personal Pronoun Agreement in Acehnese: A Sociolinguistic Approach

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Abstract

This study aims to identify variations in the use of personal pronoun agreements in the Acehnese language based on a sociolinguistic approach, by focusing on the North Aceh dialect. A descriptive-qualitative method was used and data were collected through interviews. These interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using the sociolinguistic approach by structure and semantics. The results of the study showed that the personal pronouns of the Acehnese language are influenced by social factors such as age, social status, and familiarity. In the context of the age factor, there are variations in the use of personal pronoun agreements related to communication patterns between the younger and older generations. In social interactions with differences in social status, the use of personal pronoun agreements that reflect respect and recognition of social status is more dominant. Meanwhile, in familiarity, the use of more formal or informal personal pronouns depends on the degree of familiarity between the speakers. Overall, variations in the use of agreement personal pronouns in the Acehnese language are influenced by sociolinguistic factors that reflect social dynamics, cultural norms, and relationships between individuals. Understanding these variations can provide better insight into

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social interactions, social hierarchies, and familiarity norms in Acehese society.

Keywords: Acehese, agreement, personal pronoun, sociolinguistics.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Acehese language is one of the local languages spoken in Aceh Province, Indonesia. Aceh Province has some local languages including Acehese, Gayonese, Tamiang, Alas, Jamèe, Kluet, Singkil, Devayan, and Singulai (Azwardi, 2014). Consequently, similar to other languages, Acehese has its characteristics such as the use of personal pronoun agreements. The personal pronoun agreement refers to the suitability between the personal pronoun and the referenced entity in the context of communication (Kojima, 2019). In a sentence, personal pronoun agreement refers to the use of grammatically appropriate personal pronouns according to the type of noun or subject being discussed. Besides, the agreement ensures that the elements that are interconnected in a sentence have matching attributes to each other.

Personal pronoun agreement is important to maintain consistency and smooth communication. The discrepancy between the personal pronoun and the noun or subject being discussed can interfere with understanding and result in ungrammatical sentences. Besides, this incompatibility can lead to the use of language that is not in accordance with the context (Yusuf et al., 2019). Therefore, understanding and using the correct personal pronoun agreement is an important aspect of language.

This study concerns variations in personal pronoun agreements in Acehese based on a sociolinguistic approach. In the grammar context, the agreement is related to the suitability between the subject and the verb. Generally, an agreement is a correspondence between one word and another to show grammatical links in a sentence. Besides, it refers to a way to express the relationship between nouns and verbs (Djunaidi, 2004).

The personal pronoun agreement in Acehese has variations in its use. This variation is influenced by social factors such as sex of the speaker, sex of the interlocutor, social class, the relation with the interlocutor, the place of the interaction, the topic of discourse, and emotional closeness (Millán, 2011). Besides, it is also influenced by differences in gender identity (Ackerman, 2019). The variation of personal pronoun agreement is an interesting phenomenon that can be viewed from a sociolinguistic perspective. Sociolinguistics is the study of the link between language and society, language variation, and attitudes about language (Spolsky, 2010).

Indeed, many studies have discussed Acehese, both by local and foreign researchers. Previous studies on Acehese have different focuses, such as Acehese clitics (Iskandar & Samad, 2018), Acehese language morphology (Iqbal et al., 2022), types of taboo words used by the Acehese people (Aziz et al., 2020; Nasution et al., 2023), Acehese lexical and grammatical collocations (Muthalib et al., 2022), interjection in Acehese (Taib & Mulyadi, 2022). The results of those studies can be classified into three fields of study, namely phonology and lexicography, morphology, and syntax. Studies related to personal pronouns, especially in Acehese were conducted by Yusuf et al. (2019) on the power and solidarity of the second person singular pronoun *ke* [ke] that is often used informally by Acehese speakers but while speaking Indonesian across four extra-linguistic factors: age, sex, relationship with

interlocutor, and social class. Furthermore, [Jakfar \(2010\)](#) and [Zikra et al. \(2016\)](#) also studied personal pronouns in Acehnese, but the discussion has not specifically discussed personal pronouns based on a sociolinguistic perspective.

To fill this lacuna, the present study aims to examine personal agreement in Acehnese based on the sociolinguistic perspective. This study can provide in-depth insight into how social factors influence the choice and variation of the use of personal pronouns in Acehnese. Moreover, the use of personal pronoun agreements can reflect social norms, social hierarchies, and relationships between members of the Acehnese community. This study can reveal the dynamics of language in daily interactions and how the use of personal pronoun agreements can affect communication and social interaction ([Syamsi et al., 2022](#)).

This research has practical relevance. The results of this study can contribute to the development of more contextual Aceh language learning and enrich understanding of the use of language in Acehnese society. In addition, by deepening knowledge about variations in the use of personal pronoun agreements in the Acehnese language and the social factors that influence them, this research can provide new insights and support efforts to preserve and develop the Acehnese language as an important cultural heritage in Indonesia. Hence, more specifically, this paper attempts to answer the following research question, what are the variations in the Acehnese personal pronoun agreement based on the sociolinguistics approach?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Pronouns

Pronouns function to replace the noun that becomes its antecedent ([Simon & Wiese, 2002](#)). It is called a word replacement for nouns that take the place of persons, places, or things. By using pronouns in sentences, the repetition of nouns can be avoided. The names of the objects are changed by using pronouns. For example, the subject pronouns can be referred to by the pronouns 'he', 'she', 'they', etc. The description of 'the table has three legs', here, 'it' could be used to refer to the word 'table'. When viewed from its function, it can be said that pronouns replace the positions that are generally occupied by nouns, such as subjects, and objects, and in certain types of sentences are also used as predicates ([Oshodi & Adekeye, 2021](#)). Another characteristic of pronouns is that their references or subjects can be found in different places in a sentence because it depends on who is the speaker/writer, who is the listener/reader, or who/what is being talked about ([Dawood, 2010](#)).

In spoken or written language, speakers/writers usually refer to something or things that have been mentioned before. By using pronouns, repeating or mentioning something that has been mentioned previously can be avoided. It saves the usage of plenty of words especially if the previous sentences are composed of a long series of words ([Weerman & Evers-Vermeul, 2002](#)).

2.2 Personal Pronouns

Subject pronouns are used to refer to the speaker himself/herself, to the people he/she talks to, or to the people he/she is talking about. According to [Moravcsik \(2012\)](#)

and Velupillai (2012), almost all languages in the world have subject pronouns that are divided into three categories: the first person, second person, and third person. Each form of these three groups can be independent or derivative. The independent form means that these pronouns are not formed by attaching affixes (Moravcsik, 2012) or inflexion (Cysouw, 2009). One of the pronouns refers to the number of one or more than one person/object. Their forms are exclusive, some are inclusive, and some are neutral.

The pronouns in Indonesia, when used by speakers in society, are used depending on the educational background of the family or the community character (Dilfuza, 2022). The singular persona or subject pronouns in Indonesian are two personal pronouns referring to 'I' (*saya*) for formal, and 'I' (*aku*) for informal. These forms are standard forms, but the placement where they are used is slightly different. The pronoun *saya* can be used for anyone and by anyone; it is the formal form and is generally used in official forums. Meanwhile, the other pronoun *aku* can only be used for someone who is younger or has a lower social status (Chaer & Liliana, 2005). It is used more in informal situations or everyday conversation and shows more intimacy between the speaker and the listener, or between the writer and the reader (Alwi et al., 2003). It has clitic forms, both proclitic, and enclitic, namely *-ku* and *ku* (Alwi et al., 2003), as in *ku menulis* 'I wrote', and *tulisanku* 'my writing, mine'.

In addition to the singular first-person pronouns, there are also plural first personal pronouns, there are two plural first subject pronouns, namely *kami* 'we' and *kita* 'us' (Arnold et al., 2021). Īñigo-Mora (2004) states that these pronouns are exclusive; they include the speaker/writer and other people on his/her part but do exclude other people on the side of the listener/reader. *Kami* is also used in the singular sense to refer to the speaker/writer in formal situations. Instead, *kita* is inclusive; meaning that the pronoun includes not only the speaker/writer, but also the listener/reader, and possibly other parties as well.

The second person singular pronoun is *kamu* and *engkau*, both meaning 'you'. This pronoun has several forms, such as *engkau*, *kamu*, *anda*, *dikau*, *kau-*, and *-mu*, and they differ in usage depending on contexts (Alwi et al., 2003). *Kamu* and *engkau*, for example, are only used for people who are younger or have lower social status. This second persona of 'you' also has its plural form, namely *kalian*, *anda sekalian*, and *kamu sekalian*. The use of *kalian* or *anda* is the same as the usage for the basic pronoun of 'you', except with the addition of a plural sense (i.e., *anda sekalian*).

The third person singular pronoun *ia* is used in the subject position, not in the object position, while the pronoun *dia* can be used in both subject and object positions (Song & Heine, 2017). There are two kinds of third person singular: (1) *ia*, *dia*, *-nya*, and (2) *beliau*. Although *ia* and *dia* function the same in many ways, there are certain constraints for each one. In the position as a subject or in front of a verb, *ia*, and *dia* other usage of he can be used equally. However, if it functions as an object or if it is located next to the one described, only the forms of *dia* and *-nya* can appear. Likewise about prepositions, *dia* and *-nya* can appear, while *ia* cannot.

The third person plural is *mereka*, and can be used by anyone, regardless of whether or not there is respect (Chaer & Liliana, 2005). In fictional stories or other narratives that use a fictional style, the word *mereka* is sometimes used to refer to animals or objects that are considered animate. The pronoun they have no variation in forms, it appears in any position and has the same form or usage such as *rumah mereka* 'their house', *pendapat mereka* 'their suggestion', and *kepada mereka* 'to them'.

2.3 Acehnese Personal Pronouns

Acehnese personal pronoun has its referential function, such as referring to oneself (first person pronoun), referring to the person speaking with the first person (second-person pronoun), and referring to the person in question (third-person pronoun) (Iqbal et al., 2022). Some pronouns are exclusive, inclusive, and neutral. The Acehnese personal pronoun with the North Aceh dialect can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Personal pronouns of Acehnese.

Person	Meaning			
	Singular	Plural		
		Neutral	Exclusive	Inclusive
First	<i>lôn</i> <i>lôntuan</i> <i>ulôntuan</i> <i>kêe</i>		<i>kamoe</i>	<i>geutanyoe</i>
Second	<i>gata</i> <i>droeneuh</i> <i>kah</i>	<i>gata</i> + num. <i>droeneuh</i> + num. <i>kah</i> + num.		
Third	<i>jih</i> <i>gobnyan</i> <i>droeneuhnyan</i>	<i>awaknyan</i>	<i>awakjêh</i>	<i>awaknyoe</i>

Based on Table 1, the personal pronouns of the Acehnese consist of first person, second person, and third person. Besides, these three personal pronouns have singular and plural meanings. Puspita and Suprayogi (2021) stated the local languages in Indonesia have a common characteristic, namely types of division of personal pronouns based on their functions. Each type of pronoun has its referential function, such as referring to oneself (first person), referring to the person speaking with the first person (second person), and referring to the person in question (third-person pronoun). In addition, in personal pronouns, some pronouns also refer to singular or plural numbers.

2.4 Variations in Acehnese Personal Pronoun Agreement

The Acehnese personal pronoun has a uniqueness in adjusting the predicate in the sentence. The correspondence between the predicate in the sentence occurs according to the Acehnese personal pronoun which occupies the subject function in the active sentence (Djunaidi, 2004). This agreement can be seen in the correspondence of personal pronouns I, II, and III, both plural and singular personal pronouns. In Acehnese, each personal pronoun has a correspondence, for examples:

(1) Agreement of singular first-person pronouns:

<i>lôn</i> 'I'		
<i>lôntuan</i> 'I'	→	<i>lôn</i>
<i>ulôntuan</i> 'I'		
<i>kêe</i> 'I'	→	<i>ku-</i>

(2) Agreement of plural first-person pronouns:

<i>kamoe</i> 'we'	→	<i>meu-</i>
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geutanyoe 'we' → *ta-*

(3) Agreement of singular second-person pronouns:

kah 'you' → *ka-*
gata 'you' → *ta-*
droeneuh 'you' → *neu-*

(4) Agreement of plural second-person pronouns:

kah 'you' + num. → *ka-*
gata 'you' + num. → *ta-*
droeneuh 'you' + num. → *neu-*

(5) Agreement of singular third-person pronouns:

jih 'he/she' → *ji-*
gobnyan 'his/her' → *geu-*
droeneuh 'you/yours' → *neu-*

(6) Agreement of plural third-person pronouns:

awaknyoe 'us' → *ji-*
awaknyan 'them' → *ji-*
awakjéh 'them' → *ji-*

Acehnese personal pronouns have varied agreements according to the personal pronouns used. Based on the personal pronoun agreement above, it can be said that the use of different pronouns (subjects) will affect the use of the verb or the predicate in a sentence, and the use of this agreement is closely related to the status of the people involved in the speech act (Iqbal et al., 2022).

2.5 Sociolinguistic Approach

A sociolinguistic approach is an approach in linguistic studies that relates language to social factors in society. This approach recognizes that language does not only function as a means of communication but also as a representation of social structure, power relations, identity, and social interaction (Bright, 2017; Romaine, 2000). The sociolinguistic approach views language as a social phenomenon formed by social, historical, and cultural contexts.

One of the important aspects of the sociolinguistic approach is the analysis of language variations. This approach examines variations in the use of language that occur in society. This variation can be related to social factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, social status, and social group (Coupland, 2007; Hazen, 2002). Analysis of language variation helps to understand how language is used by certain social groups and how language use reflects identity, group membership, and social relations.

In addition, the sociolinguistic approach also pays attention to social factors that influence language change (Bright, 2017). Changes in language can occur as a response to social changes in society. For example, changes in social structure or changes in intercultural contacts can affect changes in language use. This approach

analyzes language change as a process that takes place in a wider social context (Chambers & Schilling, 2018).

The sociolinguistic approach also emphasizes the importance of understanding language in the context of language communities (Hazen, 2002). Language communities can consist of groups of speakers who share the same language. Each language community can have unique linguistic characteristics and variations in language use. Analysis of language communities helps to understand how social norms and communication practices play a role in language use within these communities.

Sociolinguistic approaches further extend the understanding of language as a complex social phenomenon. This approach allows us to study the interaction between language and social factors, and how the use of language reflects and shapes identity, social relations, and changes in society (Spolsky, 2010). By using a sociolinguistic approach, language is understood not only as a linguistic system but also as a tool used in complex social interactions.

3. METHODS

This study used the qualitative descriptive research design in which the researchers recorded the phenomena heard, through interviews or listening directly. Qualitative descriptive research generates data that describe the ‘who, what, and where of events or experiences’ from a subjective perspective (Kim et al., 2017, p. 23). The source is the utterances of informants. The informants were determined using a purposive sampling technique with the criteria of living in the Dewantara District, in which Acehnese native speakers of the North Aceh dialect reside, with the age range of 20-60 years old, have a high level of Acehnese language mastery (i.e., Acehnese as their first language), are able to understand holistically how the Acehnese language system works, physically able to speak, never lived in another area for more than three months, and psychologically shows good enthusiasm (i.e., cooperative) in providing data.

Data collected were noted down (Muswazi & Nhamo, 2013); through the ‘listening’ method, an engagement observation form was followed by note-taking techniques. Proficiency engagement observation techniques are carried out through face-to-face interviews with question-and-answer sessions. Data analysis used sociolinguistic approaches. Structural and semantic approaches are inseparable in research. To combine the two approaches, the researcher applied a distributional method, a study whose determining elements are found in the language itself (Rahardi, 2020).

4. RESULTS

The results of the study showed that the variation in the use of personal pronoun agreements in Acehnese is influenced by social factors such as age, social status, and familiarity. The detailed results are presented in Table 2.

The three personal pronouns in this language have more than two forms as the Acehnese culture is concerned about social relations between speakers. Based on Table 2, these forms of personal pronouns consist of first person, second person, and third

person. The social relations between speakers differentiate the use of personal pronouns in Acehese. This matter is in accordance with some researcher who states that the usage of pronouns should be observed with politeness and the receiver in the conversation (Ruriana, 2019).

Table 2. Personal pronoun agreement based on the sociolinguistics approach.

Pronoun		Usage					
		Age		Social Status		Level of Relationship	
		Younger	Older	Respected Person	Ordinary Person	Close relationship	Not Related
I	Singular	<i>kèe</i>	<i>lôn, lôn Tuan, ulôn Tuan</i>	<i>lôn, lôn Tuan, ulôn Tuan</i>	<i>kèe</i>	<i>lôn/kèe</i>	<i>lôn, lôn Tuan, ulôn Tuan</i>
	Plural	<i>kamoe</i>	<i>geutanyoe</i>	<i>geutanyoe</i>	<i>kamoe</i>	<i>getanyoe</i>	<i>kamoe</i>
II	Singular	<i>kah, gata</i>	<i>droeneuh</i>	<i>droeneuh</i>	<i>kah</i>	<i>kah</i>	<i>droeneuh</i>
	Plural	<i>awak kah</i>	<i>awak droeneuh</i>	<i>awak droeneuh</i>	<i>awak kah</i>	<i>awak kah</i>	<i>awak droeneuh</i>
III	Singular	<i>jih</i>	<i>gobnyan, droeneuhnyan</i>	<i>gobnyan, droeneuhnyan</i>	<i>jih</i>	<i>jih</i>	<i>gobnyan</i>
	Plural	<i>awaknyoe, awaknyan, awakjéh</i>	<i>awakgobnyan</i>	<i>awakgobnyan</i>	<i>awaknyoe, awaknyan, awakjéh</i>	<i>awaknyoe, awaknyan, awakjéh</i>	<i>awaknyan, awakjéh</i>

4.1 Age

Age plays an important role in variations in the use of personal pronoun agreement in Acehese. Studies on this variation revealed significant differences in preference and use of personal pronouns between different age groups. Concerning age factors, personal pronoun agreement is divided into two groups, the younger age group, and the older age group. The younger age group used some personal pronouns such as *kèe*, *kamoe*, *kah*, *gata*, *awakkah*, *jih*, *awaknyoe*, *awaknyan*, and *awakjéh*, while the older age groups used *lôn*, *lôn Tuan*, *ulôn Tuan*, *geutanyoe*, *droeneuh*, *awak droeneuh*, *gobnyan*, *droeneuhnyam*, and *awakgobnyan*. Examples of the use of personal pronoun agreement in Acehese by the younger age group or younger interlocutors are shown in the following example.

- (1) *Kèe hana ku-mu'u kali nyoe.*
 I NEG 1- plow this time
 'I didn't plow this time'.

Data (1) shows the use of the word *kèe*. The use of the personal pronoun *kèe* is followed by *ku-* in the verb as the predicate. The personal pronouns *kèe* and *ku-* are for the first person singular. The use of *kèe* and *ku-* which refer to oneself tends to be used by younger age groups when communicating with others in the same age group. However, *kèe* is only used in informal situations because *kèe* is considered impolite. Thus, *kèe* and *ku-* are not used when communicating with older people.

Personal pronouns for the first-person singular which are used by older age groups or when communicating with older people are shown in the examples.

- (2) *Lôn lônjak u rumoh sikula baroe.*
 I 1- go to school yesterday
 'I went to school yesterday'.

Data (2) shows the use of the word *lôn*. The personal pronoun *lôn* followed by *lôn-* in a verb as the predicate, namely *lônjak* (1-go). These self-referential uses of *lôn* and *lôn-* are neutral. It means that the word *lôn* is used by both young and old age groups. Besides, the use of *lôn* can be found in both formal and informal situations.

The word *lôn* is considered polite. It has some variations, namely *lôntuan* and *ulôntuan*. The use of *lôntuan* and *ulôntuan* can be seen in the following examples.

- (3) *Lôntuan hana lônjak bak khanduri nyan.*
 I Neg 1-go to feast that
 'I didn't go to the feast'.

- (4) *Ulôntuan hana lônpeugah haba ngon gobnyan.*
 I Neg 1-talk with her/him
 'I didn't talk to him/her'.

Data (3) and (4) show the use of the words *lôntuan* and *ulôntuan*. The use of personal pronouns of *lôntuan* and *ulôntuan* are followed by *lôn-* in verbs as the predicate, namely *lônjak* (1-go), and *lônpeugah haba* (1-talk). The use of *lôntuan* and *ulôntuan* also refers to oneself. They are considered politer than *lôn*. Moreover, these personal pronouns can be found in both formal and informal situations and are used by older age groups. However, sometimes younger age groups such as students in classroom situations (i.e., learning environment) also use these pronouns. The difference in the use of personal pronoun agreement is not only for the first-person singular but also for the second and third person, both singular and plural, but with different uses based on age (see Table 2).

Other findings showed that children also have variations in the use of personal pronoun agreement. They often use personal pronoun agreement more simply and do not always follow standard grammatical rules. For example, they tend to use the singular personal pronoun form regardless of the suitability of the subject or verb used. On the other hand, adolescents and young adults use personal pronoun agreement by the grammatical rule. They tend to pay more attention to the suitability between the subject, verb, and personal pronoun adjusted for the age. For example, they use the personal pronoun *lôn* (*lôn-*) when communicating with older people or *kèe* (*ku-*) when communicating others with of the same age. Meanwhile, the older group uses a more standardized personal pronoun agreement in which they consistently use the personal pronoun that corresponds to the entity referenced in the sentence. For example, older speakers tend to use *lôn* (*lôn-*) to refer to themselves and *droeneuh* (*neu-*) to refer to the interlocutor.

The use of personal pronoun agreement in Acehnese based on age is related to aspects of politeness in communication. Age influences preferences and tendencies to use personal pronoun agreements that are in accordance with the politeness norms applicable in Acehnese society. Variations in the use of personal pronoun agreement in relation to age and politeness factors indicate the importance of social context and cultural norms in communication. Politeness and respect for differences in social status influence the choice in the use of personal pronouns. Thus, it results in different linguistic patterns in various age groups.

4.2 Social Status

Variations in the use of personal pronoun agreement in Acehnese are also influenced by social status. A person's social status can include position, wealth, education, or social hierarchy in society (Bright, 2017; Müller & Weymuth, 2017). Based on the social status factor, personal pronoun agreement is divided into two groups, namely more respected and less respected groups. Examples of the use of the personal pronoun agreement used in Acehnese in the two groups are shown in (5), where the use of personal pronoun agreement in the words *gobnyan* (subject) and *geupajôh* (3-eat). The personal pronouns of *gobnyan* and *geu-* are for the third person singular and for those people who are respected. The respect can be due to older age, position, education, or social hierarchy. The word *gobnyan* has a variation, namely *droeneuhnyan*. These *gobnyan* and *droeneuhnyan* pronouns are considered polite.

- (5) *Gobnyan geupajôh bu.*
He/She 3-eat rice
'He/she eats rice'.

Then, the third person plural pronoun for the less respected group, either because of a younger age or others, is *jih*. The use of the word *jih* can be seen in the following example.

- (6) *Jih jijak u keudèe.*
He 3-go to market
'He/She goes to the market'.

Data (6) shows the use of personal pronoun agreement *jih* (subject) and *ji-* for the verb predicate *jak* (go). The personal pronouns *jih* and *ji-* are for the third person singular. These pronouns refer to less respected people, such as people who are younger or have lower education and are considered impolite. These words are often used to express annoyance. Differences in the use of pronouns based on social status can also be found for first and second-person pronouns, both in singular and plural (see Table 2).

Specifically, in people who come of royal descent, the use of personal pronoun agreement for those who are not respected is not found. It is because this group always maintains their honor by speaking softly and politely. This is related to the manners applicable in the group.

If there is a significant difference in social status between speakers, the use of personal pronouns can reflect respect and recognition of that social status. On the other hand, in a more relaxed social interaction between individuals with relatively equal social status, the use of personal pronouns can be more intimate and informal. For example, peers in a social group may use personal pronouns such as *kah* (you) or *tanyoe* (we) in their conversations.

Variations in the use of personal pronouns agreement based on social status may vary in different cultural and societal contexts. The applicable social norms in a community can influence preferences and tendencies to use personal pronoun agreements in their interactions. Thus, the use of personal pronouns that are appropriate to social status provides insight into the dynamics of social relations and hierarchies in society.

4.3 Familiarity

Variations in the use of personal pronoun agreement can also be influenced by the level of familiarity between speakers. The level of familiarity reflects the degree of closeness or social distance between the individuals involved in the interaction. In terms of kinship, personal pronoun agreement is differentiated based on the familiarity and unfamiliarity of the speaker and the interlocutor. Examples of the use of the personal pronoun agreement in Acehnese based on the level of familiarity can be seen below.

- (7) *Kèe bèk kujak keunan*
 1 don't 1-go there
 'I do not want to go there'.
- (8) *Kah bèk kadöng inan!*
 You don't-2 stand there
 'You should not stand there!'

Data (7) shows the use of the words *kèe* and *ku-*. The words *kèe* and *ku-* refer to oneself and are mainly used when the speaker and the interlocutor have a close relationship. They are often found in a joking situation. In this context, the use of these pronouns is not considered rude/impolite and is found in both the younger and older age groups.

Data (8) shows the use of the words *kah* and *ka-*. The words *kah* and *ka-* refer to second person singular used when the speaker and the interlocutor have a close relationship. They are also often found in a joking situation. In this context, these pronouns are not considered rude/impolite and are found in both the younger and older age groups.

Next, to refer to the second person, the word *droeneuh* is used in an unfamiliar context. The word *droeneuh* has a more polite value so for interactions with people who are not familiar with each other, the word *droeneuh* is always used. This aims to respect the interlocutor. In this case, *droeneuh* is a formal personal pronoun. The use of *droeneuh* can be seen in the following example.

- (9) *Droeneuh peu neu-pajôh?*
 You what 2-eat
 'What did you eat?'

The use of this more formal personal pronoun reflects respect and maintains the social distance between speakers. However, the use of personal pronouns that are more intimate reflects a sense of familiarity, closeness, and an informal relationship between speakers. Within the family or between close friends, variations in the use of personal pronoun agreements are more flexible. Speakers use varied personal pronouns depending on their preferences and relationship dynamics.

Variations in the use of personal pronoun agreement based on familiarity indicate linguistic adjustments in social interactions. This reflects the level of closeness between speakers, strengthens social bonds, and creates a more relaxed and intimate atmosphere in daily conversations.

5. DISCUSSION

Based on variations in the use of agreements for personal pronouns in Acehese from a sociolinguistic perspective, it can be concluded that the use of agreements for personal pronouns is influenced by the following factors: age, social status, and familiarity. This reflects social dynamics, hierarchies, and relationships between individuals in society (Müller & Weymuth, 2017; Osafo-Adjei et al., 2022). In the context of the age factor, there are variations in the use of personal pronoun agreements related to communication patterns between the younger and older generations (Yusuf et al., 2019). The older generation tends to use more formal and respectful personal pronoun agreements, while the younger generation tends to use more familiar and informal pronouns. This reflects differences in the cultural norms surrounding intergenerational communication. Hanifah et al. (2023) also found in their research of the South Jakarta speakers, the use of pronouns is adjusted based on the age of the speakers and interlocutors as well.

In addition, social status factors also affect variations in the use of Acehese personal pronoun agreements. Ackerman (2018) asserted that social variables bring change in the use of pronouns and address systems in general. In Acehese, social interactions with differences in social status bring change in the use of personal pronoun agreements that reflect respect and recognition of social status. On the other hand, in more intimate and equal interactions between individuals with relatively equal social status, the use of personal pronoun agreements that are more intimate and informal is more dominant. The use of personal pronouns based on social factors is found in many other languages, such as in Balinese (Sastrawan, 2022), Vietnamese (Hiep, 2022), Japanese (Milicia, 2019), Burmese (Müller & Weymuth, 2017), among others.

Familiarity factor is also a consideration in the variation of the use of the Acehese personal pronoun agreement. The use of more formal or informal personal pronouns depends on the degree of familiarity between the speakers (Ghina & Helmi, 2023). Overall, variations in the use of agreement personal pronouns in the Acehese language are influenced by sociolinguistic factors that reflect social dynamics, cultural norms, and relationships between individuals (Millán, 2011; Osafo-Adjei et al., 2022; Syamsi et al., 2022). Understanding these variations can provide better insight into social interactions, social hierarchies, and familiarity norms in a society.

6. CONCLUSION

The Acehese personal pronouns have 18 personal pronouns. They are (1) first-person singular pronouns, which include *lôn*, *lôntuan*, *ulôntuan*, and *kèe* with the correspondences of *lôn-* and *ku-*; (2) plural first person pronouns, which include *kamoe* and *geutanyoe* with the correspondences of *meu-* and *ta-*; (3) singular second personal pronouns, which include *kah*, *gata*, and *droeneuh* with the correspondences of *ka-*, *geu-*, and *neu-*; (4) plural second personal pronouns, which include *kah* + num., *gata* + num., and *droeneuh* + num. with the correspondences of *ka-*, *ta-*, and *neu-*; (5) singular third person pronouns, which include, *jih*, *gobnyan*, and *droeneuhnyan* with the correspondences of *ji-*, *geu-*, *geu-*, and *neu-*; (6) the third plural personal

pronoun, which includes *awaknyoe*, *awaknyan*, and *awakjéh* with the correspondences of *geu*-.

This research focuses on the use of personal pronouns in the Acehese language. The results of this study can be a reference for observers, researchers, teachers, and learners in constructing personal pronouns in Acehese sentences. Nonetheless, this study has a limitation in observing variations in the use of personal pronouns throughout Aceh as a whole. In a broader scope, there is a potential for significant differences in the use of Acehese personal pronouns between regions that have not been given in-depth research. Therefore, the need for further comparative studies becomes urgent.

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Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding as a Sluggish Policy: A Critical Discourse Analysis with Process Types

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Abstract

Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the government of Indonesia (GoI) and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) celebrated its 18th anniversary in 2023. However, its discursive aspect and efficacy are still under-researched. This article aims to analyze the process types in the Helsinki MoU text and explore the policy implementation of the agreement on the social changes in Aceh. The MoU document was retrieved from the United Nations peacemakers' website. Mixed methods with descriptive statistics were used to identify, interpret, and explain the data. Hallidayan systemic linguistics was employed to identify the process types and the transitivity patterns. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) as an explanatory critique was applied to critical social analysis. The findings show that the material processes dominated the Helsinki MoU text (73%), followed by the relational processes (18%), and verbal processes (4%). The actors were generally in the form of concepts and sometimes obfuscated. Meanwhile, the goals were also mostly realized by concepts. Explanatory critique reveals that there was a vagueness and hidden power relation between the GoI and GAM in the peace deal. The GoI has also been inconsistent with some of the agendas. The Helsinki MoU has yet to produce comprehensive outcomes for Aceh's development and has seemingly served as a bureaucratic means of control. The current study has limited itself to the single MoU text. Therefore, for deeper inquiries further research should focus on multiple similar texts and use a different research design, including intertextuality, questionnaires, and interviews.

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Keywords: Critical discourse analysis, Free Aceh Movement, Indonesian government, process types, Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding.

1. INTRODUCTION

This article conceives of the Helsinki MoU document as a policy text of political, social, and legal significance not only to the local, national, and regional people but also to the international society. A policy text usually deals with the proposed actions on the economy, politics, and social changes (Dunn, 2018; Mulderrig et al., 2019). Unfortunately, not all policies enacted in the Helsinki MoU text have been implemented. Considering the global readership of this platform, it is necessary that this introduction briefly elucidate the history of the protracted conflict of Aceh that gave rise to the signature of the Helsinki MoU.

The people of Aceh had devoted their spirit, energy, and belongings to the establishment of the Republic of Indonesia long before Indonesia proclaimed its independence. However, after Indonesia gained its independence in 1945, Aceh experienced inequality, oppression, broken promises, and unjust policies from the central government of Indonesia (Schulze, 2004). Consequently, in 1953 Daud Bereueh, then the governor of Aceh, led a rebellion movement, which was initially supposed to be the political weapon against the centrality of the Indonesian government in Jakarta. Later in 1976, Hasan di Tiro, the supporter of Daud Bereueh's political ideology for an independent state, returned from the United States and established the Free Aceh Movement (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*, GAM), formally called the Aceh-Sumatra National Liberation Front. GAM experienced three distinct periods.

During the first phase from 1976 to 1979, GAM was only a handful of well-educated elites, doctors, engineers, business people, and academics. This phase ceased at the end of 1979 during which the leaders of the movement were imprisoned, killed, or went into exile. GAM reemerged in 1989 when hundreds of its guerillas returned from military training in Libya. To counter this reemergence, the GoI enacted a counterinsurgency operation that classified Aceh as a Military Operations Zone, *Daerah Operasi Militer* (DOM), which occurred from 1989 to 1998. During the DOM, it was estimated that 5,000 Acehnese people were killed, tortured or raped (Barber, 2000). According to Al-Chaidar et al. (1998), 500 people 'disappeared' and have never been found. An estimated 3,000 women were widowed and 16,000 children were orphaned. GAM was then once again defeated.

In the wake of the Asian financial crisis, followed by the demise of Suharto's regime in 1998, GAM arose again and this time it transformed itself into a mass movement. The fight in this third phase was for self-determination (Kadir, 2012), which attracted attention from international institutions, including ASEAN and the European Union. Eventually, after five rounds of negotiation, the GoI and GAM agreed on a peace deal. It was on August 15th, 2005 that GAM and the GoI signed a memorandum of understanding in Finland, which is formally known as the Helsinki MoU. However, until its 18th anniversary this year, the MoU has yet to be fully implemented.

This article recognizes the Helsinki MoU document as a public policy text, treating it as a particular form of peace discourse between the two parties. Similar to Fairclough (2003), this article argues that a text can have social effects. Discourse can

bring about changes in the social and the material worlds. However, there is only a small body of literature on Aceh's political discourse. Using CDA as a qualitative research methodology, [Zainal et al. \(2022\)](#) identified five reasons Aceh has not achieved full self-government. The fact that GAM was underrepresented and held a weak position during the negotiation processes were two of the reasons they advanced. Although [Zainal et al. \(2022\)](#) employed CDA, they did not focus on the linguistic aspects, such as transitivity and process types. In other words, their study was not supported by the textually-oriented analysis as the majority of studies in CDA are. As a result, the analysis is somewhat abstract. [Amalia \(2019\)](#) focused on the Helsinki MoU and claimed to have used CDA, but ignored the linguistic trivialities. In a different research setting, [Mwinlaaru and Nartey \(2022\)](#) applied a transitivity analysis to identify the process types in national anthems of African countries. They claimed that the African national anthems figure in the trauma of colonialism foregrounds the motif for freedom, and legitimizes land ownership for Africans. Although [Mwinlaaru and Nartey \(2022\)](#) used transitivity, their study focused on the substances of the anthems without exploring their social impacts on the economic, political, and socio-cultural sectors. Above all, these studies have not focused on the legal text as a special document of the public policy discourse.

This article attempts to explore the 18-year-old MoU legal text by incorporating the Hallidayan classifications of process types in the transitivity system into CDA's explanatory critique. Linguistically, the exploration will contribute to the development of critical policy discourse analysis ([Fairclough, 2013](#); [Mulderigg et al., 2019](#)) and legal discourse ([Coulson, 2020](#)). Socially, the investigation provides positive insights for political institutions and policymakers in Aceh. To that end, this article aims to analyze how the Helsinki MoU text was grammatically realized by the process types in the transitivity system and to unmask the ideological, economic, and social effects of this text on Aceh's development. From this set of objectives, two research questions arise:

1. What process types in the transitivity system do prevalently occur in the Helsinki MoU text?
2. To what extent have the policy measures embedded in this peace discourse been undertaken for Aceh's development?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Discourse of Conflict

There has been some research on political discourse and transitivity analysis ([Adjei et al., 2015](#); [Amalia, 2019](#); [Mwinlaaru & Nartey, 2022](#)). However, the topics on the investigation of Aceh's political discourse from a transitivity perspective are scant. [Kadir \(2012\)](#) used a social-historical framework to investigate Aceh's self-determination discourses within Indonesia's unitary system with respect to the struggle for independence that was finally manifested by the signature of the Helsinki MoU. He provided a historical analysis of Aceh's self-determination on the basis of the International Human Rights Law. He referred to a conceptual understanding of the Helsinki MoU in terms of self-determination. He claimed that self-determination and the Helsinki Agreement prevented Aceh from proclaiming an independent state.

Furthermore, [Usman \(2017\)](#) studied the role metaphors play in the ex-GAM's political discourses during the preparation for local government elections in Aceh. He identified a small number of metaphors used in the pre-election political discourse. Although the study aimed at identifying political metaphors occupying the Ex-GAM's political discourse, it draws a conclusion from metaphors analyzed in isolation that regard elections as a battle. Based on limited examples, he also claimed that the ex-GAM politicians resorted to this populist metaphor but did not manage to attract the majority of votes in the elections.

In contrast, [Rizki et al. \(2019\)](#) examined the rhetorical pattern of political advertisement in the form of posters in Aceh. Using the descriptive qualitative methodology, they found that the posters of two politicians—Irwandi Yusuf and Nova Iriansyah—applied ten strategies in their political advertisement during the local election campaign, some of which are the use of dramatic statements, sketch model participation, and detailed benefit change. Furthermore, [Amalia \(2019\)](#) applied CDA to analyze the Helsinki MoU and claimed that there was no dominance of either party in the peace agreement. Other researchers applied transitivity but in different research contexts and settings.

[Seo \(2013\)](#), for instance, analyzed media news items. [Coffin \(2013\)](#) focused on digital technology in education, while [Zhang \(2017\)](#) examined the political discourse of presidential debates. Although these studies used transitivity analysis to explore the meaning-making process in discourses, they did not look at texts from a public policy perspective and they lack historical, economic, social, and cultural dimensions. [Gunawan et al. \(2023\)](#), investigated a testament of the *jihadi* Indonesian woman from a transitivity and CDA perspective. They claim that the testament embeds the Salafi jihadist ideology of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. To recap this literature review, although some studies such as [Kadir \(2012\)](#), [Usman \(2017\)](#), and [Rizki et al. \(2019\)](#) analyzed the political issues in Aceh, they used neither CDA nor transitivity in the analysis. [Gunawan et al. \(2023\)](#) used transitivity and CDA, but their study was not on public policy discourse.

2.2 CDA as an Explanatory Critique

This article uses critical discourse analysis (CDA) as the conceptual framework and also treats it as an explanatory critique for doing critical research with respect to textual, political, and social analysis. CDA's roots can be traced as far back as Karl Marx whose ideas on critical social theory have influenced the latter-day thinkers of the Frankfurt School such as Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno and currently Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak. These critical theorists and CDA scholars have stressed the significance of addressing a wide variety of social structures and their relations in economic, political, and social issues in modern societies. CDA can thus provide theories and methods for the empirical study of the relations between discourse and the social world in different domains.

As an explanatory critique, CDA focuses on the opaque relationship between language and social problems ([Bhaskar, 2009](#); [Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999](#)). Its analysis oscillates between the critical reading of texts and the critical reading of social wrongs for emancipation from the abuse of power, inequality, or hegemony. Ontologically, CDA scholars see discourse as a social practice that represents semiotic events. In other words, discourse is a socially placed action; it is shaped and shaping,

what Fairclough and Wodak (1997) called constituted and constitutive. CDA politically aims at providing social critiques to social problems such as unequal opportunities, injustices, and discrimination.

Methodologically, CDA is an interdisciplinary research paradigm that commits a dialogue between disciplines, for instance, critical linguistics and social theory. As for critical linguistics in general, CDA is an interdisciplinary approach to social practice that has an overtly political agenda. Its concept and method are different from many traditional approaches such as conversational analysis which tends to understand texts merely as interactional elements among discourse participants (Blommaert, 2005). Consequently, this article posits CDA as a critical social theory and as a research method in doing language-based social research motivated by a set of core principles. As proposed by practitioners (Fairclough, 2010; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997), CDA as the explanatory critique is built upon the following standpoints.

First, CDA is concerned with social problems that have linguistic aspects. Scholars hold the view that without social problems, CDA does not exist. An incomplete implementation of public policy is an example of a social problem (Dunn, 2018). The incomplete process of policy implementation is not just a matter of political practices but it is a discursive issue as well (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012). The reason is that public policy is seen as a product and a process in the intersubjective production of meaning. There is an opaque relationship between public policy and how it is represented in texts. The relationship needs to be made unequivocal and transparent through analysis.

Second, discourse is historical. CDA thus sees discourse from a binding context. It recognizes that discourse and semiosis in general do not exist in isolation. Discourse needs context to have meaning. It needs context either for production or for interpretation (Fairclough, 2003; see also van Dijk, 2008). This account can also be drawn from cultural political economy in which context can be defined in terms of conditions of production and conditions of interpretation of the social problems. A discourse on public policy is not only related to economic and social aspects but is also related to political and cultural contexts (Jessop, 2010; Sum & Jessop 2015). Therefore, analyzing policy discourse from a CDA perspective requires some treatment of the economic, political, and social contexts as a means for a dialogue between disciplines. Third, CDA is an explanatory critique. CDA scholars look at social realities in critical ways and try to change them. They explore what the unjust social world is and how it should be changed by advancing critiques (Bhaskar, 2009; Lacey, 2002). Accordingly, the critiques are aimed at “making respective political stance explicit, and having a focus on self-reflection as scholars undertaking research” (Wodak, 2008, p. 298).

Finally, CDA is a form of radical analysis. The analyst is often regarded as an activist as well as a thinker. The reason is that CDA allows the analyst to unravel the opaqueness in language use and its impacts on social life such as unequal access, unequal power relations, and discrimination in order to seek equality and social justice (Fairclough, 2018). Accordingly, the success of CDA’s analysis is determined by how effective its contribution to transformation for a better society is. In brief, some scholars have used CDA as both the theoretical framework and the analytical tool in their critical research on policy texts (Fairclough, 2013; Taylor, 2004; Theine & Rieder, 2019), but none has focused on the policy text of the MoU document.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This article used mixed research methods. The quantitative procedure was used for identifying the prevalence of the process types in the Helsinki MoU text and qualitative CDA was applied as the explanatory critique. [Chouliaraki and Fairclough \(1999\)](#) and [Fairclough \(2003\)](#) argue that CDA and transitivity analysis of the process types can commit a dialogue for text-based critical research. CDA provides a concept for analyzing representations of social phenomena. Meanwhile, transitivity can provide a grammatical and semantic concept of analysis. This is because transitivity can reveal how discourse participants represent reality through language. CDA consists of three dimensions of analysis: description, interpretation, and explanation of the discourse ([Fairclough, 2010](#)). However, CDA without grammatical analysis is not a critical analysis of discourse at all.

3.2 The Technique of Data Collection

The Helsinki MoU text is the primary source of data for the present study. The data was collected by retrieving the online version from the website of the United Nations Peacemaker. The academic reason for selecting the 18-year-old Helsinki MoU is that this document is of social, political, and historical significance not only for the GoI and GAM but also for the people of Aceh and the international community.

The Helsinki MoU text identifies the parties, defines the scope, specifies the roles and responsibilities of each party, and outlines future actions. It was understood as an agreement between the GoI and GAM to establish a permanent ceasefire of a 29-year conflict for new political, economic, and legal structures. It expresses a convergence of determination between the parties, indicating the common line of the actions to be taken. The Helsinki MoU text also sets out a variety of rules for the autonomous government of Aceh. It pertains to what the parties should do and how they should behave. The Helsinki MoU consists of seven pages, which are divided into six sections. Altogether it consists of 2.860 words.

3.3 The Technique of Data Analysis

The analysis of the data involved the following steps. First, to answer the first research question, this article set out six process types based on the Hallidayan system of transitivity: material process (processes involving physical actions); mental process (processes that go on in the internal world of mind); relational process (processes of being, having, attributing, and identifying); verbal process (processes of saying and talking); behavioral process (physiological processes of behaving); and existential process (processes of expressing that something exists). For an exhaustive treatment of the transitivity system, see [Thompson \(2013, Ch. 5\)](#) and [Halliday and Matthiessen \(2014, Ch. 5\)](#). Each process type has its unique participant roles and other grammatical characteristics. For example, the material process is associated with the Actor, the participant who does the action, the Goal, the affected participant, the Recipient/Client, the beneficiary of transfer of possession or service, and the Scope, the quantity of something. In addition, the material process can also have Circumstances realized by

adverbial phrases. The relational process is associated with the participant roles of the Carrier, the entity that carries or has the Attribute. When a relational clause is reversible, the clause has the participant roles of Value/Token and Identified/Identifier. The mental process concerns the participant roles of Senser, the participant who feels, likes, or knows Phenomenon, the entity of the world in the mind. The verbal process is associated with the participant role of Sayer, the participant who says a Verbiage, what is said, and Receiver, to whom something is said. The behavioral process is realized by Behaver, the one who behaves, and Behavior is the human physiological process itself. The existential process has the participant role of Existent, the entity that exists, which is normally recognizable because the Subject of the clause is ‘there’.

Table 1. Process types in transitivity system.

Process types	Examples
Material	GAM _[Actor] undertakes _[Process: Material] the decommissioning of all arms, ammunition, and explosives _[Goal] . Outside monitors _[Goal] will be invited _[Process: Material] to monitor the elections in Aceh _[Circumstance: Place] . All former combatants _[Recipient] will receive _[Process: Material] an allocation of suitable farming land _[Scope] .
Relational	Aceh _[Carrier] has _[Process: Relational] the right _[Attribute] to raise funds with external loans. The number of organic police forces to remain in Aceh after the relocation _[Value] is _[Process: Relational] 9100 _[Token] .
Mental	Aceh _[Senser] will enjoy _[Process: Mental] direct and unhindered access _[Phenomenon] to foreign countries.
Verbal	The European Commission _[Sayer] said _[Process: Verbal] that they would help _[Verbiage] .
Behavioral	The widows _[Behaver] cried _[Process: Behavioral] .
Existential	There will be _[Process: Existential] transparency in campaign funds _[Existent] .

Table 1 provides a simple illustration for each of the process types of the main clauses in the transitivity system that the article employed. The semantic labels (Actor, Goal, Carrier, Attribute, Senser, Phenomenon, Sayer, Verbiage, etc.) are all functional and conventional categories. Their uses depend on the participant roles of the linguistic elements they play in a clause.

Second, each of the major clauses in the MoU text was inserted into the spreadsheets for identification and tabulation. Third, to decide the type of processes occurring in the major clauses, the author referred to Table 1 and Thompson (2008, 2013) and Mwinlaaru and Nartey (2022). When the borderline cases occurred, the researcher used common sense and the grammar of English. All technical labels were set to start with a capital letter. Finally, to answer the second research question, the researcher resorted to Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) and Fairclough (2003), where CDA can provide the explanatory critique for the policy measures enacted in the Helsinki MoU.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The first research question of this article concerns the prevalent process types used in the Helsinki MoU document. The findings are revealed in Table 2. It shows that the most prevalent process types in the Helsinki MoU were the material processes and the relational processes ranked the second. The least realization was the existential

process. Behavioral process did not seem to have existed in the text. The findings also demonstrated that the Helsinki MoU document was concerned more with the world of doings, beings, and relations than the world of feelings and sayings (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Thompson, 2013).

Table 2. Frequency distribution of process types in the Helsinki MoU text.

Process types	Frequency	Percentage
Material	95	73.07%
Relational	24	18.46%
Mental	4	3.07%
Verbal	5	3.84%
Behavioral	0	0.0%
Existential	2	1.53%
Total	130	

Table 3 shows the transitivity of clauses in the Helsinki MoU document with the participants involved in the process types. It shows that the social actors are dominated by concepts and are usually obfuscated. The GoI functions more as an actor than GAM. This demonstrates that there was an unequal power relation between the two parties. The findings also revealed that the relational processes as the second dominance in the text in which the Carrier was realized by Aceh. The Attributes were frequently concepts and the Token–Value slots were generally occupied by the AMM.

Table 3. Transitivity of the clauses in the Helsinki MoU Text.

Participant Role	Entities						
	GoI	GAM	GoI & GAM	Aceh	AMM	Obfuscated	Concepts
Actor	19	11	9	7	7	18	24
Carrier	2		1	6			4
Senser	1		1	1	1		
Sayer					4		1
Behaver							
Existent							2
Goal			3	4	1		57
Recipient				5	1		
Token–Value				1	8		2
Attribute							13
Phenomenon							3
Receiver				1	3		2
Verbiage							1
Total	22	11	14	25	25	18	109

Concerning the second research question, the findings reveal that some of the policy measures articulated in the MoU, such as establishing *Wali Nanggroe* and decommissioning all arms, have been undertaken; others such as establishing a human rights court, distributing farming land, creating jobs for ex-combatants, and setting the bank interest rate by the government of Aceh remain to be seen. In addition, different from Amalia's (2019) findings, the current study found that there was not only vagueness in power relation between the GoI and GAM embedded in the Helsinki MoU, but the document has also served as a bureaucratic means of control for Aceh development. The next subsections provide a rigorous analysis of the important

excerpts that constitute the textual evidence of the findings and for the discussion section that follows.

4.1 Material Processes

Table 2 shows that the material processes dominate the process types in the Helsinki MoU. The action verbs in the material processes included ‘established’ and ‘receive’. Such choices of verbs signify the prescriptions that the two parties have needs, duties, and preferences to accomplish.

- (1) Kanun Aceh_[Goal] will be **re-established**_[Process: Material] for Aceh_[Recipient] respecting the historical traditions and customs of the people of Aceh and reflecting contemporary legal requirements of Aceh.
- (2) The institution of Wali Nanggroe with all its ceremonial attributes and entitlements_[Goal] will **be established**_[Process: Material].

The verbal group ‘will be reestablished’ and ‘will be established’ are in passive forms that refer to the history of Aceh and the political promise that the parties need to manifest. The social actors in the clauses are obfuscated; they are concealed. Since the Actor is indirectly mentioned in the clause, it becomes less prominent and less affected by the action. The MoU also stipulates that:

- (3) A Human Rights Court_[Goal] will **be established**_[Process: material] for Aceh_[Recipient].

The Actor in this excerpt also obfuscates while Aceh is the Recipient. The promise enacted in ‘will be established’ has passed timelessly. The GoI has forgotten its promise and its impact is discussed later. Another stagnant implementation of the policy concerns the distribution of farming land and employment for the former GAM combatants.

- (4) All former combatants_[Recipient] will **receive**_[Process: Material] an allocation of suitable farming land, employment, or, in the case of incapacity to work, adequate social security_[Goal] from the authorities of Aceh_[Source].

The material verb ‘will receive’ in excerpt (4) refers to a promise of the allocation of suitable ‘farming land’ and ‘employment’ that ‘the authorities of Aceh’ for ex-combatants. The implementation has also been sluggish. The excerpts in (5) and (6) are the material clauses concerning security.

- (5) GAM_[Actor] **undertakes**_[Process: Material] the decommissioning of all arms, ammunition, and explosives_[Goal] **held by**_[Process: Material] the participants_[Actor] in GAM activities with the assistance of the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM)_[Circumstance: Role].
- (6) The Head of Monitoring Mission_[Actor] will **make**_[Process: Material] a ruling_[Goal] which_[Actor] will be binding on_[Material Process] the parties_[Goal].

The timeless action verb ‘undertake’ in excerpt (5) indicates that the submission of weapons from GAM’s combatants is the responsibility of GAM. They have completed the task. In excerpt (6), the verb ‘make’ signifies that the presence of the third party, the AMM, has the structural power that can force the two parties to comply

with the agreement stipulated in the MoU. The presence of the modal verb ‘will’ in excerpt (6) indicates a strong commitment from the AMM to settle the conflict and the parties obey the regulation. The social actor in the clause is the AMM which holds power to monitor the peace process. It is fair to say that the decommissioning of ‘all arms, ammunition and explosives’ was implemented efficaciously because there have been no serious armed clashes in the region.

4.2 Relational Processes

The second prevalent process type in the Helsinki MoU is the relational process. In total, there are 24 occurrences of the relational processes in the MoU document. The verbs which accompany the relational clauses include ‘has’, ‘have’, and ‘be’. Sample excerpts of the relational processes in the Helsinki MoU text are as follows:

- (7) Aceh_[Carrier] **has**_[Process: Relational] the right_[Attribute] to use regional symbols including a flag, a crest and a hymn_[Attribute].
- (8) Aceh_[Carrier] **has**_[Process: Relational] the right_[Attribute] to set interest rates beyond that set by the Central Bank of the Republic of Indonesia.
- (9) Aceh_[Carrier] **has**_[Process: Relational] the right_[Attribute] to set and raise taxes to fund official internal activities.
- (10) Aceh_[Carrier] **has**_[Process: Relational] the right_[Attribute] to conduct trade and business internally and internationally and to seek foreign direct investment and tourism to Aceh.

These relational clauses are concerned with political and economic policies. The excerpts show that the relational verb ‘has’ collocates with the nominal group ‘the right’ in excerpts (7)-(10). All these rights are manifest in nonfinite verbs, ensuring the Attribute ‘right’ to use ‘regional symbols including a flag’ in excerpt (7), to set ‘interest rates’ in excerpt (8), to set and raise ‘taxes’ in excerpt (9) and to conduct international trade and to seek ‘foreign direct investment’ in excerpt (10). Rhetorically these rights are taken for granted, for Acehness identity is inculcated in the document. It is Aceh that serves as the Carrier of having rights.

Another excerpt on the major economic policy realized by the relational process occurs in excerpt (11).

- (11) Aceh_[Carrier] **is**_[Process: Relational] entitled_[Attribute] to retain seventy (70) per cent of the revenues from all current and future hydrocarbon deposits and other natural resources in the territory of Aceh as well as in the territorial sea surrounding Aceh.

In excerpt (11) the MoU stipulates that Aceh is entitled to retain ‘seventy (70) per cent of the revenues’ from sharing of exploitation of ‘hydrocarbon deposits and other natural resources’. The predicative adjective ‘entitled’ is the Attribute of the Carrier, Aceh, for the nonfinite verb ‘to retain’.

The following are three excerpts of the relational process concerning security.

- (12) The number of organic military forces to remain in Aceh after the relocation_[Value] **is**_[Process: Relational] 14700_[Token].

- (13) The number of organic police forces to remain in Aceh after the relocation_[Value] **is**_[Process: Relational] 9100_[Token].
- (14) Military forces_[Carrier] will **be**_[Process: Relational] responsible for_[Attribute] upholding external defence of Aceh.

In excerpts (12) and (13), the processes are realized by a Value–Token relation. In excerpt (14) the nominal group ‘military forces’ serves as the Carrier for the Attribute ‘responsible for upholding external defence of Aceh’. The constituent ‘will be responsible for’ indicates that the process of being is constructed from a perspective of Indonesian security. The propositions of these clauses presuppose that Aceh cannot have its own military. The GoI is totally in charge of national security. Consequently, to tackle a new movement, the GoI has strategically expanded the military bases in the province, but not a significant number of troops.

4.3 Mental Processes

Table 2 reveals that the MoU uses mental processes sparingly. The mental verbs by which the processes are manifest include ‘agree’, ‘enjoy’, and ‘decide’. The following are excerpts of mental clauses in the Helsinki MoU that require analysis.

- (15) To this end_[Circumstance: Contingency] the GoI and GAM_[Senser] have **agreed** on_[Process: Mental] the following_[Phenomenon]: ...
- (16) Aceh_[Senser] will **enjoy**_[Process: Relational] direct and unhindered access to foreign countries_[Phenomenon].
- (17) The Head of the Monitoring Mission_[Senser] will **decide** on_[Process: Mental] disputed cases_[Phenomenon] based on advice from the legal advisor of the Monitoring Mission from the legal advisor of the Monitoring Mission.

In excerpts (15)-(17), the mental verbs ‘agree’, ‘enjoy’, and ‘decide’ refer to the cognitive and desiderative type of mental process. The participants are the GoI, GAM, Aceh (people), and the AMM; the participants seem to be inanimate, but they still refer to living things. The phenomenon includes ‘access to foreign countries’ and ‘disputed cases’, and certainly the substance of the Helsinki MoU itself as stated in ‘the following’ of excerpt (15), which includes a new law of the MoU.

4.4 Verbal Processes

There are five verbal clauses occurring in the Helsinki MoU text. The following are two excerpts of the verbal processes.

- (18) In that case_[Angle], GoI_[Receiver] will be **informed**_[Process: Verbal] and the GoI will not assume responsibility for the security of this.
- (19) AMM_[Sayer] **reports to**_[Process: Verbal] the Head of Monitoring Mission_[Receiver] who will provide regular reports to the parties and to others as required, as well as to a designated person or office in the European Union and ASEAN contributing countries.

The reporting verbs ‘informed’ and ‘reports’ in the clauses are categorized as verbal clauses since they construe verbal activities. In excerpt (18), the Sayer is indirectly mentioned in the clause while the Receiver is ‘the GoI’. On the other hand,

in excerpt (19) the Sayer conflates with ‘AMM’ while the Receiver is ‘the Head of Monitoring Mission’. This indicates that it is the AMM’s role that is decisive in maintaining law and order after the declaration of the truce. Since the MoU is a written document, it contains only a few verbal processes.

4.5 Existential Processes

The last and least prevalent process type in the Helsinki MoU document is the existential process. This process is marked by the word ‘there’. Existential process occurred only twice in the document, as follows:

(20) There will **be**_[Process: Existential] full transparency_[Existent] in campaign funds_[Circumstance: Location].

(21) There will **be**_[Process: Existential] no major movements of military forces_[Existent] after the signing of this MoU_[Circumstance: Temporal].

Excerpts (20) and (21) show that the existential processes are expressed by the finite verb ‘be’ and supported by modal ‘will’, indicating the future events with a presupposed strong commitment from the parties of the Helsinki MoU. Moreover, the nominal group’s ‘full transparency’ and ‘no major movements of military forces’ are the Existents of processes that are presupposed and back-grounded. The word ‘there’ in the excerpts has no ideational meaning; it simply indicates the characteristic of the ideational process that fills in the subject slot. Historical consensus shows that full transparency in the campaign and other funds has not always existed. As a result, several politicians have been imprisoned because of misappropriating such funds. The GoI has not moved the military forces, but they actually have expanded the military bases in Aceh.

5. DISCUSSION

The most significant finding (see Table 2) is that the material processes dominate the Helsinki MoU text. Meanwhile, in the transitivity of the clauses (see Table 3), the actors are mostly realized by concepts and sometimes they are obfuscated. This indicates the vagueness of the Helsinki peace agreement. Economically, the meaning-making processes in the text emphasize physical actions, because concrete and comprehensive solutions were anticipated for the protracted conflict of Aceh. Furthermore, the actors are often concealed, because politically the GoI pretended to be accountable for the proposed actions without GAM’s awareness of it. Therefore, the real agency is unclear. In other words, although social structures can determine discursive practices and establish the system of doings and doers (Fairclough, 2010; van Leeuwen, 2008), the actors of certain actions in the MoU text are not specified. In other words, some policies are articulated without agents. Theoretically, transitivity manifests itself in representing five different worlds in the MoU text, including the physical, relation, and the world of existence (Fairclough, 2003; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Thompson, 2008, 2013). Empirically, transitivity can also manifest in the mediated legal world (Coulson, 2020). The findings reflect those of Adjei et al. (2015) and Gunawan et al. (2023), who found that the material processes dominated the texts they studied. The MoU text mostly embeds the physical actions; for instance,

establishing *Qanun* (bylaw) Aceh, establishing the institution of *Wali Nanggroe* (customary leader of state), and establishing a Human Rights Court.

For *Qanun* enactment, as in excerpt (1), the legislative members of the Aceh House of Assembly (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Aceh*, or DPRA) passed *Qanun Jinayah* (Islamic criminal bylaw) Number 6 of 2014. From the explanatory critique point of view, this law has mostly affected the subaltern groups. For instance, when the law of canning was executed for committing *zina* (adultery), *maysir* (gambling), and *khalwat* (dating in secluded places), it generally victimized the lower level of Acehnese society. The politicians and government officials who are involved in the corruption cases are exempt from the *Qanun* enforcement although the corruption issues also deserve serious attention (Rahman, 2022). Indeed, the politicians involved in such cases have never been whipped. Certainly, the ultimate goal of flogging is for corrections, not for punishment, but the abuse of power exists in such law enforcement since it discriminates against particular groups.

Establishing *Wali Nanggroe*, as in excerpt (2), was also fulfilled. However, the institution of *Wali Nanggroe* seems to have been more a political agenda for power sharing than its main functional roles. In other words, *Wali Nanggroe* has not played a significant role in the development of Aceh. The institution focuses generally on *Hukum Adat* (customary law), ignoring serious duties: tackling unemployment, fighting against injustices, and eradicating poverty. GAM actually did not fight for the *Syariah* law but for the economic injustices, unjust policies, and political rights of the GoI (Schulze, 2004). Regrettably, establishing a Human Rights Court, as in excerpt (3), was not fulfilled. Consequently, the ruthless abductions, tortures, and the bloody massacre of innocent civilians that beset Aceh during the protracted conflict, such as the tortures and killings at *Rumoh Gedong* from 1989 to 1998, the shooting tragedy at *Simpang KKA* in 1999 and at *Bumi Flora* in 2001, have passed without investigations (“16 tahun damai Aceh,” 2021).

In excerpt (4), the MoU stipulates that ‘all former combatants will receive an allocation of suitable farming land and employment’: a material process for actions. However, in practice, only some GAM top leaders have access to a large part of land distributions. The fair distributions of land remain to be seen. The same holds true for the employment promise. The most conspicuous political impact of the employment policy is that dozens of ex-GAM politicians have reached top positions, such as the head of *Wali Nanggroe*, members of legislative and executive, provincial governor, and district regents (Usman, 2017). On the other hand, ex-GAM combatants, *inöng bale* (widowed combatants), and other subaltern groups have not been treated equally; they still generally live in utter misery.

Another important finding (see Table 2) is that the second prevalent process type in the MoU text is the relational process. They are concerned, among others, with Aceh’s having the ‘right’ to use a regional flag, a crest, and a hymn (as in excerpt (7)). However, in reality, Aceh still cannot raise the flag legally or sing the hymn in public ceremonial activities. Furthermore, the policies of having the ‘right’ to set interest rates (as in excerpt (8)), ‘right’ to raise taxes (as in excerpt (9)), and ‘right’ to conduct international trade and seek foreign direct investments (as in excerpt (10)), have not been implemented either.

To follow up the economic policy on the right to set interest rates (as in excerpt (8)), in 2018 the government of Aceh enacted *Qanun* Number 11 stipulating that all banks in Aceh must operate on the basis of the Islamic finance law. However, in the

five years of the *Qanun* practices, the interest rates are still set by the Central Bank of Indonesia. Ideologically, in the past, the conventional banks used marketing vocabulary such as ‘result-oriented’, ‘in tune listening’, and ‘service excellence’. Now the Sharia banks adopt religious terms, such as *mudharabah* (profit sharing), *musyarakah* (joint venture), and *qaulan ma’rufah* (good communication). Yet the profit-oriented practices have not changed. It is the discourse that actually has changed. Indeed, even the converted banks still levy taxes instead of *zakat* (alms) from the clients’ accounts. In principle, the ultimate purpose of Sharia banking is to create well-being for the *ummah* (community), not simply to boost the financial growth of the stakeholders and the banking institutions. Furthermore, the government of Aceh ‘has right’ to seek foreign direct investments, as in excerpt (10), but it appears that foreign companies are still reluctant to invest in Aceh. This is probably because they are still haunted by *pajak nanggroe* (local taxes); the raised taxes (see excerpt (9)), that are illegal because they are levied by the *oknum* (unknown authority). Consequently, neither large greenfield investments nor big brownfield investments flow into Aceh.

In excerpt (11) the MoU stipulates that Aceh ‘is entitled to retain 70 per cent’ of the revenues. Linguistically, this excerpt was also in the relational process. Politically, this sum of revenue ‘70 per cent’ is a commitment between the GoI and GAM. Aceh receives a special autonomy revenue from natural resources about 10 trillion rupiahs annually. With the approval of DPRA, the Aceh government through decrees stipulates where the revenues should be spent. Compared to other provinces in Indonesia like East Java and West Java with a population of 40.6 million and 49.9 million respectively, this sum of revenues is rational for Aceh with a population of 5.2 million. Surprisingly, Aceh has yet been able to eradicate the crippling poverty, high unemployment, and high stunting rates. This is because the government of Aceh has mismanaged the annual revenues. The members of the parliament are so engrossed in power maintenance that they rarely visit villages to provide solutions to unemployment, economic hardship, and education for disadvantaged youths. They are generally in search of ordinary people when they need votes to secure their political power.

Taken together, Mwinlaaru and Nartey (2022) found that transitivity in the African nations’ anthems represented the people’s resistance to colonization, the motif for freedom, and their right to land ownership. This study shows that transitivity manifests various discrete issues, including the rule of law, social order, and economy. For instance, the Helsinki MoU demanded the GoI’s confession of the flag of Aceh, the right to *Qanun*, the rights to a larger portion, and the self-management of the revenues. Regrettably, although the MoU has passed for 18 years, a number of points specified in the document have yet been implemented. In other words, Aceh has not obtained its power of self-government (Zainal et al., 2022) as there was at face value no dominance in power in the peace agreement (Amalia, 2019). These are some of the indicators of the sluggishness of the Helsinki MoU implementation. The conundrum occurred because the MoU was not carefully planned and the GAM leaders signed it without mature considerations. Therefore, since its total implementations are stagnant, the Helsinki MoU policy text to some extent constitutes a bureaucratic means of the economic, political, and social controls for the post-conflict Aceh.

6. CONCLUSION

This article has shown the material processes constitute the most dominant process type in the Helsinki MoU text, followed by the relational processes. The actors are mostly concepts, frequently obfuscated. Unless concealed, more actors' roles were filled by the GoI than GAM. This indicates that there is an unequal relation between the GoI and GAM. Meanwhile, the goals are also in general realized concepts. The article has argued that the material clauses dominated the MoU text because the GoI and GAM deserve a real overarching approach to the protracted conflict. In addition, the prevalent process types also indicate that there are prescriptions and provisions that need to be carried out to generate solutions to the economic, political, social, and structural problems in Aceh. However, although the agreement has passed for nearly 18 years with special autonomy revenues, the development of Aceh is still lagging behind the other provinces in Indonesia. This is probably because most of the actions are in the form of concepts and obfuscated in which the agency is not clear. This indicates that there was a vagueness in power relations, agendas, and policies articulated in the Helsinki MoU.

The article has argued that although the Helsinki MoU has played a significant role as the negotiated way of regulating Acehnese society that is embedded in discourse, a number of the crucial provisions in the form of social transformations it needs to generate have not been implemented. These provisions include setting the bank interest rates and the establishment of a Human Rights Court. Others, such as the equal distributions of land and the invitation of foreign direct investments have also been sluggish. This implies that the Helsinki MoU has served as the bureaucratic means of control for the post-conflict Aceh. Therefore, this study would provide some academic enlightenment not only for text-based critical research but also for political institutions and better future Aceh development.

The current study has some limitations. It has relied on the analysis of a single large text. It has not been supported by ethnographic data such as interviews and questionnaires. Therefore, further research should include various texts, such as other agreements, laws, decrees, or statutes on public policy that came after the Helsinki MoU. The research methodology should include interviews, questionnaires, and a discourse-historical approach. Textual analytical tools can include intertextuality and interdiscursivity.

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A Critical Discourse Analysis of ELT Institutional Contradictions in Language Policy and Recruitment in Japan

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Abstract

This paper analyses a series of websites of language institutions in Japan and highlights the consistent contradictions between the language policies advertised and the recruitment of non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) conducted. I did a qualitative website study that involved an analysis of the most in-demand ELT companies and organizations in Japan. The websites were of ELT institutions, which were a mix of private institutions that teach for profit, and organisations that are mediators in supplying teachers (Assistant Language Teachers–ALTs) for schools around the country. The aim of this was to compare and contrast the discourse in language ideology with recruitment policies at these companies regarding NNESTs. Conducting a study of these companies' websites enabled me to find and highlight trends in recruitment and language ideologies where I found a series of inconsistencies but also some encouraging trends in moves towards a more global outlook in teacher recruitment and discourse ideology. At the heart of the analysis was the question of whether a move towards more NNEST recruitment was due to changes in language ideology or economic necessity. The increase in non-native English-speaking teacher recruitment in Japan would be an encouraging development in attitudes and policy if it was related to a recognition of how the linguistic landscape in the 21st century is evolving but it seems apparent that economic factors are the motivating factor.

Keywords: English language teaching, non-native English-speaking teachers, language policy.

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1. INTRODUCTION

More non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) are being recruited at ELT institutions across Japan, ranging from small-scale *eikawas*¹ to government-funded programs such as JET.² It is salient to ask whether ideology or economic necessity is the driving force behind this recruitment drive at ELT institutions, which can reflect quite accurately changes in Asia on the whole. If the change can be deemed to be ideological then this is encouraging for the enfranchisement of NNESTs as the shifting sands of the global use of English is being reflected in the various institution's policies, which will enhance the prestige and self-appreciation of NNESTs teaching both in their home countries and abroad. However, if it can be surmised that changes taking place are borne out of the desire for profit and other economic necessities, then it demonstrates that there is still a dichotomy of NS-NNS attitudes that need to be further challenged to bring about change at a macro level in the ELT industry in Asia. To gain insight into the mechanisms behind NNEST recruitment and the motivating factors behind it, I conducted an analysis of a series of websites of ELT institutions based in Japan.

At the heart of this paper lies the issue of the equity of non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) within ELT and how this appears to be stalling in current ELT institutions. [Kumaravadivelu \(2016\)](#) poignantly mentions that:

Seldom in the annals of an academic discipline have so many people toiled so hard for so long and achieved so little in their avowed attempt at disrupting the insidious structure of inequality in their chosen profession. ([Kumaravadivelu, 2016, p. 83](#))

I aim to address this insidious structure of inequality by highlighting how ELT institutions are increasingly recruiting NNESTs, but seemingly due to economics rather than a shift in ideology. Within ELT the native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) are still the dominant partners in the dichotomous relationship with NNESTs, and despite evidence to show otherwise, is considered the better and more legitimate teachers ([Benke & Medyges, 2005](#); [Braine, 1999, 2010](#); [Kiczowski, 2020](#); [Liu & Zhang, 2007](#); [Mahboob, 2003](#); [Medgyes, 1994](#)). This advantageous position results in better employment opportunities, higher pay, more work benefits, better conditions, and higher self-esteem. NNESTs continue to struggle in gaining employment, especially out of their home country, and when they do gain a position, it is often under conditions that by no means match the gains made by their NEST counterparts. [Braine \(1999, p. xvii\)](#) states how these discriminatory practices against NNESTs are:

...highly ironic, considering the profession's strident championing of multiculturalism, diversity, and other socio-political causes, often on behalf of ESL students and immigrants. Although ESL students are praised and admired for the multiculturalism and diversity they bring into language classes, non-native English teachers, who can contribute their rich multicultural, multilingual experiences, are often barred from the same classes. ([Braine, 1999, p. xvii](#))

¹ Small independent English schools.

² The Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme.

These inconsistencies are highlighted in this paper where I demonstrate how the discourse espoused by ELT institutions in Japan does not align with their employment policies. Regarding recruitment, I analysed the text in the relevant sections to see how explicitly the requirements were indicated and how recruitment principles aligned with the goals of the company. I looked at the text that was situated in the recruitment requirements section and compared it with the discourse ideology of the institutions to identify inconsistencies. Numerous contradictions were clear, which indicated a trend toward more acceptance of NNESTs within these institutions is driven by economic factors rather than any explicit ideology that would be deemed favourable to NNESTs. The equity of NNESTs in ELT is at the heart of this research, which sought to establish whether signs of change were taking place in Japan.

The research questions for this study are:

1. In ELT institutions in Japan what is the prevalent discourse on the recruitment of NNESTs?
2. Are there inconsistencies between recruitment policies and discourse ideology within ELT institutions in Japan?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers (NNESTs)

ELT is a big and growing business. The ELT market was worth \$33.5 billion in 2018, and that figure is expected to grow to \$54.9 billion by 2027³. The transnational educational element to the future growth of the ELT industry opens the doors to NNESTs seeking to either enter the industry or gain parity within it. However, NNESTs have traditionally been seen as inauthentic representatives of the English language in the monolingual environment of ELT. Their ability to benefit from the other languages they know has often been ignored or seen as leading to linguistic inaccuracy in the chosen language, and even contamination (Ellis, 2016; Selvi, 2011). Rather than exploit the strengths that exist in their portfolios NNESTs often need to mimic their NEST counterparts and adhere to principles that do not suit them. Galloway (2014) offered an insight into this indiscreet discrimination in a study of a qualified multilingual NNEST in Japan, who has been forced to take on a 'fake American' identity as a strategy to avoid the perils of being an NNEST in Japan. This serves as an example of what lengths are sometimes necessary to 'fit in' and paddle downstream in the current ELT trends. Another example of this mimicking comes from Perry's (2021) research into a Filipino NNEST working in China who adopted an Australian accent, encouraged by his employers, to seem more 'native'. The participant began to believe himself in this adopted identity and felt shame towards his non-nativeness as a teacher.

Identity has been a well-explored theme in NNEST research, where there is a sense of 'impostor syndrome' (Bernat, 2008). This vacuum was explored more by Medgyes (2017) who writes of the binary nature of NNESTs in that they are both learners and teachers, so this dichotomy of realities naturally creates a pessimistic sense of self that manifests itself in resignation and complicity with the institutional

³ 18 March 2021 06h30 HE | Source: Meticulous Market Research Pvt. Ltd.

standards. [Choe \(2005\)](#) portrayed the NS dominance in Korea and how this affected the self-identity of Korean NNESTs, who were always comparing themselves to this apparent yardstick. Similarly, in Turkey, [Dogancay-Aktuna \(2008\)](#) found that NNESTs had negative self-esteem and viewed other NNESTs in a negative light. They insisted upon the need for them to learn more idiomatic expressions and improve their conversational abilities. [Phillipson \(1992\)](#) also mentions how NNESTs self-doubt their own expertise and judgement, a feeling born from the unjust environment in which they are required to conduct their professional lives. Institutional discourse in ELT speaks of globalism and equality but on the ground, this is seldom translated into reality for the increasing number of NNESTs working in ELT.

At the heart of discrimination against NNESTs is the employment issue and how NNESTs are routinely given preferential treatment in matters of employment. Research has demonstrated that there is an element of demographic sorting within ELT. An example of this comes from a questionnaire survey study by [Clark and Paran \(2007\)](#), who found that 72% of English language teaching institutions in the UK made hiring decisions based on perceived native/non-native speaker distinctions in their recruitment. [Ruecker and Ives \(2014\)](#) found similar results through a study conducted on 59 recruitment websites which showed a clear majority of ELT institutions in Southeast Asia were explicitly focused on employing mostly white NNESTs. More recently, [Kiczowski \(2020\)](#) discovered, through a survey study, that the issue of being 'non-native' still carried weight in employment motivations, although he claims it appears to be diminishing slightly. All these apparent barriers placed before NNESTs in recruitment happen despite the ever-increasing necessity and demand for NNESTs ([Graddol, 2006](#)). According to [Braine \(2013, p. 13\)](#), "for many NNS English teachers, qualifications, ability, and experience were of little help in the job market where the invisible rule appeared to be No NNS need apply".

This is demonstrated in Japan and China where in the visa requirements it is often stated that being a native speaker is required. Although NNESTs can get visas in these countries to work as teachers it is often through an agency that charges expensive fees and then continues to take money from the teachers as they renew contracts throughout their period of employment ([Perry, 2021](#)).

What other prejudiced product is openly marketed just because of customer demand? Many job ads explicitly or implicitly suggest that the ideal candidate is young, white, and Western-looking ([Ruecker & Ives, 2014](#)). [Holliday \(2008\)](#) stated,

I have heard influential employers [in the ELT industry] in Britain say that while they would abolish the discriminatory differentiation between 'native speakers' and 'non-native speakers' tomorrow, they can't because their customers demand it. ([Holliday, 2008, p. 121](#))

[Kramadibrata \(2016\)](#) claims there is no rational justification for students preferring NNESTs. In private schools' students are paying higher costs due to employers targeting exclusively NNESTs, and paying them higher wages, in order to advertise that there are native teachers, and then this subsequently attracts more students to the school. [Kramadibrata \(2016\)](#) puts students' preference for NNESTs down to subconscious cognitive bias, or what he describes as the Halo Effect. This bias is based on no empirical evidence nor practical outputs, meaning it is possible to counteract and dispel. The research conducted for this paper identified that NNESTs

are being recruited in increasing numbers, however, NNESTs being employed based on their acceptance of a lower salary⁴ must not be acceptable for this ignores the professional skills and global positioning that make them equal assets with, and in some cases more than equal with, NESTs.

2.2 ELT Pedagogy

An issue in current ELT pedagogy is that 21st century linguistic realities are not being represented in ELT classrooms (and thus, institutions) globally, which consequently is not allowing NNESTs to professionally take advantage of their potential. [Kramsch \(2014\)](#) summarizes the situation aptly by stating,

There has never been a time when language teaching and learning has been more interactive and more imaginative than today...and yet there has never been a greater tension between what is taught in the classroom and what the students will need in the real world once they have left the classroom. In the last decades, that world has changed to such an extent that language teachers are no longer sure of what they are supposed to teach nor what real world situations they are supposed to prepare their students for. ([Kramsch, 2014, p. 296](#))

Attitudes in research have drifted from a monolingual approach to language teaching to an acceptance that learners possess wide-ranging repertoires of communicative abilities that need to be utilized and it is important to translate this to classroom practices. A shift in ideology within ELT institutions towards more hybrid language policies⁵ would be a welcome move that would enhance the legitimacy of NNESTs and ensure that they were recruited in greater numbers on equal terms.

Globalization has been influential in making the field of sociolinguistics shift towards a study of mobile, trans-global networks and linguistic resources ([Blommaert, 2012](#)). The traditional concept of language and Saussurean ideals have been further dismantled and moved toward the social matrix and function of language ([Hymes, 1989](#)). Linguistically, multilingualism is at the heart of globalization and the trans-global issues that accompany it. Multilingualism in its mobile global context is not a neatly packaged assortment of resources used uniformly throughout time and space, but it instead moves us away from the local when we consider language use across space and time. [Blommaert \(2012\)](#) proposes “truncated” multilingualism (p. 23), in which repertoires of language use are composed of specialized but often underdeveloped resources. These are not “flat” and “smooth” repertoires but ‘chequered’ and representative of the unstable trajectories of the people who possess them ([Blommaert, 2012, p. 23](#)). They are grounded in historical events, social systems, and informal learning processes. These chequered repertoires will gradually make most English uses appear to be deviant from the traditional ‘standard’ as the truncated use of English in mobile settings will have evolved. When referring to a multilingual’s repertoire, it is worth specifying what this encompasses. [Hall \(2019, p. 86\)](#) uses the

⁴ Data is difficult to demonstrate regarding financial issues due to the sensitivities involved but research by Saengngoen (2014), Griffith (2015), and Jung (2014) demonstrates disparities in salaries between NESTs and NNESTs in Thailand, Indonesia, and Korea respectively.

⁵ Hybrid language policies can be defined as embracing multiple linguistic concepts that serve the same communicative objective. Examples are English as a lingua franca and translanguaging.

term repertoire “to refer to the totality of an individual’s language knowledge” meaning flexibility and not an adherence to a binary notion of competence or not in a language. Multilingual competencies within their repertoires are used according to situational contexts and are thus adaptable and fluid in their nature, something that will be increasingly important in the evolution of ELT pedagogy.

With regards to multilingual pedagogy, Flores and Aneja (2017) propose more immediate attention being drawn to introducing a multilingual perspective into TESOL teacher education and into the classroom. This enhances positivity in their self-identity and encourages them to embrace their multilingualism. Cummins (2007, p. 222) is a proponent of bilingual teaching strategies “that acknowledge the reality of, and strongly promote, two-way cross-language transfer”. This concept is taken further by García and Li (2014) whose research on translanguaging also seeks fluid practices that represent teachers’ and students’ full linguistic repertoires. We need inclusive curriculums that are shaped by the students’ and teachers’ social and cultural backgrounds. Genealogy as an analytical framework is useful here as we cannot take for granted the discourse of current curriculums. We must look at the lineage of how and why the current ELT curriculums exact the principles that they do, and problematise accepted terminology and images within curriculums, and indeed the marketing of ELT. Regarding intercultural communication, where multilingualism is such an asset, Taglialetela (2022) calls for the integration of an English as a lingua franca (ELF)–oriented approach into traditional ELT to develop learners’ full intercultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence. Interestingly, this involves a dual teaching model, in which there is a structural section (based on native-speaker norms) and an intercultural section (using ELF principles). Baker (2020) is also a proponent of incorporating ELF into ELT pedagogy to increase the sociocultural dimension of communication by using multilingual linguistic resources.

3. METHODS

I analysed websites of ELT institutions in Japan, which were a mix of private institutions that teach for profit, and organisations that are mediators in supplying teachers (Assistant Language Teachers–ALTs) for schools around the country (see Table 1).

Table 1. ELT institutions in Japan.

Company	Established	Number of schools
JET	1987	-
INTERAC	1972	-
ECC	1962	188
NOVA	1981	300 approx.
AEON	1973	250 approx.
GABA	1995	36
Berlitz (Japan)	1980	60

The exponential use of the internet made it an inevitable source of enquiry for my research project as it was apparent the websites used by various ELT institutions were sites of invaluable data that could be used to define trends in NNEST recruitment and discourse ideology. It could be more accurately described as content analysis of

web-based content for the focus of the analysis is on web content as socio-cultural 'texts', which can be analysed and interpreted. Describing and exploring the content from a qualitative perspective allowed me to uncover underlying meaning and significance. Essentially, I was examining why the creators of the websites, namely the institutions themselves, have created the content and what are the underlying reasons behind it. What can this content tell us about attitudes to NNESTs and whether these are genuinely changing or not? It was imperative for me to critically examine the meaning of the content to discuss whether it is economics or ideology that is driving changes in teacher demographics at these institutions.

Content analysis was used to apply the theory and principle being examined in my study. Krippendorff (1980) defines content analysis as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context" (p. 21). In describing the advantages of content analysis, Krippendorff (1980) also states that investigation of the text is free from the bias and researcher influence that can plague questionnaire surveys, interviews, and other projective tests. The low costs involved, convenience, and easy accessibility made website analysis an attractive proposition to the project too. However, although not having to engage with users is an advantage of content analysis, I was keen to reach out to various actors in the institutions on whom the websites were based, so as to gather additional data to support my content analysis. I also wanted to clarify my interpretations against the explanations given by those who were determining the policies dictated in the texts. This would prove useful in gathering more data, such as teacher demographic statistics.

Regarding the format of the methodology, I proceeded with the following steps:

1. I formulated the research questions relevant to this research procedure (as presented in the Introduction of this article).
2. I identified variables in the texts across the differing websites.
This involved analysing the websites to establish which sections were relevant to my research questions and whether there was consistency in my methods across the different institutional websites.
3. I created a coding system.
The coding system was categorised by:
 - a) Recruitment
 - b) Discourse ideology
 - c) Advertising
 - d) Curriculums
 - e) Materials
4. I confirmed the sampling.
The number of websites used was limited to institutions with numerous schools and students, and those with large revenues. This was established by reviewing each institution's public records.
5. I conducted text analysis.
I used critical discourse analysis techniques to examine and analyse the texts from the websites. CDA is being used to complement content analysis on this project as it enables me to delve into ideological notions that lie beyond the text, which is crucial to my understanding of NNEST enfranchisement. The choice of wording on the websites is deliberate and crucial to answering my questions of the economic or ideological leanings of the companies in their decision to employ more NNESTs. Using Wodak's (2001) framework of systematically collecting text samples, I could

determine the interrelationship of discourses that exist on the websites. I could thus analyse the ideologies involved in the sets of discourses on the websites highlighting the contradictions.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The Prevalent Discourse on the Recruitment of NNESTs in ELT Institutions in Japan

In the analysis of recruitment policies, there were three groups of ELT companies that I analysed. Two companies that recruit Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs), are ELT schools aimed at adults, and ELT schools aimed at children. Firstly, I examined two companies, JET, and INTERAC, that employ ALTs to be placed in public schools across Japan. On the Japan Exchange and Teaching program (JET) website⁶, it states in Part 6 of the general applicant criteria the candidate must:

- (1) Be adept in contemporary standard pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation in the designated language and possess excellent language ability that can be applied accurately and appropriately; have the ability to form sentences in a comprehensive and logical manner.

When I enquired about how they define ‘standard pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation’ the answer was that it:

- (2) Just simply refers to the standard language as opposed to a dialect. In the Japanese version it says 「現代の標準的な発音、リズム、イントネーション⁷」, but it basically just means having an excellent ability of the standard language.⁸

The issue of native-speakerism continues in the requirements when stated:

- (3) In the case of English-speaking countries (United States, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Ireland, South Africa, Philippines, Singapore, Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, etc.) the designated language is English.⁹

Interestingly the Philippines has been designated as an English-speaking country, despite Filipino, a form of Tagalog, being the most widely spoken national language and unofficial lingua franca. English is an official language, but this is different from being considered a native language, which is widely considered to be Filipino. Article XIV Section 6 of the Philippines 1987 constitution declares that:

- (4) The National language of the Philippines is Filipino. As it evolves, it shall be further developed and enriched on the basis of existing Philippine and other languages.¹⁰

⁶ <http://jetprogramme.org/en>

⁷ Translation: Standard modern pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation.

⁸ Taken from an email on 06/01/2022 in correspondence with jet-aa@clair.or.jp.

⁹ <http://jetprogramme.org/en/eligibility/>

¹⁰ <https://ncca.gov.ph/about-ncca-3/subcommissions/subcommission-on-cultural-disseminationscd/language-and-translation/development-of-filipino-the-national-language-of-the-philippines/>

This does not appear to be in line with JET's claim for it being a designated 'native' language, which would indicate that the company is justifying its increasing recruitment there under 'native-speaker' standards.

The ambiguity of whether NNESTs meet the requirements is also present in the Frequently Asked Questions section of the website where one of the listed questions asks:

- (5) I am not from an English-speaking country, but I majored in English and have experience as an English teacher. Can I apply to become an ALT?

The answer states:

- (6) Depending on your situation, you may be eligible to participate as an ALT. Please contact the Embassy or Consulate General of Japan in your country of citizenship for further information.¹¹

Looking at the Japanese embassy in Manila, the Philippines, it repeats the JET website's requirement that applicants must be adept in contemporary standard pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation in English. However, to clarify this, it is also stated that:

- (7) An applicant's ability to use the English language accurately and appropriately will be assessed based on the information he or she will provide in the application documents, as well as the results of an in-house English exam.¹²

This does not seem to be consistent with applicants in the Philippines being designated as 'native-speakers' by the JET program as it is deemed necessary for them to conduct a demonstration of their English ability, something not done in the USA, UK, Australia, etc.

INTERAC¹³ is another company that recruits ALTs for public schools in Japan, although it is not a governmental organisation and operates for profit. The requirements to be an ALT, as advertised on their website, state that applicants must:

- (8) Be a native-level speaker of English
And:
Have studied a second language at school or university¹⁴

Highlighted are two interesting excerpts from the requirements. Firstly, "Be a native-level speaker of English" is significant because it moves beyond the requirement of "native-speaker". Adding 'level' indicates that NNESTs, particularly from Kachru's outer and expanding circles are seemingly welcome to apply and consider themselves eligible. As with Kiczowski's (2020) study into NNEST employment no official definitions were offered on the website to be more specific about this, but it appeared to be a positive development regarding NNEST recruitment policy. The second interesting requirement, listed as less important than the previous, is that it would help if the applicants, "Have studied a second language at school or

¹¹ <http://jetprogramme.org/en/faq01/>

¹² https://www.ph.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/00_000147.html

¹³ <https://interacnetwork.com>

¹⁴ <https://interacnetwork.com/how-to-apply/requirements/>

university”. This broadens the scope of recruitment significantly and opens up enquiries from a wider range of potential NNESTs.

For the recruitment of Filipino teachers, INTERAC uses Chesham Recruitment Inc.¹⁵, which is a Philippines-based agent, licensed by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration. There are extra requirements for the potential ALTS coming through this agency. For example, video demonstrations are required in the recruitment process as a way to filter those who are deemed to have a suitable level of English. This video test also assesses accents with a ‘native’ English-speaking employee being the assessor as to whether it will suffice. Chesham proudly states in its job advertisement for Filipino ALTs that:

- (9) THE ALT CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT, INCLUDING THE COMPENSATION PACKAGE ON OFFER, IS PRECISELY THE SAME AS THAT OFFERED TO NATIVE ENGLISH-SPEAKING LANGUAGE TEACHERS RECRUITED FROM THE WEST.¹⁶

This indicates that the NEST-NNEST dichotomy is being used as a marketing tool. Regarding accent, Chesham stringently requires that candidates must have:

- (10) THE ABILITY TO TEACH ENGLISH WITH A SUSTAINED NEUTRALIZED ACCENT.

Recruits are also informed:

- (11) YOU WILL UNDERGO AN ACCENT ASSESSMENT TEST.

It also states that:

- (12) Locally accented English is absolutely not acceptable, especially in a Japanese high school setting.¹⁷

There is another interesting passage in the recruitment advertisement that portrays attitudes among Filipinos about how they are seen abroad, exposing insecurities that can be deemed unnecessary. It states:

- (13) In Japan, you will be judged not just on the delivery of your English lessons in the classroom, especially on your fluency and non-accented English in a High School setting, but also with regards to the quality of your English speaking and writing skills in your communications with your native English-speaking and other branch colleagues.¹⁸

This is not a discourse that would be expressed towards potential teachers from inner-circle countries and demonstrates the obstacles faced by NNESTs working in an environment abroad, especially when alongside NESTs. It supports Perry’s (2021) study of NNESTs working in China who needed to go through agencies to gain employment, a process that was lengthy and expensive.

Having examined the two major companies that provide ALTs to public schools in Japan, I now turn to private English language schools in Japan. Berlitz¹⁹ is a well-

¹⁵ <https://cheshamrecruitment.com.ph/>

¹⁶ http://cheshamrecruitment.com.ph/docs/20220314_ALT_ADVERTISEMENT.pdf

¹⁷ http://cheshamrecruitment.com.ph/docs/20220314_ALT_ADVERTISEMENT.pdf

¹⁸ http://cheshamrecruitment.com.ph/docs/20220314_ALT_ADVERTISEMENT.pdf

¹⁹ <https://teach.berlitz.co.jp>

known international ELT company with a large presence in Japan. Regarding recruitment, the most notable text comes in the FAQs section, where Question 11 is:

- (14) I'm not a native English speaker. Can I still teach English at Berlitz?

The response is:

- (15) We are looking for native or native-fluent instructors, as evidenced by our English instructors coming from over 70 different countries.²⁰

At Berlitz, each individual opening has specific requirements laid out, but all English-teaching positions state requirements similar to the following:

- (16) Our Language Centers (LCs) in the Kanto Area are looking for a diverse group of native (or native-fluent) English speakers for an immediate start.²¹

The recruitment website states that 1.7 thousand teachers are coming from over 70 countries with 17 different languages taught.²² Although not conclusive this could indicate that there are more teachers recruited to teach than from the number of countries in the inner circle. This is supported by their claim in the FAQ section that:

- (17) Our English instructors coming from over 70 different countries.²³

Further evidence is provided that NNESTs are employed in the visa requirements section, which states:

- (18) Applicants from non-English speaking countries should provide detailed information on degrees held and proof of 12 years of education in a native English-speaking environment.²⁴

On the student website for Berlitz in Japan, with a focus on English, a question is asked in the FAQ section:

- (19) What is the nationality of the teacher?

To which the answer is:

- (20) We employ teachers from all over the world, including America, Europe, and Asia. In order to provide more practical lessons, we actively employ teachers of various nationalities.

It further states that:

- (21) In order to provide more practical lessons, we actively recruit teachers with high language skills from all over the world.²⁵

²⁰ <https://teach.berlitz.co.jp/faq/>

²¹ <https://teach.berlitz.co.jp/>

²² <https://teach.berlitz.co.jp/reputation/>

²³ <https://teach.berlitz.co.jp/faq/>

²⁴ https://teach.berlitz.co.jp/apply/visa_support_requirement/

²⁵ <https://www.berlitz.com/ja-jp/faq>

In this last answer, it becomes clear that Berlitz employs NNESTs and understandably justifies this as offering the students an international outlook of the English language. However, the ideology as advertised on their website contradicts this, as will be seen in the next section.

At AEON²⁶ recruitment is done under the subsidiary AEON Intercultural USA. On the front page of the website, there is a multicultural group of teachers posing over the caption “Teachers from all around the world.”

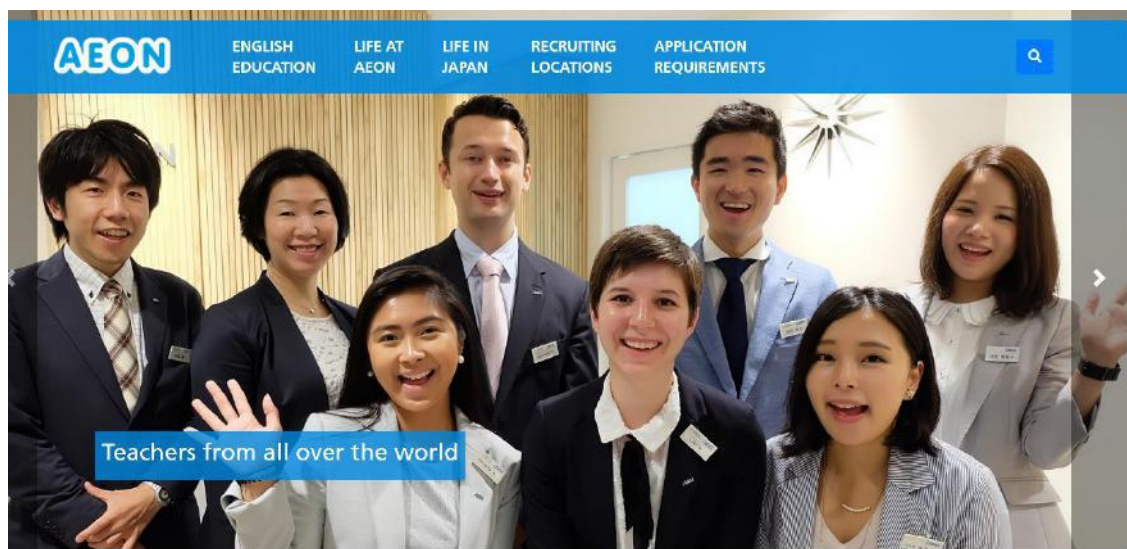


Figure 1. AEON advertising photo.²⁷

This immediately sets the tone on the recruitment agenda for AEON and a NNEST enquiring into this company will be enthused as they observe the deliberately multi-ethnic image that welcomes potential teachers. This is seemingly an advancement from the research conducted by [Ruecker and Ives \(2014\)](#) who concluded that there is a ‘halo effect’ surrounding NESTs due to their being predominantly white and western looking, but as seen in Figure 2, this still appears to be prevalent in student recruitment advertising as opposed to teacher recruitment. In a similar vein, there is further encouragement within the text where it states:

- (22) AEON recruits from several English-speaking countries around the world, as we realize that diversity is essential to the well-rounded education of our students.²⁸

This was confirmed in correspondence with AEON who stated:

- (23) What we can say is that we hire candidates from all over the world, so we do have teachers that come from countries where English is not the primary language.²⁹

Regarding the specifics of the recruitment policy, it states that:

²⁶ <https://www.aeonet.com>

²⁷ <https://www.aeonet.com>

²⁸ <https://www.aeonet.com>

²⁹ Taken from an email received on 20/08/2022 from aeonrecruiting@aeonet.com

- (24) All applicants must have a strong and masterful command of the English language and a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution.³⁰

To clarify further there is a question in the FAQ section that asks:

- (25) Is it a problem if I'm from a non-English-speaking country or I'm not a citizen of an English-speaking country?

In response, AEON states:

- (26) AEON requires a perfect command of the English language. Applicants from countries where English is not the native language (or not the only native language) must have a total of at least 10 years of education from schools where English is the primary mode of education, including a bachelor's degree from an English-speaking country.³¹

In contrast to the encouraging text on the teacher recruitment website regarding country of origin, the Japanese website for Japanese administrative staff states:

- (27) イーオンでは外国人教師の採用は原則的にアメリカ、イギリス、カナダ、オーストラリアで行っており、パーソネルセンター（外国人採用拠点）は現在アメリカに2ヶ所あります。³²

In principle, AEON recruits foreign teachers in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, and currently has two Personnel Centres (bases for hiring foreigners) in the United States.³³

As stated by Graddol (2006), there is a need for NNESTs within the industry and they are increasingly recruited but the discourse aimed at students leads them to believe that they will be taught by NESTs, which does not correspond with the recruitment policies.

NOVA³⁴ states in its requirements section that teachers must have native level English, although nationality requirements are conspicuous by their absence. Upon further enquiry on their LinkedIn profile, it states that they are:

- (28) Recruiting teachers from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the UK and the US to teach English in Japan at Nova English schools.³⁵

This seems clear, but the NOVA LinkedIn page indicates in the people section that their teacher demographics are actually more diverse. There were profiles of NOVA teachers originating from the Philippines, Indonesia, and India.³⁶

At GABA³⁷ in the requirements section of the recruitment website, it states potential teachers must possess:

³⁰ <https://www.aeonet.com/application-requirements/>

³¹ <https://www.aeonet.com/frequently-asked-questions/>

³² Translation: In principle, AEON recruits foreign teachers in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, and currently has two Personnel Centers (foreign recruitment bases) in the United States.

³³ <https://www.aeonet.co.jp/company/>

³⁴ <https://nova-holdings.jp/teachinjapan>

³⁵ <https://www.linkedin.com/company/nova-holdings/>

³⁶ <https://www.linkedin.com/company/nova-holdings/people/>

³⁷ <https://www.gabateachinginjapan.com>

(29) Native-level English (all nationalities considered).

This is expanded upon when it states that potential teachers:

(30) Must have a fluent command of English (both spoken and written).³⁸

Furthermore, in the FAQ section, a question asks:

(31) What are the requirements to become a Gaba Instructor?

To which the answer is:

(32) You must speak, read, and write English fluently. While you do not need to be a native speaker, a confident command of the language is essential as lessons are taught entirely in English.³⁹

GABA is actively recruiting NNESTs as is reflected on the open positions page for candidates outside of Japan, which states:

(33) We accept applications all year round from applicants of any nationality and country of residence.⁴⁰

In general, an initial look at ELT recruitment websites in Japan would indicate that there has been progress in NNEST recruitment since studies conducted by [Clarke and Paran \(2007\)](#) and [Ruecker and Ives \(2014\)](#) demonstrated indiscreet discriminatory recruitment policies. It is encouraging to see that more NNESTs are being recruited, even if the websites do not explicitly state this, which is in step with current trends in English usage, and employment, but the methodology of most of these companies contradicts their recruitment policies, as discussed in the next section.

4.2 Inconsistencies between Recruitment Policies and Discourse Ideology within ELT Institutions in Japan

This section on discourse ideology analyses the ELT institutions' websites and lays bare how the discourse does not align with the recruitment policies they are currently following. Analysing the texts closely offers significant indicators as to the image the companies wish to portray to their clients and potential employees, and it should align with their recruitment policies and methodologies but seldom does. The texts go beyond words and incorporate images and various social media. These all offer an interesting insight, not into the realities of how these ELT institutions carry out their business, but into how they think it is most beneficial to be portrayed.

According to the mission statement of INTERAC:

(34) INTERAC teachers enrich the lives of hundreds of thousands of Japanese school children every year by delivering interactive and exciting English lessons, sharing their knowledge of English, and giving insights into other cultures.⁴¹

³⁸ <https://www.gabateachinginjapan.com/>

³⁹ <https://www.gabateachinginjapan.com/faqs/>

⁴⁰ <https://www.gabateachinginjapan.com/out-of-country-applicants/>

⁴¹ <https://interacnetwork.com/about-us/>

The pluralisation of culture provides an insight into the developing mentality of the company as does the image of an ALT of Asian ethnic origin on the title page of the website besides the words “Make a world of difference”.⁴² There is no accident in the use of ‘world’ in describing the difference the ALTs could make. There is an effort to align themselves with a globalised world that is edging away from Kachru’s inner-circle English-speaking nations.

In the section of the website titled ‘What is an ALT?’ it states:

- (35) ALTs serve as an ambassador to promote cultural understanding and international communication. Being an ALT is more than just teaching, you’re a window to the world for your students and community.⁴³

We must consider the meaning behind this. Is this a genuine mindset and acceptance of linguistic globalization, or justification for evolving employment techniques, that will eventually see a pay freeze and lessening of conditions for the ALTs being employed? According to the website as of 2021, as an INTERAC ALT, you will most likely receive a gross annual salary of approximately ¥2.4–¥2.7 million per year, which is considered relatively low due to the various expenses and deductions that will be made. The employment review websites Indeed and Glassdoor reveal that the conditions are getting worse for employees of INTERAC. A current employee wrote:

- (36) The contract is getting more and more ridiculous. It is so easy for them to replace any ALT. They always try to be in the gray line with the labor law. No benefits such as social insurance. Not even a proper health check.⁴⁴

This is a sentiment shared across the websites, as demonstrated by another current employee with statements such as:

- (37) INTERAC’s salary is very low, and opportunity for growth is severely limited.
Very mediocre pay with a huge lack of opportunities to get raises.
The salary is low comparable to other jobs in the same industry.
The pay is not cutting it.⁴⁵

Glassdoor summarises the satisfaction with INTERAC salary with a score of 2.1/5⁴⁶, which is considerably low compared to other education companies.

Switching to the independent ELT companies that profit directly from teaching English, we get a more accurate picture of apparent contradictions due to the drive for profit and marketing that accompanies it. Berlitz has a vast global presence, and it states on its recruitment website for Japan that teachers will “Be part of a global team”.⁴⁷ This indicates a sense of globalism in its recruitment process, supported by its recruitment policies that ambiguously state that NNESTs would be welcome to apply. Students at Berlitz are informed that they will learn with:

⁴² <https://interacnetwork.com/>

⁴³ <https://interacnetwork.com/alt/>

⁴⁴ <https://www.indeed.com/cmp/Interac/reviews?fcountry=JP>

⁴⁵ https://www.glassdoor.com/Reviews/Interac-Reviews-E251903_P2.htm?filter.iso3Language=eng

⁴⁶ https://www.glassdoor.com/Reviews/Interac-Reviews-E251903_P2.htm?filter.iso3Language=eng

⁴⁷ <https://teach.berlitz.co.jp/>

- (38) Situations based on not only the language but also the culture.

This comes under the heading “Cross-cultural understanding,”⁴⁸ aligning with Blommaert’s (2012) observations about transglobal networks and linguistic resources. The website also state that:

- (39) To get the most out of your language skills, you need to understand the culture that uses the language.⁴⁹

This relates to integrative motivation for the culture of the target language, which does not align with the recruitment of English teachers not from inner-circle countries. It also does not relate entirely to a ‘global’ environment for the culture associated with the English language is based on countries that are traditionally seen to be the standard. On the website, they claim that:

- (40) Language and cross-cultural understanding contribute to the progress of mankind. That is Berlitz’s belief.⁵⁰

This seems to be selective in that the understanding of different cultures is restricted to the USA, UK, Australia, etc.

At AEON, in his message to potential students, the company president states:

- (41) 昨今、急速にオンライン化が加速する中、これまで以上にグローバル化や多様性が求められる時代となりました。⁵¹
In recent years, with the rapid acceleration of online work, we have entered an era in which globalization and diversity are required more than ever.⁵²

In this environment, AEON claim to offer:

- (42) English education with authentic conversation practice to give them (students) the skills they’ll need to succeed.⁵³

It is left open to interpretation of what is meant by ‘authentic’, but it is no doubt synonymous with ‘native’, which again contradicts their employment practices. They also state on their website for potential students that they’ll be taught by a ネイティブ 外国人教師 “native foreign teacher”.⁵⁴ This is followed by an image⁵⁵ that shows three white western-looking teachers interacting with students.

⁴⁸ <https://www.berlitz.com/ja-jp>

⁴⁹ <https://www.berlitz.com/ja-jp/why-berlitz>

⁵⁰ <https://www.berlitz.com/ja-jp/about-berlitz>

⁵¹ Translation: In recent years, with the rapid acceleration of online work, we have entered an era in which globalization and diversity are required more than ever.

⁵² <https://www.aeonet.co.jp/company/aboutus/message.html>

⁵³ <https://www.aeonet.com/english-education/students-expectations/>

⁵⁴ <https://www.aeonet.co.jp/reason/teacher.html#point>

⁵⁵ <https://www.aeonet.co.jp/reason/teacher.html#point>



Figure 2. AEON student recruitment poster.

In the first text, which promises the students ‘native’ English, there is a depiction of an interaction where the teacher is teaching the idiomatic phrase “Can I take a rain check?” Thus, AEON is selling the students on idiomatic NS standard language that they claim will help them advance in their professional lives. The third caption gives a promise of cultural understanding for the target language and depicts a Western custom, demonstrating how the promise of cross-cultural understanding is not truly global but based on Western standards.

On the student’s website FAQ section, a question is:

(43) Where are the foreign teachers from?

To which the answer is:

(44) Foreign teachers are hired locally at overseas recruitment offices. **Many** of our foreign teachers are from North America, England, and Australia.⁵⁶

The ambiguity is clear here and there is a refusal to declare that they are actively hiring NNESTs because this would not fit in with the ideology they are portraying. Instead, they refer to ‘many’ of their teachers being ‘native speakers’, and only mention three inner circle countries as examples. This website is aimed at potential students but should potential NNESTs also examine this website to gather more information about the company and its methods then they would surely suffer from what ‘imposter syndrome’ (Bernat, 2008).

AEON reveals that:

(45) While all of our students come to AEON because they want to learn and use English, a growing number are coming because they need to use English at work. They are looking to their teachers to guide and support them in reaching their goals.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ <https://www.aeonet.co.jp/faq/>

⁵⁷ <https://www.aeonet.com/english-education/students-expectations/>

Whether AEON's interpretation of what their students need at work responds to the growing realities is questionable. On the student's website, they state:

- (46) ビジネスシーンで使う英語は「きちんとした正確な英語で話すこと」が重要。⁵⁸
When it comes to English used in business situations, it is important to speak in proper and accurate English.⁵⁹

This does not seem to reflect the fact that most business transactions are with other non-native English speakers. At NOVA they run a seminar in their business English program designed for the 'real world' workplace called 'cross-cultural adaptability', despite stating that the teachers will only be native English speakers.⁶⁰ This is another inaccurate portrait of how English is being used in international transactions, but it fits with the marketing trend they believe sells to potential clients of a Western-oriented NS standard.

At NOVA they claim:

- (47) We are dedicated to delivering high quality language instruction together with opportunities for our clients to learn from and interact with people from different countries and cultures.⁶¹

However, the different countries and cultures do not appear to be too diverse as listed in the ADVANTAGES section of their website it states:

- (48) All instructors are native speakers of the respective language that they teach.⁶²

There is ambiguity about the origins of the English teachers, but it states on the student's website:

- (49) 講師の出身国も様々。多様な「生の英語」に触れることで、「英語耳」が育ちます。⁶³
The countries of origin of the teachers are also different. By touching various "raw English", "English ears" will grow.⁶⁴

The message seems to be that teachers from inner-circle countries are guaranteed for students that will attend NOVA schools but browsing on the NOVA LinkedIn recruitment page indicates that many NNESTs are currently working for NOVA or

⁵⁸ Translation: When it comes to English used in business situations, it is important to speak in proper and accurate English.

⁵⁹ <https://www.aeonet.co.jp/course/business/>

⁶⁰ <https://www.nova.co.jp/biz/wp/>

⁶¹ <https://nova-holdings.jp/teachinjapan/>

⁶² <https://nova-holdings.jp/teachinjapan/aboutus.html#:~:text=All%20NOVA%20instructors%20are%20native,they%20start%20teaching%20for%20NOVA.>

⁶³ Translation: The countries of origin of the teachers are also different. By touching various "raw English", "English ears" will grow.

⁶⁴ <https://nova-schoolblog.info/2022/08/22/%E3%80%90%E8%8B%B1%E4%BC%9A%E8%A9%B1-%E9%87%91%E6%B2%A2%E3%80%91%E2%9C%A8nova20%E5%91%A8%E5%B9%B4%E8%A8%98%E5%BF%B5%EF%BC%81%EF%BC%81%E5%85%A5%E4%BC%9A%E3%82%AD%E3%83%A3%E3%83%B3%E3%83%9A%E3%83%BC/>

have been until recently. There were teachers whose origin was Indonesia, the Philippines, Fiji, Vietnam, and India.⁶⁵

On the GABA website, it states:

- (50) The need for English among our clients falls into two main categories – participating in global business, or for travel and hobby reasons.⁶⁶

The general message is that spoken communication is the aim for use on the international stage, which seems to be supported by the company's promise of diversity and equity, which is highlighted on the website stating:

- (51) Specifically, Gaba's policy is to work with instructors to ensure fair treatment without regard to race, nationality, sex, religion, age, education, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, and disability. In doing so we aim to ensure that all instructors, Gaba staff, and clients will continue to benefit from involvement in a learning environment with an extremely diverse group of participants. This policy applies to all of Gaba's dealings with instructors. All decisions made by Gaba regarding recruitment, lesson remuneration, belting, certification, and all other matters related to its dealings with instructors will be made without bias. In addition, Gaba expects that all interactions between its staff, instructors, and clients will be fair, non-discriminatory, and consistent with this policy.⁶⁷

This is important in order to promote more equity at such companies, and it is backed up by the message to students, who are informed that:

- (52) There are teachers from various countries of origin, so you can talk to instructors from many countries while staying in Japan.⁶⁸

However, they are referred to as 'Carefully Selected Natural English Speakers'⁶⁹, which is not further explained. Furthermore, when explaining the benefits of their diverse range of teachers, students are informed it is beneficial for them if "they want to know local information when traveling to the United States, and so on",⁷⁰ which is a convenient example to demonstrate integrative motivation that does not match the promise for a global outlook.

On the chosen ELT websites, the discourse regarding global outlooks both culturally and linguistically appears to counter [Kramsch's \(2014\)](#) claims of a lack of real-world exposure in ELT classrooms. However, she was predominantly referring to the exposure to different ways of communicating in English among different cultures and nationalities, and the ambiguity still remains in that sense. We cannot separate economics from ideology in NNEST recruitment as it appears that the motivation behind NNEST recruitment is economic. Ideally, ideology representing globalism, multilingualism, and English for a transnational cliental would be based on the pedagogic change that reflects the strengths of NNESTs, but this is not evident nor likely to appear in the near future as the neoliberal influence on ELT ideology maintains that NS norms are the ideal arena in which to maximize profit. [Toh \(2019\)](#)

⁶⁵ <https://www.linkedin.com/company/wearenova/people/>

⁶⁶ <https://www.gabateachinginjapan.com/our-approach/>

⁶⁷ <https://www.gabateachinginjapan.com/policies/>

⁶⁸ <https://www.gaba.co.jp/>

⁶⁹ <https://www.gaba.co.jp/aboutgaba/instructor.html>

⁷⁰ <https://www.gaba.co.jp/aboutgaba/instructor.html>

demonstrated in his study of a new ELF program being installed at a university in Japan, where ingrown and ingrained practices in English teaching were constant obstacles to change.

The texts on the websites analysed have nothing to indicate there has been an ideological shift, especially with regard to multilingualism or other NNEST capabilities. This would indicate that economic factors could be more prevalent in the upshift towards NNEST employment. This can be a result of two factors. The first, and likely most prominent, is that ELT institutions are seeking to cut costs and maximize profit. How this profit is distributed and the reasons behind wishing to increase it are beyond the scope of this paper, but it would be appearing to influence recruitment trends. The onset of COVID-19 and its impending consequences might serve to enhance this trend as companies seek to make up for financial losses and NESTs are more reluctant to travel so far from home. NNESTs are willing to work for less as low wages by Japanese standards still appear attractive to local wages in a country such as the Philippines. They may also stagnate wages as they employ more NNESTs as the NESTs currently working in these schools are easily replaceable by a steady stream of NNESTs willing and eager to move abroad for work.

5. CONCLUSION

It is evident that the increased recruitment of NNESTs by ELT institutions in Japan is based on economics and maximizing profits but the door to change can be opened. For change to happen, attitudes to pedagogical innovations that embrace multilingual concepts at these institutions, and how it is accurately advertised, would need to be changed, as would the materials used, which would be a big undertaking that requires commitment and the support of the teachers, management, and students. Change depends on the nature of the institution and to what degree profit is their motivation and whether the adoption of NNESTs is related to the profit made. Private institutions will be open to employing NNESTs as the market will dictate that they can save money by paying them less, and as a result, hybrid policies may be introduced to legitimize the teacher demographic at such institutions. At public institutions with less necessity to create profits, pedagogic ideologies will be more at the heart of change as research expands into the field. If there is profit in hybrid language ideologies, then this would also be a catalyst for change. As the growing amount of literature about multilingualism, ELF, translanguaging, and other hybrid policies has an impact on the psyche of language teaching there will be those in positions of power converted as they see trends that they wish to be on top of. However, behind the change, there are numerous obstacles associated with obscured practices, undisclosed agendas and financially and ideologically motivated (inter)actions of various actors.

The role NNESTs can play in enforcing change is crucial to their equity within ELT. As their numbers increase at these institutions, they will gain more autonomy to dictate how they wish to be perceived both among their colleagues and by the students they teach. They can be in control of these perceptions as they exploit their assets and attract credit for themselves. It is also vital to consider what the students will desire in the future of ELT. As more and more students experience English use in more regional contexts that do not involve perceived native-speakers of English they may come to realize that focusing on native-speaker ideologies is of no immediate benefit to them

and their everyday use of English. Their status and desires must be considered by ELT institutions that rely on them for profit.

To supplement this study, it would be useful for future research to focus on more quantitative methods to ascertain more accurate numbers of NNESTs being employed by ELT institutions in Japan. Without concrete facts and numbers, there is always a degree of speculation and hearsay. The study could be expanded to Taiwan, South Korea, China, and other Asian countries to gain more regional insight and this could lead to a comparative study with Europe, Australasia, and North America, which could demonstrate similarities and differences in how economic motivations are affecting recruitment drives. Events such as Brexit in the UK could be influencing more NNESTs being employed around the EU for example.

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A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Representation of Ukrainian Refugees Across the British Mainstream News Media

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Abstract

This research investigates the dominant rhetorical/ discursive strategies in the British mainstream news media regarding their reports on Ukrainian refugees in the United Kingdom (UK). While news media have negatively constructed the non-European refugees, as previous studies have revealed, this research is unique because it specifically focuses on European refugees as its research sample. The ultimate objective was to demonstrate how the news media in the UK portrayed the incoming Ukrainian refugees on British soil. The data were 40 Ukrainian-refugee-related news reports published in four mainstream news media in the UK from March until July 2022. The data was then analysed by using Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), consisting of six analytical categories: Referential, Predication, Argumentation (Topoi), Perspectivisation, Mitigation, and Intensification (Reisigl & Wodak, 2008). The research found that regardless of their ideologies, all four news media consistently employed the discursive strategies of humanization and individualization and pervasively established a positive argumentative strategy on Ukrainian refugees. These dominant strategies depict a positive representation of Ukrainian refugees. Moreover, despite the overall negative picture of third-world refugees in British news media, the finding of this research is distinctive from the previous ones, showing that the British news media actively constructed the Ukrainian refugees positively and

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sympathetically. It is argued that the news media's ideological stance of Eurocentrism and biased racial values played a decisive role in framing the pictures of European/Ukrainian and non-European refugees in their reports.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis, discursive strategies, discourse, racism, UK news media, Ukrainian refugees.

1. INTRODUCTION

Due to the extraordinary number of persons leaving war-torn nations such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, and most recently, Ukraine, the issue of immigration and, more specifically, refugees have acquired significant attention since the start of the 21st century. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees by the end of 2021, an estimated 89.3 million people, the greatest number ever recorded, would have been forcibly displaced due to conflict, persecution, or other conflict abuses of human rights (UNHCR, 2021). Meanwhile, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is projected to reach 108.4 million by the end of 2022, while the number of refugees exceeds 27.1 million. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2021), 135.912 refugees were in the United Kingdom (UK) midway through 2021, while 83.489 refugee claims were still being assessed. This number is barely 0.23 percent of the entire population of the UK (based on a mid-2020 estimate of 67.4 million people, (ONS, 2021)). As the number of refugees worldwide has risen, so has the media's attention on these populations. As a result, refugees have increased media attention in the United Kingdom over the past 50 years (Baker & McEnery, 2005). In 2000, the Daily Mail published over 200 items about forced migration. After a few years of relative calm and the immigration debate heated up in the 2020 presidential election, the immigration issue grew more divisive (Blommaert, 2009).

Meanwhile, late February 2022 has become the starting point of Europe's continuing refugee crisis following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. While an estimated 8 million people were displaced within the nation by May 3, around 6.7 million refugees from Ukraine were documented throughout Europe. In the UK alone, Ukrainian refugees fleeing to the country were estimated as 82.100 people by the end of June 2022. Since then, headlines in the UK have shown the picture of Ukrainian refugees entering the UK.

As various works of literature illustrate, discourse and refugees have been the subject of extensive and varied inquiry. In the UK itself, a series of research has been conducted on the representation of refugees in the UK since 1996. This series of studies examined some of the most prominent discursive tactics employed in depicting refugees from third-world nations such as Afghanistan and Iraq, emphasizing ideological disparities amongst newspapers. A study by Parker (2015, p. 35) revealed the British media's alienation construction towards incoming refugees by suggesting these illegal immigrants as "unwanted invaders". Still, in his research, Pruitt (2019, p. 17) described the standpoint of the British media on the refugee problem as "assumptions that allow more people to enter our territory would threaten European borders, security forces, people, and identity". He continued to mention that these discursive constructions marginalize the instability and dangers asylum seekers and

refugees confront in conflicts and portray them as perpetrators of catastrophe. Another negative portrayal of refugees in the British print media was well presented by [Blumell et al. \(2020\)](#) who found that right-leaning news media focused on criminality and disorders when reporting refugees-related news.

The current study aims to fill a gap by examining the depiction of European migrants in the news media, Ukrainian refugees, which was lacking in earlier studies. It is hypothesized that the British news media would create the discourse on Ukrainian refugees differently from media outlets in third-world nations. This hypothesis is built upon numerous expert analyses of the Western media regarding their heroic and patriotic ways of reporting Ukrainian refugees flooding into Western Europe. For instance, [Muthy \(2022\)](#), a senior analyst at Aljazeera Media Institute, pointed out that news media in the UK reported Ukrainian refugees humanistically, citing that some news anchors revealed the refugees are 'just like us' and glorified women taking up Kalashnikovs against Russian invaders. Another example is a comment from a daily Independent news media analyst, [White \(2022\)](#) who described how the Western media reporting Ukrainian coverage was racially biased and shameful. Still, an analysis from senior media analysts at CNN, [Allawati and Ebrahim \(2022\)](#) condemned the bias which the Western media have caused when reporting Ukraine coverage.

In addition, the present study seeks to contribute to the field of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by directly describing how the Western media of the UK discursively constructed the Western refugees from Ukraine in news media. Since the issue of refugees has become a global phenomenon, it lies on the ground and paves the way for other researchers in the future to carry out similar research worldwide, especially in developing countries. For example, a study was conducted to explore how the news media in Indonesia and Malaysia represent Rohingya refugees coming to these countries ([Isti'anah, 2019](#)) or how Turkish news media portray forced refugees from Syria ([Yücel, 2021](#)).

The present study, within the CDA framework, focuses on selected newspaper extracts which are aimed at addressing the following questions:

1. What discursive strategies do the British media employ in reporting the Ukrainian refugees' coverages?
2. How do the British news media represent the Ukrainian refugees coming to the UK by employing those discursive strategies?

The study implicates the potential existence of media framing and bias in the representation of Ukrainian refugees. The findings of the CDA can shed light on the dominant narratives and discourses employed by the British mainstream news media when reporting on Ukrainian refugees. This implies that media organizations should critically examine their reporting practices to ensure fair and accurate representation. Also, the research suggests that the representation of Ukrainian refugees in the media can have a significant impact on public opinion. The framing and language used in news articles can shape how the general public perceives Ukrainian refugees, their experiences, and their reasons for seeking asylum. Media organizations should be aware of this influence and strive to present a balanced and nuanced portrayal to foster understanding and empathy. Last but not least, the research emphasizes the importance of media literacy and critical engagement among the audience. By raising awareness about media biases and discursive strategies, the study encourages readers and viewers to critically analyse news content related to Ukrainian refugees. This empowers

individuals to challenge and question media representations, promoting a more informed and nuanced understanding of the refugee crisis.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Discourse on Refugees across News Media

A recent study on stories of migrants in the news media has mostly relied on linguistic analysis of article corpora to find predominantly used terms and utterances (Baker & McEnery, 2005) and discourse analysis on refugee-related newspaper texts (Baker et al., 2008). However, investigations have also used a historical discourse approach (Parker, 2015b). It is presumed that discursive analysis arose as a response to cognitive perspectives that saw discursively generated behaviours as separate and distinct from internal representations.

Furthermore, critical discourse theory has paid considerable attention to constructed 'out-groups' such as refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants, and different ethnic minorities in modern liberal nations. Numerous studies have been undertaken with diverse sociopolitical aims. Namely, research on media representation of refugees in Australia conducted by Doherty and Lecouteur (O'Doherty & Lecouteur, 2007), and a study of immigrant youth from Sudan in Australia (Macaulay & Deppeler, 2020b). Meanwhile, numerous studies on media discourse on refugees have been done in the UK alone, such as the one by Parker (Parker, 2015a). Still, the British media's marginalizing practice of refugees is revealed by Pruitt (2019) and (Parker, 2015a). Another negative portrayal of refugees in the British print media is provided by Blumell et al. (2020). Lastly, Parker et al. (2022) in their latest study on refugees in print media in the UK, came with three negative media repertoires on refugees.

Despite growing media coverage, relatively few research studies analyse the rhetorical construction of refugees in UK media. Pilkington (2021) pointed out that research studies often have diverse objectives and focus on various aspects of refugee-related topics. While some studies may touch upon the portrayal of refugees in UK media, they may not explicitly concentrate on the rhetorical construction of their representation. This narrower focus requires a distinct research approach. In addition, as far as literature is concerned, most studies on Western media focused on the depiction of non-European refugees. This emergent phenomenon is what this research seeks to analyse. The most striking outcome of previously conducted studies discussed above was that migrants were negatively framed by the use of water metaphors (floods, tides, swamped) in media coverage (Pickering, 2001). The use of these analogies was prevalent in tabloid newspapers. Lynn and Lea (2003) investigated public letters addressing the refugee topic to study the rhetorical construction of refugees in the UK media. They demonstrated how these lay discourses tended to portray refugees negatively. This construction was achieved by modifying several different social groups' social structures to relocate refugee populations outside civilization.

2.2 Discourse-Historical Approach

Within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Ruth Wodak from the University of Vienna developed the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) as a collection of

analytical tools. This strategy identifies five discursive strategies: nomination, predication, argumentation/perspectivation, and mitigation/intensification (see Table 1). Furthermore, [Reisigl and Wodak \(2008, p. 67\)](#) also created a criterion for the main argumentative/topoi of outgroup discourses. These topoi include the topoi of advantage/usefulness, danger/ threat, name interpretation, burdening, law, culture, topoi of abuse, and authority. Influenced by this approach, several studies on refugee discourse have significantly contributed to the systematization of approaches for evaluating outgroups in speech. Namely, studies carried out by [Baker et al. \(2007\)](#), [Macaulay and Deppeler \(2020\)](#), and [\(Khosravinik, 2009\)](#). These studies focused on the depiction of refugees by news media by employing the DHA framework as their analytical instrument. Their findings revealed the negative depiction of refugees. The commonality between these studies and this undertaking research is that they similarly analyse refugee related texts and attempt to uncover media portrayals of refugee by employing DHA approach. Therefore, as pointed out by [Reisigl & Wodak \(2008\)](#), the methodology is reasonably beneficial for analysing the outgroup discourses including refugee, discrimination, racism, nationalism, and xenophobia.

Table 1. Discourse-historical approach analytical framework ([Reisigl & Wodak, 2008, p. 24](#)).

Question to approach discursive features	Discursive strategies	Purpose
How are persons, objects, phenomena, social events, processes, and actions linguistically in question?	Nomination	the discursive construction of actors, the discursive and referred to objects, phenomena, and discourse in construction
What characteristics or qualities are attributed to social actors, objects, phenomena, events, processes, and actions mentioned in the discourse?	Predication	discursive characterization of social actors, objects, events processes, and actors
What arguments are employed in discourse?	Argumentation	persuading addresses of the validity of specific claims of truth and normative rightness
From what perspective are these nominations, attributions, arguments, writer's point of view, and expressed?	Perspectivization	positioning the speaker or expressing involvement or distance
Are the respective utterances articulated overtly, are they to be intensified or mitigated?	Mitigation	modifying the illocutionary force of utterances with respect to their epistemic or deontic

The first strategy in the DHA framework is referential or nomination strategies, which are especially relevant to self and other representation and by which people, processes, events, and all other (abstract or concrete) things are named, either positively by demonstrating respect for them or negatively by holding them in low regard ([Wodak & Meyer, 2009](#)). By looking at the words that are employed to designate and represent various groups of social actors as the creation of in-groups and out-groups is promoted, the methods are discovered. It is accomplished by utilizing a variety of membership categorization tools, such as deictic, tropes like metaphors, metonymies, and synecdoche ([Wodak & Meyer, 2009](#)).

Second, predication procedures are employed to describe or linguistically characterize all subsequent (concrete or abstract) things following their formation or identification. It describes all subsequent things after identification is made (Forchtner, 2011). Predication procedures can be expressed in the linguistic form of implicit or explicit predicates as positive or negative evaluative attributions or qualities (Reisigl & Wodak, 2008). These tactics seek to categorize individuals, events, processes, and all other objects (abstract or concrete) in a positive or negative, disparaging or complimentary manner. Since references already have the predication property, they cannot be clearly distinguished from nomination strategies. However, careful analysis reveals subtle distinctions that can enhance our understanding of language usage (Paksoy, 2022). Textual argumentation schemes are frequently assumed to serve as argumentation's foundations and draw on referential and prediction techniques (Reisigl & Wodak, 2008). To put it in another way, categorizing and attributing individuals, events, processes, and all other things (abstract or concrete) using referential/nominative and predication strategies is frequently introduced as given and shared background information, which hides much of the political and ideological interests served by this categorization of qualities. Unravelling these underlying interests is essential for a more nuanced understanding of discourse and power dynamics in the language (Forchtner, 2021).

Third, perspectivization involves the examination of various linguistic and discursive strategies used to represent different perspectives. These strategies include lexical choices, evaluative language, rhetorical devices, and discursive structures. By analysing these elements, researchers can uncover how certain perspectives are privileged or marginalized within a discourse (Reisigl & Wodak, 2008).

Fourth, mitigation in the DHA approach refers to the linguistic and discursive strategies used to downplay or soften the impact of certain events, actions, or statements within a discourse (Reisigl & Wodak, 2008). It involves the analysis of how language is employed to mitigate or minimize responsibility, blame, or negative evaluations. In c mitigation is associated with CDA's language view as a site of power and ideology. Mitigation is thus a discursive strategy that can be employed to manage or manipulate the perception of events or actions, often serving the interests of certain actors or social groups.

The final component consists of argumentation methods. Following Wodak's DHA Approach, argumentation techniques are premises that must be either expressed or inferred. Argumentative methods are the 'conclusion rules' or content-related grounds that link an argument or group of reasons to a conclusion or claim (Reisigl & Wodak, 2008). It justifies the transition from the argumentation to the conclusion. This tactic is crucial for classifying arguments that seem persuasive and it is regularly employed in biased discourse against outgroups.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This study employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA is an interdisciplinary approach to analysing language and discourse that aims to uncover the social, political, and ideological dimensions embedded within them (Paltridge,

2021). CDA recognizes that language is not neutral but is loaded with power dynamics. It acknowledges that media discourse is influenced by various power relations and ideologies that can shape the representation of social groups such as refugees. By analysing the language and discourse used in newspaper articles, CDA aims to uncover hidden biases, stereotypes, and ideological frameworks that may perpetuate negative or positive portrayals of refugees. Therefore, this approach is suitable for this research as it attempts to uncover the embedded ideology behind the production of Ukrainian refugees-related news texts.

In relation to CDA, Wodak and Meyer (2009) pointed out that the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) is a specific methodological framework within CDA that focuses on the historical dimension of discourse. It combines the analysis of language use with an examination of the historical context and the social processes that shape discourse over time. DHA specifically aims to uncover how historical events, ideologies, and power relations are reflected and reproduced in discourse. DHA focuses its analysis on uncovering the ideologies embedded in discourse related to refugees, nationalism, cultural identity, and security. DHA can shed light on how such ideologies may influence the portrayal of refugees and shape public opinion. As this study took the refugees-related text for its analysis, the DHA framework therefore was suited to be employed in this research.

3.2 Data Collection

The data were derived from four major UK daily newspapers chosen purposively, namely The Daily Mail, The Daily Mirror, The Telegraph, and The Guardian. These magazines were selected because they represented two mainstream political viewpoints in the UK, with The Daily Mail and The Telegraph supporting conservative ideology and The Guardian and The Daily Mirror favouring liberalism. The decision is also based on their vast circulation in the UK and their widespread appeal, which makes them worldwide. Moreover, the most significant articles were chosen by typing 'Ukrainian refugees' as the keyword in the search box of the newspaper's website. The search resulted in 10 articles from each newspaper or 40 articles altogether which were analysed using a Discourse-Historical Approach to determine the prevalent discursive sources of Ukrainian refugee portrayals. Table 2 summarizes the newspaper, including the names of the newspaper, its ideological stance, and the number of articles.

Table 2. The data source of news report articles.

News media	Ideological stance	Number of articles
The Daily Mail	Conservative	10
The Telegraph	Conservative	10
The Guardian	Liberal	10
The Daily Mirror	Liberal	10

3.3 Data Analysis

The news excerpts from the selected news media were analysed using qualitative analysis techniques. Themes and rhetorical patterns were identified and interpreted to understand how Ukrainian refugees are represented in the British mainstream news media. There were two analytical tools used in analysing the data: (1) discursive

strategies and, (2) argumentative strategies. The discursive strategy is used to examine and interpret discursive practices in order to uncover power relations, ideologies, and social structures embedded in language use. These tools help researchers analyse and deconstruct how language shapes and reflects social reality. Meanwhile, argumentative strategy refers to how arguments are constructed and employed within discourse to support or challenge certain viewpoints, ideologies, or power relations. It involves analysing the rhetorical techniques, reasoning patterns, and persuasive tactics used to advance a particular position or influence the beliefs and opinions of the audience.

4. RESULTS

After analysing the data, the researchers found three discursive strategies the British news media employed in reporting Ukrainian refugees. These three strategies aimed at establishing a positive view of Ukrainian refugees. The first two strategies were Nomination and Predication. The former refers to the state/condition of Ukrainian refugees that British people must support, while the latter refers to the humanist characteristics to which Ukrainian refugees are attributed. What follows in this section is a detailed explanation of Humanization and Individualization, as well as argumentative processes found in the news media in constructing a positive account of Ukrainian refugees.

4.1 Humanization and Individualization Strategies

Compared to other categories of discursive strategies, Humanization and Individualization as antidotes to Collectivization became the major themes in the discourse of Ukrainian refugees fleeing the war as indicated in Table 3. It reached above 50% in all given researched news reports. These processes entailed that the discourse emphasized the plight of individuals (Victimization), where the refugees were portrayed as acting normally in a normal situation (Humanization). This generic rhetorical strategy of Individualization attributed voices to various individuals. It asserted the diversity of these individuals in terms of their ways of life, upbringings, jobs, ages, sexes, and political stances.

Table 3. The distribution of humanization and individualization strategies.

News media	Number of total clauses	Occurrence of strategies
The Daily Mail	471	62%
The Telegraph	430	57%
The Guardian	484	54%
The Daily Mirror	532	64%

The Daily Mail story excerpts illustrate how the migrants were exploited by depicting their desperate situation. The article humanizes the parties involved by describing the persons in terms of who they are and what they do. Readers can more easily identify with and sympathize with the characters if the Predicational technique depicts the people engaging in normal and familiar activities.

- (1) A mother's miracle: Ukrainian refugee who survived Bucha massacre gives birth to a daughter after finding sanctuary in the UK. (The Daily Mail, 16 August 2022). (Humanization)
- (2) Ukrainian women and children are being trafficked into the UAE as sex slaves (The Daily Mail, 12 Mei 2022). (Humanization)

Another Humanization and Individualization consistently appeared in other three news media:

- (3) UN says 75,000 children a day are forced to flee their country (The Guardian, 25 June 2022). (Humanization)
- (4) Ukrainian refugee, 9, so traumatised by war she could not speak for five weeks (The Telegraph, 12 July 2022). (Humanization)
- (5) Family considering going back to Ukraine because they cannot keep their cats with them (The Daily Mirror, 2 June 2022). (Humanization)

Other strategies of Humanization and Individualization were used by mentioning the social actors with their names and relations:

- (6) Dad-of-two Tony Garnett is starting a new life for Ukrainian refugee Sofiia Karkadym who had moved into the family's home just ten days before after leaving Lviv at the start of the invasion (The Daily Mirror, 2 June 2022). (Individualization)
- (7) Ukrainian refugee family are reunited with eight-year-old Yorkshire Terrier Ellie, stolen six days after they arrived in the UK after police trawl CCTV footage (The Daily Mail, 12 Mei 2022). (Individualization)
- (8) Two Ukrainian sisters, Tetiana and Anna, are pursuing their dreams of becoming competitive figure skaters after fleeing a warzone (The Guardian, 25 June 2022). (Individualization)
- (9) Adriana, a mother, and her 13-year-old son - told that she thought her hosts would be kind and caring, but within weeks she "did not feel safe or secure" (The Telegraph, 3 April 2022). (Individualization)

Furthermore, another form of Humanization and Individualization is realized by highlighting terrible occurrences (Wetherell & Potter, 1998). Such an approach, for instance, focuses on the specifics and various facets of a dreadful incident rather than just calling it a 'bad tragedy'. One instance of this in the text is how the victims who participated in the attack described the incident's beginning:

- (10) On the CCTV, you see them shooting their way into rooms, stealing bicycles and even a scooter and lolling around in the director's office, drinking his whisky, and rifling through his cupboards (The Daily Mirror, 2 April 2022)
- (11) People were being beaten up and tortured with electric shocks. If someone did not say something, the torture would continue, sometimes for several hours (The Guardian, 19 July 2022)
- (12) Mr. Sychevskyi told The Telegraph. "They killed my dog and were cruel to my family, threatening us with weapons" (The Telegraph, 9 April 2022). (Individualization)
- (13) The footage, which is not published, shows a group of men wearing Russian camouflage pinning a soldier in Ukrainian fatigues down and using a box-cutting knife to remove his genitals and then hold them up to the camera (The Daily Mail, 29 July 2022). (Individualization)

Still, foregrounding a victim as an ordinary innocent individual (Victimization) is another way of forming Humanization and Individualization strategies:

- (14) Putin's army handcuffed man, an ordinary Ukrainian peasant whose relatives had stayed there for many years (The Guardian, 23 April 2022). (Humanization)

To highlight the Humanization and Individualization narratives, other victimization processes were introduced by presenting the suffering circumstances of those who were fortunate enough to flee. It also provides a dramatic explanation, the sympathetic picture of the migrants such as in the following excerpts:

- (15) To save his life, his father carried him in his arms through a thick and dense forest with a potent of wild animal attacks (The Daily Mail, 2 Mei 2022). (Individualization)
- (16) After the Russian shelling, the relative managed to flee the beloved country. With Audrina in her arms, Sergey showed the way. Behind him were his two other children, and their grandmother Maria Andrei (The Telegraph, 27 April 2022). (Individualization)
- (17) Some young men had collapsed in the mud, unable to manage the last distance to the border with Poland. Their friends had no strength to carry them (The Guardian, 2 April 2022). (Individualization)

4.2 Argumentative Strategies 'Refugees Desperate for Support'.

Topoi/Topos, according to Wodak, can be described as parts of "Argumentation which belong to the obligatory, either explicit or inferable premises" (Wodak, 2006, p. 67). Concerning critical discourse analysis, Wodak and Richardson (2013, p. 36) defined Topos as "Reservoirs of generalised key ideas from which specific statements or arguments can be generated". They continued to classify Topoi, which characterised the most common topoi used when writing or talking about 'other', specifically about migrants, into the following types: Usefulness, Advantage, Uselessness, Disadvantage, Definition, Name-interpretation, Danger and Threat, Humanitarianism, Justice, Responsibility, Burdening, Weighting, Finances, Reality, Numbers, Law and Rights, History, Culture, Abuse.

After deeply analysing the 40 selected articles, the writer found that the most dominant and persistent topoi in those articles were topoi of Humanitarianism. In order to frame the Ukrainian refugees positively, the news media employed the argumentative strategy of Humanitarianism. This strategy was realised in an argumentation form. The researcher conclusively formulated the most dominant argumentative form, which he identified as 'refugees desperate for support'. The distribution of this argumentative strategy can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. The distribution of 'the refugees desperate for support' topoi.

News media	Number of total clauses	Percentage of 'the support'
The Daily Mail	471	56%
The Telegraph	430	63%
The Guardian	484	64%
The Daily Mirror	532	52%

The arguing method that ‘refugees are needy for help’ recurred throughout the forty pieces. Here, refugees were portrayed as victims who required protection. This Argumentation was achieved in the examined newspaper articles by employing various discursive constructs that will be examined in the following news excerpt samples.

- (18) Mr. Javid said the government was supporting Ukraine ‘in every single way we can’ (The Daily Mail, 21 March 2022)
- (19) Health Secretary vowed the rescue schemes would be dramatically scaled up (The Daily Mail, 21 March 2022)

Another ‘the refugees desperate for support’ consistently appeared in other three news media:

- (20) As refugees continue to pour out of war-torn Ukraine, it is beholden on the global community to respond with open arms and not just with warm hearts (The Daily Mirror, 26 February 2022)
- (21) Government must offer Ukrainian refugees a safe route to the UK (The Daily Mirror, 26 February 2022)
- (22) So far, around 4,000 visas have been issued to Ukrainians, with “tens of thousands” more expected to be provided, according to the levelling up secretary, Michael Gove (The Guardian, 14 March 2022)
- (23) The “homes for Ukraine” program allows individuals, charities, community groups, and businesses across the UK to offer a room or home rent-free to Ukrainians escaping the war, regardless of whether they have ties to the country (The Guardian, 14 March 2022)
- (24) The British public will be asked to offer homes to tens of thousands of Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion under plans to be announced this weekend (The Telegraph, 10 March 2022)
- (25) Charities, including the Refugee Council and Save the Children, have urged ministers to waive the visas to speed up the process (The Telegraph, 17 March 2022).
- (26) Michael Gove says millions of Britons could be willing to accept Ukrainian refugees for £ 350 a month (The Daily Mail, 25 March 2022)
- (27) Thousands of British families offering sanctuary to Ukrainian refugees are stuck in a massive backlog (The Daily Mail, 27 March 2022)

As mentioned previously, the purpose of ‘the refugees desperate for support’ argumentative strategies in the news media was to enhance the already positive framing of the refugees, which Humanization and Individualization have initially achieved. The ultimate goal of this strategy was to persuade a positive attitude on the part of the readers and construct a public opinion that Ukrainian refugees coming to British land should be protected and supported.

5. DISCUSSION

The article mentioned that refugees attempting to reach safe nations is not a new problem. Since the 1990s, numerous refugees, primarily from non-European nations,

have sought to reach Britain, prompting the British government to impose stricter regulations on the entry of newcomers (Dijk, 1991). Research indicates that these policies were supported by the British media's portrayal of migrants as criminals or deviants (Pickering, 2001) and the need for secure borders. Similar media discourses were prevalent during the so-called 'refugee crisis in Europe' in 2015 (ter Wal, 2002). However, until recently, the number of Ukrainian migrants arriving in the United Kingdom remained quite low. This paper provides an innovative contribution to the research on the media construction of refugees by focusing on refugee coverage in the United Kingdom.

In the early stages of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, as Ukrainian refugees began to pour into the United Kingdom, British President Boris Johnson said that the United Kingdom and other European nations would assist Ukrainian refugees in any manner necessary. This speech illustrates how populist politicians discursively intertwined the 'Ukrainian refugee tragedy', although it is hard to determine its effect on the public's desire to aid the migrants. Likewise, the major news media in the United Kingdom maintain a clear picture of Ukrainian refugees. This situation demonstrates how UK politicians and the news media portrayed the Ukrainian refugee as 'a tragedy' rather than a problem and a moral obligation to the British and the European people.

Through the constant use of the words 'folks and fellows', it was evident that the British government and its citizens supported only those seeking to join the nation lawfully. The study determined that Humanization and Individualization were the primary means by which the British news media manufactured a 'humanity tragedy' of Ukrainian migrants. Numerous papers implemented these methodologies by utilizing positive nomination and prediction. This favourable perception of refugees was further bolstered by using persuasive methods known as *topos*. Nearly all investigated British news outlets emphasized the acute need for aid among Ukrainian refugees. The lines 'we must open our doors to our Ukrainian people', 'it is our moral duty as Europeans to assist other Europeans', and 'the British government must safeguard our fellow Europeans' were examples of the reasoning techniques the news media wished to develop. Through the employment of language tools such as the humanist metaphors 'folks and fellows', the discursive constructs of the news media can affect their audiences. This result consequently contradicts Pickering's (2001) and Van Dijk's (2003) findings that refugees were formed as a deviant group through the deployment of stories that distinguished 'them' from 'us' (Pickering, 2001). Similarly, Van Dijk (2003, p. 34) stated that discourses of immigration and socioeconomic issues generated a clear 'us' versus 'them' division, which redefines these problems in terms of 'race' and immigrants as outsiders who must be 'kept out'. The examples of this research illustrate how two different images of refugees are portrayed in British news media.

As CDA is meant to look below the surface of a text to explore ideology under a discourse, this study's findings reinforced a view that the British news media, especially right-leaning media, deliberately or not adopt 'biased racial' ideology reporting global refugees' coverage. Biased racial ideology refers to a set of beliefs or ideas that promote or endorse discriminatory attitudes and actions based on race. It involves holding unfair prejudiced views toward individuals or groups based on their racial or ethnic backgrounds (Van Dijk, 1993). In the assessed UK mainstream media, this ideology is replicated in the 'othering' rhetorical strategy as 'us versus them'.

Numerous studies namely, studies from [Khosravini \(2009\)](#), [Parker \(2015\)](#), [Pruitt, \(2019\)](#), and [Xu \(2021\)](#) unveiled how the British media depicted coloured refugees from third-world countries negatively. The media portrayed non-European refugees in a negative portrait, calling them ‘boat people’, ‘unwanted invaders’, and ‘illegal immigrants’. This research’s findings, on the other hand, reveal the positive construction of Ukrainian refugees, who are white, by the UK mainstream media. The media represented Ukrainian refugees in humanist and appealing images, referring to them as ‘just like us’, ‘fellas’, and ‘people desperate for help’. This double standard and biased racial views on refugees can be traced to the deep root and long history of racism in the British Empire, especially among the British news media ([Kaul, 2006, p. 12](#)) revealed how the British rulers during the colonization era established media to preserve ‘white systems’ throughout their colonies. Similarly, [Połowska-Kimunguyi \(2022, p. 3\)](#) illustrated how the British media referred to the immigrants as either a threat to the national economy or security, marginalizing their voices, thus continuously reproducing ‘the age-old hierarchies of the colonial system, which divided humans into superior and inferior species’.

6. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to illustrate the discursive construction of Ukrainian refugees in British news media. Humanization and Individualization were the major discursive methods, augmented by the reasoning strategies of “refugees yearning for aid.” The necessity to help and protect Ukrainian migrants exemplified the ideological usage of these methods. In addition, the publications from the United Kingdom emphasized the necessity for all Europeans to provide a helping hand to their Ukrainian neighbours by employing persuasive arguments. There was evidence that migrants were created as figures of desperation. These publications focused on the human aspect of war to justify political actions and provided the picture of a sympathetic nation concerning the human rights of individuals who have experienced losses. Because refugees from non-European countries were portrayed negatively by the British news media, as revealed by previous research, this study’s findings suggest the need for further investigation into why news media in the United Kingdom presented refugees from different countries differently to reveal the ideology behind this stance.

The study is limited by its narrow scope, as it exclusively examines the British mainstream news media, hence limiting the generalizability of the findings. The temporal scope of the study may not adequately account for the dynamic nature of media portrayals, while the sample size and selection may not comprehensively represent the range of discourse variety. Furthermore, the presence of language hurdles imposed constraints on the incorporation of non-English language media, hence potentially resulting in the exclusion of valuable perspectives. The employment CDA might potentially add inherent biases, and the subjectivity that is inherent in the readings of conversation remains a persistent worry. The study may have failed to thoroughly examine all contextual aspects that impact media coverage. In order to overcome these limitations, future research endeavours may incorporate cross-national comparisons, longitudinal analyses, mixed-methods approaches, multilingual analysis, audience reception studies, policy impact assessments, investigations into media ownership and editorial decision-making, considerations of intersectionality, ethical

evaluations, and stakeholder interviews. These combined efforts would contribute to a more comprehensive and comprehensive comprehension of the portrayal of Ukrainian refugees in the British mainstream news media.

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The (In)Visibility of Torajan Language: A Study on Linguistic Landscape in South Sulawesi, Indonesia

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Abstract

The Torajan language is the heritage language of the Torajan people, which reflects the local wisdom and identity of the people. Yet, with the popularity of Indonesian and English as the lingua franca, there is a concern for the domain, status, and vitality of the Torajan language within the society. Therefore, this study aims to study the visibility of the language. This study offers a novel approach by looking at the use of the Torajan language in the linguistic landscape in two regencies, Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara, to determine its position in the community. The research utilized a case study design, and the source of data is linguistic landscapes found along Jalan Poros Rantepao–Makale which connects the two regencies. The images of linguistic landscapes were collected by viewing the Google Street View facility provided by Google Maps, and the languages in those linguistic landscapes were noted. The findings show that Indonesian and English dominate the linguistic landscape in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara, and the Torajan language is minimally represented in the public space of these two regencies. The lack of visibility of the language in the public space might be caused by the restricted use of the language for familial talks at home and oral indigenous rituals. However, the Torajan language needs to be used more frequently in public spaces since it could promote a positive attitude of the people, which would in turn solidify the position of the language in the society.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is known as one of the most linguistically diverse nations in the world (Cohn & Abtahian, 2017; Collins, 2022). Home to over 700 regional languages, Indonesia is blessed with the existence of Indonesian (*bahasa Indonesia*) as the official and national language of the country. The language is proudly considered the language of unity since it enables people from different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds to communicate (Cohn & Ravindranath, 2014). The regional languages, which are often referred to as heritage languages (Kelleher, 2010), are commonly spoken by the ethnic groups spreading across the country.

Many heritage languages (henceforth, HLs) in Indonesia are threatened and on the brink of extinction (Collins, 2022). When two languages converge, the privileged language will trump the less-privileged languages by occupying more societal domains (Crystal, 2000). Without proper maintenance and preservation efforts, the number of speakers of the less-privileged language would decrease, and the language would die along with the absence of active speakers of the language.

This phenomenon is currently happening in Indonesia (Suwarno, 2017) as the Indonesian language occupies most domains in the country. On October 28th, 1928 – long before Indonesian Independence Day – young Indonesian nationalists from different regions and ethnic backgrounds organized a youth congress in Batavia (now Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia). In the congress, they declared what is famously called *Sumpah Pemuda* ‘the Youth Pledge’ and proclaimed three historically important points: one motherland (Indonesia), one nation (Indonesian), and one language (Indonesian or *Bahasa Indonesia*). Even though the youth attending the 1928 congress came from different ethnic groups and thus had their own HLs as their mother tongues, the Youth Pledge in 1928 sparked the spirit of many young people to build their nationalism and use Indonesian as the language of unity. The status of Indonesian as the official and national language was cemented further in the 1945 Constitution. It was a successful language policy as the language is widely accepted all over the nation. As such, Indonesian enjoys the status as the lingua franca in Indonesia, and it is dominantly used in various situations and interactions. This success, unfortunately, has brought an impact on the declining use of many HLs in Indonesia (Suwarno, 2020). HLs are now relegated and marginalized into smaller domains, such as homes, as evinced by many studies on various fields of sociolinguistics (among others Anderbeck, 2015; Cohn & Ravindranath, 2014; Collins, 2022), including the study on linguistic landscape.

Linguistic landscape (henceforth, LL) is the study of the languages featured in the public domain. Landry and Bourhis (1997) explained that LL includes “the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration” (p. 25). This scope is expanded to languages on mobile signs such as protesters’ signages, clothes, bags, and many more (Caldwell, 2017; Kasanga, 2014; Marten et al., 2012). Lou (2016) stated that the study on LL does not merely focus on studying signs in

isolation. The study on LL may reveal the hierarchy and status of languages and the operationalization of language policies, including the hierarchy, status, and operationalization of HLs.

A number of studies in the Indonesian context have analyzed the use of HLs through LL. For instance, [Kweldju \(2020\)](#) and [da Silva et al. \(2021\)](#) observed the use of Javanese in the public signs found in the public spaces and streets in Malang and Yogyakarta, respectively. [Mulyawan and Erawati \(2019\)](#) examined the LL of six main streets in a tourist destination in Desa Kuta, Bali. In a different context, [Purnawati et al. \(2022\)](#), investigated the use of Balinese and Roman scripts in the LL of a heritage area in Denpasar, Bali. The results of the studies are similar, i.e., Indonesian and English are heavily featured on the LL, whereas the heritage languages are rarely used.

To date, no studies on linguistic landscapes have been conducted in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara, two neighboring regencies in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. This study aims to discover the visibility of the Torajan language in the linguistic landscapes within the two regencies. The language plays a key role in keeping the Torajan tradition ([Smeets, 2004](#)) and is mostly used orally by the Torajans as a “cultural representation” and is “passed down orally from generation to generation” ([Baan & Suyitno, 2020, p. 212](#)). The language is also utilized in informal contexts such as home or market domains ([Dewi et al., 2018](#)). Besides, it is formally taught as local content at various education levels in the regencies of Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara ([Garing, 2016](#)). Considering the important role of the language for the Torajan ethnic group, we would like to fill the gap in the literature by focusing on the public signs on the main street connecting two major subdistricts in the two regencies, i.e., the subdistrict of Makale in Tana Toraja and the subdistrict of Rantepao in Toraja Utara. The research questions are formulated as follows:

1. What types of LL can be found in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara?
2. Which languages are featured on the LL in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara and to what extent is the visibility of Torajan language in both areas?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Linguistic Landscape

The concept of Linguistic Landscape (LL) has been largely used to describe language texts that are displayed in the public domain ([Cenoz & Gorter, 2006](#)). As described by [Landry and Bourhis \(1997\)](#), the study on LL includes “the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration” (p. 25). In other words, LL covers all instances of languages found in public spaces, such as streets, shopping avenues, parks, squares, markets, and many more. Based on this definition, it was implied that the scope of LL was limited to signs that are intended to be installed permanently or at least for a long period. However, the scope of LL research was then expanded. According to [Marten et al. \(2012\)](#), [Kasanga \(2014\)](#), and [Caldwell \(2017\)](#), current research on LL may also include temporary and mobile signs that are non-permanent as long as they are displayed in public spaces and can be seen or accessed by all people.

Lou (2016) explained that the function of LL is twofold: informational and symbolic; the former focuses on how LL reflects the language use, “linguistic situation and the boundaries of speech communities” while the latter zooms in on how LL provides hints on “relative power and status of respective ethnolinguistic groups” (p. 3). In other words, LL does not merely study the languages on public signs in isolation; in fact, it relates the analysis to wider contexts such as the social status and power hierarchy of the languages, the issues of language vitality, planning, maintenance, and revitalization, the implementation of language policies, and many more. Furthermore, Cenoz and Gorter (2006) and Puzey (2012) emphasized that besides revealing the operation of languages in a particular community, the linguistic landscape could influence how people perceive and choose the languages. In addition, the studies on LL cannot be separated from the topics on the people, the community, and the government where the LL is displayed as it is the people who consciously choose the languages to be put on LL and those languages represent those people’s purposes, intentions, and beliefs. Alternately, it is also the people who see the languages on LL and interpret the messages conveyed by the creators of LL (Shohamy & Gorter, 2008). As a result, the people, the community, and the government are significant and crucial factors in the LL analysis.

This study follows the framework of identifying and classifying LL by Cenoz and Gorter (2006). In their study, Cenoz and Gorter (2006) considered any signs as the unit of analysis for their research. Then they classified those signs into types based on various factors such as the content of the signs, the location of the signs, and so on. In the end, the types of signs are arbitrarily coded into clothing store signs, food store signs, and so on.

2.2 Torajan Language: A Depiction of Local Wisdom and Ethnic Identity

Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara are two neighboring regencies in the province of South Sulawesi, and they are located next to each other. The data from Badan Pusat Statistik Tana Toraja (2021) or Statistics of Tana Toraja Regency mentioned that the regency area is 2.504,30 kilometers square with 19 subdistricts. The 2020 census revealed that the number of citizens is 280.794 people, with Makale as the subdistrict with the highest density of citizens. Meanwhile, the data from Badan Pusat Statistik Tana Toraja (2021) shows that the area is 1.151 kilometers square with 21 districts. The 2020 census on this region showed that the number of citizens is 261.086 people, with Rantepao as the subdistrict with the highest density of citizens.

One of the largest HLs spoken in South Sulawesi is the Torajan language. It is spoken by the Torajan ethnic group, who mostly inhabit two neighboring regencies in South Sulawesi, namely Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara (Donzelli, 2020). Toraja originated from a Buginese term *to riaja* which was used to refer to the “people from above or highlanders” (de Jong, 2013 p. 116). Torajan language is classified under the Austronesian language and Malayo-Polynesian language family (Garing, 2017). There are different views regarding the level of this language. Researchers such as Garing (2016) and Patiung and Sitoto (2021), stated that Torajan is a language, comprising a variety of dialects, such as the Makale-Rantepao dialect, Saluputti-Bongga Karadeng dialect, and so on. Meanwhile, Grimes and Grimes (1987) mentioned that Torajan, also called Toraja Sa’dan, is a sub-family of South Sulawesi languages that consists of

five distinctive languages, i.e., Kalumpang, Mamasa, Rongkong, Toraja-Sa'dan, and Toala' (p. 43).

As in other HLs in multicultural Indonesia, the Torajan language is commonly used as a “vehicle” (Smeets, 2004, p. 156) in performing rituals and traditional ceremonies (Waterson, 2009). This language is distinguished into two levels of speech style, namely *kada dipamalo* ‘straight talk’ and *kada-kada disalopak* ‘paired words’ (Sandarupa, 2013, 2016). The first mentioned is used for daily interactions in informal domains, while the latter is mainly for rituals (de Jong, 2013; Waterson, 2009). Torajan’s socio-cultural elements are typically expressed in high speech level (Baan & Suyitno, 2020; Garing, 2016), such as in *rampanan kapa* ‘or *rambu tuka* ‘marriage ritual’ (Dewi et al., 2018) and *rambu solo* ‘funeral rituals’ (Baan et al., 2022).

The Torajan ethnic community is known for a strong “focus on their own culture” (Sari et al., 2019, p. 1474) and ethnic identity (Baan et al., 2022). Their culture is “rich with ritual and ritual speech” (Sandarupa, 2016, p. 234) performed in the Torajan language (Waterson, 2009). In ritual ceremonies, speaking is “displayed by skilled speakers” known as *tominaa* or “the ones who have extensive knowledge” (Sandarupa, 2016, p. 235). The high speech level is locally called *basa tominaa*, which means “highly metaphorical, semantically indirect, and socially prestigious” (Donzelli, 2020, p. 176).

Some studies show that there is a tendency for the Torajan younger generation to be more proficient in Bahasa Indonesia rather than their HL (Patiung & Sitoto, 2021). However, other studies indicate that the Torajan language is still spoken in the family domain (Sari et al., 2019, 2020). In their study on contextualized bilingualism among adolescents from four ethnic groups in Indonesia (namely Javanese, Batak Toba, Toraja, and Chinese Indonesian), Sari et al. (2019) mentioned that Torajan people were similar to the Javanese “in maintaining their ethnic language and culture” (p. 1471). Sari et al. (2019) also found that of the four ethnic groups, the Torajan adolescents who became their research subjects speak both Indonesian and Torajan at home. However, in the public domain, they tend to speak in Indonesian (p. 1477). In a more recent study, Sari et al. (2020) tested how much three bilingual ethnic groups—Javanese, Torajan, and Chinese Indonesian—acquired the ethnic vocabulary in their respective HL. They found that the Javanese and Torajan scored higher on ethnic vocabulary skills rather than the Chinese. In this context, it can be implied that the Torajan ethnic group has a strong sense of their cultural tradition and identity.

2.3 Heritage Languages in the Linguistic Landscape of Indonesia

A number of studies about HLs in the LL of some areas or provinces in Indonesia have been conducted. Fakhroh and Rohmah (2018) and Kweldju (2020), for example, analyzed the public signs found in the public spaces and streets in Sidoarjo and Malang, East Java, respectively. Both studies reported that the dominant languages, i.e., Indonesian and English, significantly dominated the LL in both cities. Meanwhile, Javanese occupied a modest 2% of the entire public signs in Sidoarjo and 9% of the total public signs in Malang, even though it is the mother tongue of most people living in East Java. Another study in East Java was conducted by Ramadhani (2018), who researched the language used as lingua franca in LL in Gresik. The researcher primarily focused on restaurants’ names in a business center and found that Indonesian and English dominated the top restaurant names in Gresik. A small percentage of

Italian, Japanese, and Chinese were also found. Javanese was also present in the LL, albeit with other languages.

In a broader context, [Sakhiyya and Martin-Anatias \(2023\)](#) compared the languages used in the LL in three regions in the island of Java: Semarang in Central Java, Yogyakarta in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, and Depok in West Java. Similar to the studies above, Indonesian and English dominated the LL in all three cities. Meanwhile, 5% of public signage in Semarang used Javanese exclusively, and 30% of public signage in Yogyakarta used Javanese in conjunction with other languages. No instances of Javanese could be found in Depok as the official HLs of this region are Betawi and Sundanese, yet neither of the HLs was featured in the public signages.

Some other studies were conducted outside Java. [Sinaga \(2020\)](#), for example, observed the LL at international schools in Medan and found that no HLs were used around the school environment. Indonesian and English took a significant portion as the languages used the most in LL. Another study conducted on a school in Indonesia was conducted by [Riani et al. \(2021\)](#), which focus on signs found in schools located in suburban areas of Jember, Magetan, and Situbondo in East Java. They found that HL such as Latin, Arabic, and Sanskrit never occurred exclusively on the signages; instead, they were always combined with the dominant languages, i.e., Indonesian and English.

In Bali, [Mulyawan and Erawati \(2019\)](#) conducted a study on six main streets in Desa Kuta, a popular tourist destination in Bali. They reported that Balinese was found in public signs of the village, both exclusively and in combination with other languages. Nevertheless, the number of signs containing Balinese was meager compared to signs in Indonesian and English. On the other hand, a recent study by [Mulyawan et al. \(2022\)](#) investigated language contestation at the Batukau Temple in Bali which is known as a tourist destination. The findings showed that the Balinese language still dominates the LL contestation since the language is used in religious activities in the Balinese communities. Meanwhile, [Purnawati et al. \(2022\)](#) found that the majority of LL in shops and stores in Denpasar city, Bali, predominantly used Indonesian despite the fact that the shops and stores are owned by people from various ethnicities such as Chinese, Arabic, and so on. Other languages were also used in the LL, including the Balinese language, yet the use of the Balinese language in the LL was always accompanied by other languages. Similar findings can also be found in the research by [Foster and Welsh \(2021\)](#), who analyzed the public signs on main roads in Balikpapan, East Kalimantan. They reported that Indonesian, English, and a combination of both were used heavily in public signage in Balikpapan. Meanwhile, no instances of HLs were detected in the public signages.

These studies have demonstrated the lack of representation of HLs in public spaces in Indonesia. Some studies indicated that HLs were used at low frequency, while others highlighted that HLs were not included in the LL. Instead, Indonesian seems to dominate the content of LL in many areas in Indonesia. The dominant use of Indonesian in LL in Indonesia is, in fact, understandable since Indonesian acts as the lingua franca in Indonesia and provides a standard tool of communication for all ethnic groups of Indonesia. In addition, the use of Indonesian in LL follows the Law Number 24 of 2009 concerning the national flag, language and emblem, and national anthem ([Indonesian Central Government, 2009](#)) and Presidential Regulation Number 63 of 2019 concerning the use of Indonesian language ([Indonesian Central Government,](#)

2019), which stipulates that Indonesian should be the only language used on public signs and space (Kweldju, 2017). Other languages may be used upon special consideration. It is also stipulated that the responsibility to preserve the HLs falls on the shoulders of the local government. However, as previous studies have revealed, HLs are nearly invisible in LL in many local regions of Indonesia.

The dominant use of English in the LL in Indonesia, on the other hand, is peculiar but not entirely unexpected. The use of English contradicts the laws and regulations of Indonesia in regard to LL. Nevertheless, since it is widely accepted as the lingua franca of the world and the language of science, technology, trade, business, and tourism (King, 2018), it is not surprising that English dominates the LL in Indonesia.

As stated in Law Number 24 of 2009 and Presidential Regulation Number 63 of 2019, the responsibility to preserve the HLs falls on the shoulders of the local government. In line with those regulations, there have been some efforts from the local government of the province of South Sulawesi to maintain and preserve the HLs in South Sulawesi, including the Torajan language. For example, in 2012, the Language Development and Fostering Agency of South Sulawesi held the second International Congress of Heritage Languages in South Sulawesi (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2012). In 2018, the agency held the Third International Congress of Heritage Languages in South Sulawesi (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2018).

The agenda of making HLs more visible in public space was also actualized in the *Peraturan Gubernur (PERGUB) Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan Nomor 79 Tahun 2018* or Governor Regulation of South Sulawesi Province Number 79 of 2018 (Dinas Komunikasi Informatika, Statistik dan Persandian Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan, 2023). The regulation stipulates that the HLs of South Sulawesi, including the Torajan language, must be taught for at least two credits per week and must be actively used on Wednesdays at schools. In addition, the Lontara scripts (the writing system of the Bugis language and Makassar language of South Sulawesi) should be used in street names, billboards, and gates in several areas in South Sulawesi. However, there have been no instructions regarding using the Torajan language in public spaces in South Sulawesi.

3. METHODS

This research, which is ethnographic by nature (Blommaert & Maly, 2015), applied a qualitative approach. Creswell and Creswell (2017) defined qualitative research as “an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 4). This approach emphasizes inductively building and drawing conclusions about a concept based on some data. Since this research seeks to reveal linguistic composition through instances of LL in a specific area, we believe that a qualitative approach is the most appropriate method for this study. In addition, this research used a case study as the research design. Creswell and Creswell (2017) defined a case study as a design that focuses on an in-depth and detailed analysis of a single case. As we zoomed in on the use of languages in a particular area (Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara) to provide an in-depth analysis of the linguistic composition in those areas, the case study would be appropriate for this research.

In obtaining the data for this study, we utilized the Google Street View facility provided by Google Maps. The usage of Google Maps as a tool for data collection on LL has been implemented and legitimized by many researchers, among others Waliński (2014), Huebner (2016), and da Silva et al. (2021).

The source of data is the LL found in the main street connecting the subdistrict of Makale in the regency of Tana Toraja and the subdistrict of Rantepao in the regency of Toraja Utara—Jalan Poros Rantepao–Makale. The street is approximately 20 kilometers long, and the street view on Google Maps was taken in October 2019 by Google. The steps in collecting the data are illustrated in Figure 1. The overview of Google Street View and some examples of LL found on Jalan Poros Rantepao–Makale can be seen in Figures 2 and 3 respectively.

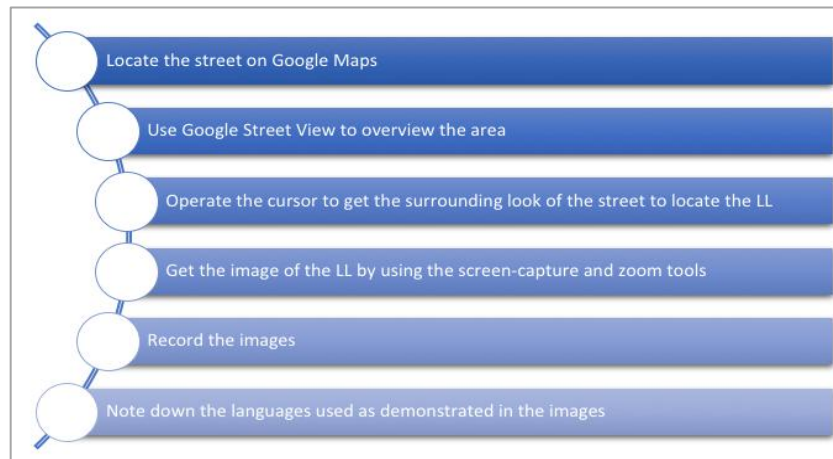


Figure 1. Data collection procedures.



Figure 2. Overview of Google Street view.

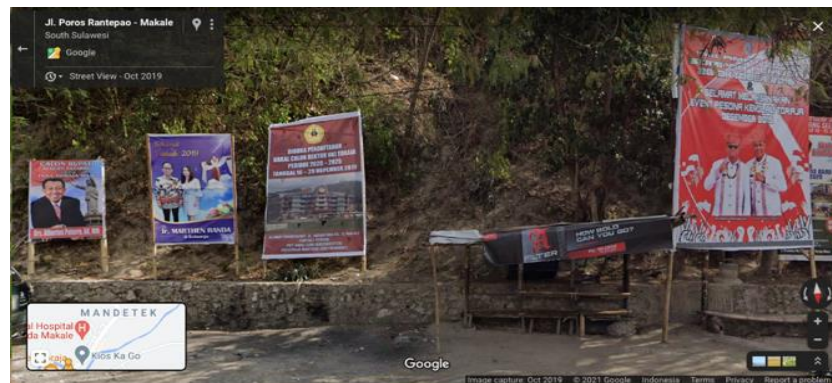


Figure 3. The LL on Jalan Poros Rantepao – Makale.

After collecting the data, we analyzed the data. The steps for data analysis can be seen in Figure 4.

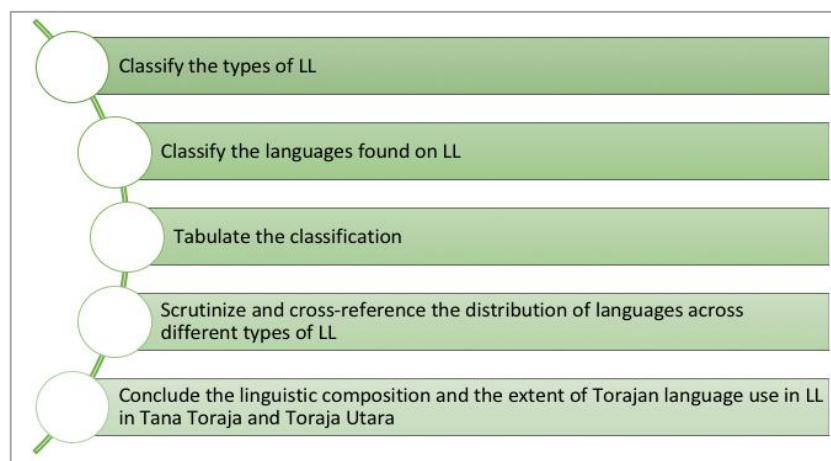


Figure 4. Data analysis procedures.

To answer the first research question, the types of LL were classified into several categories, such as political campaign materials, store names or descriptions, and many more. The categorization for the LL types was inductively created from the emerging data. To answer the second research question, the languages found on the LL were classified into two major categories: monolingual and bilingual. The monolingual category consists of LL, which only uses one language, while the bilingual category consists of LL using two languages. The monolingual category is divided into monolingual Torajan language, monolingual Indonesian, and monolingual English. Meanwhile, the bilingual category is divided into three subcategories: bilingual Indonesian and Torajan, bilingual Indonesian and English, and bilingual English and Torajan. The categorization was based on our initial hypothesis that there would be three languages found in the LL in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara: Indonesian (because it is the national and official language of Indonesia), English (because it is the lingua franca and the international language), and Torajan (because it is the HL of the Torajans). The result of tabulation was scrutinized further to find out the distribution of each language. Then it was used to provide analysis and conclusion on the linguistic composition in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara and the extent of Torajan language use in the two subdistricts.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 LL Types in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara

Along Jalan Poros Rantepao–Makale, which connects the subdistrict of Rantepao in Toraja Utara and the subdistrict of Makale in Tana Toraja, 177 signs can be found. Those signs can be classified further into several types. Table 1 summarizes the typology.

As seen in Table 1, the variety of signs along the specified street is relatively limited. Political campaign materials dominated the LL found around the area since the image collection by Google Maps coincided with the election period for the local government positions.

Table 1. Summary of LL types.

Types of signs	Number of signs	Percentage
Political campaign materials	52	29.38 %
Store/organization names	49	27.68 %
Advertisements	41	23.16 %
Eatery menu	20	11.30 %
Greeting/warning signs	15	18.47 %
Total	177	100.00 %

Several features characterize such LL. The first feature is the use of the candidates' photos, names, and represented parties on the campaign materials, and this feature occupies the most significant portion of the campaign materials. This feature may be included and designed to familiarize the voters with the candidates' general information. The second feature is the candidates' allocated numbers on the ballot papers. This feature might be included in the campaign materials to remind voters which numbers represent the candidates. The third feature is the concise vision statements and the tagline of the parties. This feature may be included in the campaign materials to attract voters' attention and persuade voters to choose specific candidates. Those features can be seen in examples of political campaign materials in Figure 5.



Figure 5. Political campaign materials.

The second most dominant type of LL is the store or organization names. This LL type is commonly found along the street since the street connects two of the most crowded subdistricts in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara. Two features characterize this type of LL. The first one is the names of the stores and organizations which typically dominate the LL. This feature might be intended to make the stores and organizations more visible to increase the viewers' awareness of the businesses so that they would be attracted to visit the stores and join the organizations. The second feature is the general description of the stores and organizations. This feature might be included in the LL to provide information on the goods and services provided by the stores and organizations. Some of the features are demonstrated in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Store/organization names.

The third most dominant type of LL is advertisements. This type of LL generally consists of two features. The first feature is the names of the brands and the taglines, which usually dominate the LL in terms of font size or font colors. This feature might be included to increase people's awareness of the brands. The second feature is the pictures of the products, which may be included to associate the products with the brands. However, this feature does not always appear in advertisements due to two reasons. Firstly, the product is already included in the names of the brands. Secondly, the pictures of the products are prohibited from being displayed in the advertisements. For instance, advertisements on cigarettes in Indonesia must not include pictures of the cigarettes as stipulated by the Government Regulation Number 109 of 2012 and the Regulation of the Minister of Health Number 28 of 2013 ([Kompas. com](http://Kompas.com), 2013). Figure 7 demonstrates some advertisement features.



Figure 7. Advertisements.

The following common type of LL is the eatery menu. There are many eateries along the specified street. To attract the people to come, the eateries provide the menu in banners installed in front of the eateries. The features of this LL are typically very straightforward, i.e., the names of the eateries, the menu catered by the eateries, and sometimes, the pictures of the food, as seen in Figure 8.



Figure 8. Eatery menu.

The last type of LL is greeting or warning signs. The message of the signs is typically conveyed through writing. Pictures are absent in this type of LL, and it might be caused by the intention of the creators to convey the message as straightforwardly and concisely as possible. Examples of such LL can be seen in Figure 9.



Figure 9. Greeting/warning signs.

These findings are consistent with Mulyawan and Erawati's (2019) and Benu et al.'s (2023) findings, albeit with different frequency. In their study in Desa Kuta, Bali, Mulyawan and Erawati (2019) also found political advertisements, commercial signs, and traffic signs in their data. In addition, Benu et al. (2023) found a wide range of LL in their study in Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara, including warning signs and commercial advertisements. This similarity shows that these types of LL are very common in different places in Indonesia.

4.2 Linguistic Composition and the Position of Torajan Language

After classifying the LL into several types, we scrutinized the instances of languages used along the road of Jalan Poros Rantepao–Makale. As earlier hypothesized, we could find the instances of Indonesian, English, and Torajan language. We also found instances of Arabic on some of the LLs. Table 2 below summarizes the linguistic composition of LL in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara. As seen in Table 2, the number of monolingual signs ($n=118$) is significantly higher than the number of bilingual signs ($n=59$).

Table 2. Summary of linguistic composition.

Languages	Number of Instances	Percentage
Monolingual Torajan	2	1.13 %
Monolingual Indonesian	107	60.45 %
Monolingual English	9	5.08 %
Bilingual Indonesian and Torajan	12	6.78 %
Bilingual Indonesian and English	42	23.73 %

Table 2 continued...

Bilingual English and Torajan	1	0.56 %
Bilingual Indonesian and Arabic	4	2.26 %
Total	177	100.00 %

Among monolingual signs, signs in Indonesian dominate ($n=107$). Figure 10 provides examples of LL in monolingual Indonesian. We then cross-referenced the frequency information of the LL with the LL types and found that monolingual Indonesian is commonly used in all types of LL. Table 3 summarizes the types of LL which only use exclusively Indonesian.



Figure 10. Monolingual Indonesian.

Table 3. Frequency of LL using monolingual Indonesian.

Types of LL	Number of LL	Percentage
Political campaign materials	40	37.38 %
Store/organization names	29	27.10 %
Advertisements	17	15.89 %
Eatery menu	11	10.28 %
Greeting/warning signs	10	9.35 %
Total	107	100.00 %

The use of Indonesian exclusively on LL is in line with the Law Number 24 of 2009 and Presidential Regulation Number 63 of 2019, which stipulates that Indonesian should be the only language used on public signs and space (Kweldju, 2017). Therefore, it is not surprising that Indonesian is dominantly used on the LL in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara. In addition, Indonesian is used as the medium of instruction in educational institutions all over Indonesia. As a result, it is expected that the people who view the LL are familiar with the language and capable of understanding the messages exposed in the public signs. As illustrated in Table 3, the most common type of LL, which is exclusively Indonesian, is political campaign materials ($n=40$). The use of Indonesian in this type is also logical since the political candidates aim to hold positions in the government office, and Indonesian as the national and official language is dominantly used in the government setting. The dominance of Indonesian in the LL in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara is in congruence with the result of previous studies conducted in many regions across Indonesia (among others, Fakhriroh &

Rohmah, 2018; Foster & Welsh, 2021; Kweldju, 2020; Mulyawan & Erawati, 2019; Sakhiyya & Martin-Anatias, 2023; Sinaga, 2020).

The next sign is the monolingual sign in English. These signs only occur nine times on advertisements ($n=4$), store or organization names ($n=4$), and greeting or warning signs ($n=1$). Figure 11 demonstrates two examples of monolingual English.



Figure 11. Monolingual English.

The use of English on the LL does not follow the Indonesian government's laws and regulations. However, as stated in the literature review, it is not surprising to find instances of English on LL since English is considered a global language (King, 2018). Compared to LL, which exclusively uses Indonesian, the number of LL, which exclusively uses English, is significantly lower. The monolingual use of English can be seen in advertisements in the form of the brands' taglines. In addition, instances of monolingual English can be found on LL containing names of the stores or organizations and seasonal greetings, as seen in Figure 11. English might be used in the context since it distinguishes the brands and the stores from similar businesses. A study by Nikolaou (2016) revealed that commercial signs tend to use English in order to give the impression of a "cosmopolitan, sophisticated, and trendy outlook" (p. 160). It is suspected that those businesses use English to project the framings and values of modernity and popularity to attract potential customers who see and access the LL.

Signs in the monolingual Torajan language have the lowest frequency in monolingual signs in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara. We only found two signs of greeting in this language. As demonstrated in Figure 12, the phrases *kurre sumanga* and *karampoanta* (respectively mean 'thank you' and 'everyone' in English) are used. The greeting signs are meant to be read by people who are leaving the village area, and the use of this language, in this case, is not peculiar since most of the Torajan people would understand what the phrases mean. In cases in which the non-Torajan people happen to see the signs, they might not be able to understand the meaning of the phrases. However, they would interpret the use of this language as a characteristic of the local culture.



Figure 12. Monolingual Torajan.

Among bilingual signs, signs that combine Indonesian and English have the highest frequency ($n=42$). Figure 13 below provides some examples of such LL. The cross-referencing result with the LL types reveals that the instances of Indonesian and English can be found in advertisements ($n=20$), store or organization names ($n=16$), eatery menus ($n=5$), and political campaign materials ($n=1$).



Figure 13. Bilingual in Indonesian and English.

As mentioned in the previous analysis, the Indonesian use of LL is in line with the Indonesian laws and regulations. Nevertheless, such a combination of languages occurs in the findings. As seen in Figure 11, the relationship between Indonesian and English in the LL is not a translational one. In other words, the information conveyed in Indonesian is not the same as the information conveyed in English and vice versa; thus, the use of the two languages on LL is not intended to clarify the message of one language by using the other language. The finding of this study confirmed the previous finding by Zahra et al. (2021), who analyzed the LL on coffee shops in Medan, North Sumatera. They found that “there is no partial or complete translation” in the bilingual

signs (Zahra et al., 2021, p. 5451). Thus, the reason for Indonesian and English bilingual use on the LL cannot be precisely determined. By using English, the creators of the LL might intend to promote the image of sophistication (Kweldju, 2017; Nirwana & Sharma, 2022) or attract customers (Fakhiroh & Rohmah, 2018), yet at the same time, they might want to keep the content familiar and understandable to the local people who do not understand English, and thus, they decided to use both Indonesian and English on the same LL.

The next most frequent bilingual sign is the signs which combine Indonesian and Torajan language ($n=12$). Figure 14 below provides some examples of such LL. Based on cross-referencing with LL types, the LL which uses a combination of Indonesian and Torajan language is political campaign materials ($n=11$) and greeting signs ($n=1$).



Figure 14. Bilingual Indonesian and Torajan.

The instances of the Torajan language and Indonesian in Figure 14 are not translations of each other. The use of the two languages does not clarify the meaning of one language using the other language. On the LL, the Torajan language phrases *Ta Sangkutu' Banne*, *Pengkilalai Tossok Nomor 1* and *Misa'kada Dipotuo* (respectively mean 'we are united', 'remember to choose number 1', and 'we are stronger in unity') are not accompanied with the Indonesian or English translation. This finding indicates that the use of Indonesia and the Torajan language on the LL is not merely for communicating messages. The most probable reason why the Torajan language is used in conjunction with Indonesian in this particular case is that the Torajan language may be used as a political tool, which might be intended to create imagery that the political candidates are from the local areas and consequently they must have a great concern for the betterment of the Torajan community. In addition, the Torajan language may be used to create a sense of kinship and closeness between the political candidates and potential voters.

Bilingual signs that combine Indonesian and Arabic also emerge in the data. There are four LLs with such a combination, all of which are eatery menus. Figure 15 provides some examples of such LL.



Figure 15. Bilingual in Indonesian and Arabic.

The translation of the Arabic writing is ‘There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His prophet.’ Although the majority of the population in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara is Christian (Sandarupa, 2013), such eatery signs can be interpreted that the food served in that place is *halal*, and therefore, it is permissible for Muslims to consume the food. As far as our knowledge is concerned, there is only one study on culinary signs in the Indonesian context which is conducted by Iwana and Sudarwati (2021). The researchers investigated the LL of culinary signs in Malang, East Java, and found that the Arabic language also appeared in their data.

Finally, the last bilingual sign category is a combination of English and Torajan. This combination only occurs on one LL, and it is categorized as a greeting sign (see Figure 16).



Figure 16. Bilingual in English and *Torajan*.

In this LL, the English phrase ‘Lovely December 2016’ is combined with the Torajan language phrase *Toraya Maelo*, which means ‘Toraja, a land with beautiful nature’. Similar to previous findings, the English and Torajan phrases are not translations. In this context, it is most probable that the visual elements in both English and Torajan are used as a medium to attract foreign and domestic tourists. In their study on the LL of Malioboro Yogyakarta, da Silva et al. (2021) stated that language use on public signs can “promote a sense of security and contentment among tourists” (p. 296).

Based on the results elaborated above, it can be concluded that the Torajan language is minimally represented in the LL in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara. The exclusive use of the language only occurs two times within 177 data, and when

combined with other languages, the occurrence only amounts to 13 occurrences. This result shows that the Torajan language lacks visibility in the public space in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara. This finding is in line with the results of previous studies by Fakhroh and Rohmah (2018), Ramadhani (2018), Kweldju (2020), da Silva et al. (2021), Zahra et al. (2021), and Benu et al. (2023), in that HLs are marginalized in the LL. To sum up, the extent of Torajan language use in the LL in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara is also minimal at best.

This minimal representation of the Torajan language might bring detrimental effects to the vitality of the language. As previously described in the analysis, the use of Indonesian and English is significantly higher than the use of the Toraja language. If this situation continues, the Torajan language might be confined to smaller and smaller domains. More of its speakers would shift towards using the more dominant languages, in this case, Indonesian and English (Patiung & Sitoto, 2021), which are considered more beneficial for the community. The mass language shift would, in turn, result in language loss and death of this language. It is imperative to maintain the language continuously to prevent that from happening as this language reflects the local wisdom and values of the Torajan people (Patiung & Sitoto, 2021).

As mentioned in Law Number 24 of 2009 and Presidential Regulation Number 63 of 2019, the issue of maintenance and preservation of HLs in Indonesia is the responsibility of the local government. Patiung and Sitoto (2021) pointed out that the government is the most influential in maintaining the HLs in Indonesia since they have the power to issue language policies. As explained in the literature review, there has been some effort by the local government of South Sulawesi to ensure that the HLs in South Sulawesi can be maintained and preserved for generations to come. However, the lack of visibility of the Torajan language in the public domain indirectly shows that the local government did not focus on enforcing the language in public spaces in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara.

LL and the community are interrelated, and both are significant factors for the maintenance and preservation of HLs. LL does not only reveal the community's general perception of one particular language, but it can also influence the community's attitude toward that language (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Puzey, 2012). Based on that reasoning, more visibility of HLs in the public space might affect HL's image in society and improve the community's perception and attitude towards HLs. If people have a favorable view of HLs, they will be more likely to use and maintain those languages.

The same logic would also apply to the Torajan language in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara. When the community is exposed to the high frequency of the language on LL in the public domain, the community members would consider the language essential to use, learn, and teach. Their attitude towards the language may improve further, and they would be more eager and motivated to utilize the language and transmit it to future generations. The favorable attitude and perception of the language would lead the people to expand larger domains for its language use in the community.

5. CONCLUSION

The instances of languages on LL and the extent of use of Torajan language as the HL in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara in LL have been discussed at length. Various

types of LL were found along the specified area of study, which is Jalan Poros Rantepao–Makale. The types of LL are political campaign materials, advertisements, store or organization names, eatery menus, and greeting or warning signs.

Further analysis of the languages found on LL in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara has revealed that Indonesian dominates the monolingual signs, followed by English and the Torajan language. In terms of bilingual signs, LL with a combination of Indonesian and English is the most frequently found along the specified street, followed by a combination of Indonesian and Torajan language, a combination of Indonesian and Arabic, and a combination of English and Torajan. Lastly, it was found that the Torajan language is minimally featured on the LL in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara. The findings suggested two further implications. The first implication is that the Law Number 24 of 2009 and Presidential Regulation Number 63 of 2019, which stipulates that Indonesian should be the only language used on public signs and spaces are not closely adhered to. The second implication is that the local government and people might not put the issue of Torajan language visibility in the public domain as a priority. Languages that are not actively used in public domains would not be able to compete with the power and influence of dominant languages. As a result, more and more people would leave their heritage languages and focus more on mastering the dominant languages. This possibility might happen to the Torajan language, whose speech domain is currently limited to familial talks at home and indigenous rituals (Patiung & Sitoto, 2021). To remedy the situation and to provide a better opportunity for the language to grow, one of the ways that local government and people could do is to expand the domain of this language use into the public domain so that the people in the community can easily see, access, and use the language.

Regarding the research limitation, the current research focuses only on observing the LL to gain a better understanding of the linguistic composition of the LL and the extent of Torajan language use on LL in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara. In this study, we inductively built the arguments and drew the conclusion based on the emerging data and by cross-referencing the result of the research with previous studies. Researchers who are interested in the topic may try combining the observation on LL and interviews with the creators of the LL and local authorities to acquire a more grounded and nuanced understanding as to why specific linguistic composition is set on LL and why HLs are rarely exposed and featured on LL.

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Place Naming in Aceh: The Genesis and Generic Patterns of Toponyms in Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh

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Abstract

Studies conducted on documenting toponymic histories and issues of place name taxonomy and etymology in the Acehese language are few to begin with. As names of villages in Aceh suggest, it indicates that many indigenous place names in the province seem to be redundant and possibly rooted from landscape formations. This study investigates the role of geographical and environmental as well as migration possibilities on their toponymy by using the descriptive method. The data were obtained from Acehese village names in Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh areas, and observation and in-depth interviews were also used as instruments. The data were analyzed using the model proposed by Miles et al. (2014). The results of this study demonstrate the history and etymology of similar names of villages in Greater Aceh and Banda Aceh areas. However, those names are not related to the migration of people. In general, place naming in Aceh was based on the genesis of the naming and the generic pattern. The former was associated with the specific object or entity, the historical reasons and use of specific-word oriented, whereas the latter was mainly succeeding word-forming elements that followed different patterns of lexicon combinations and loan-words. This study shows that toponyms

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consist of a multi-faceted structure, which entails different features according to situations.

Keywords: Acehnese, linguistic landscape, place-naming, toponymies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Place-names are omnipresence in society which represents the human linguistic-language history and the oldest living heritage of human culture. How people manage geographical spaces through naming places they inhabit in has been of interests to geographers, linguists, toponymists, and historians (Nash, 2017). Some linguistic landscape studies have been in the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial places (Landry & Bourhis, 1997) which relate to the names of companies, products, places, rules or other concepts (Akindele, 2011, p. 2). Place-names in particular is a monoreferential term that applies to places or location that usually comes with specific address functions (Helleland, 2002). However, it is not merely a representation of places or location but also provides a unique insight and underlying perspective tied to its communities (Alasli, 2019). Since places are believed to bear a certain emotional charge and attachment, place-names can usually be linked to self-identity that encompass beyond symbolic dimension of location. Therefore, a place is “a physical location imbued with meaning” (Cosgrove, 1989, p. 104).

On one hand, topography (place-names) can be seen as a way of understanding the cultural artefacts between language and environment (Taylor, 2016). He explains that place-names are the manifestation of human response toward their environment as a place where they dwell and sustain life. This means that in order to understand the origin of place-names such as when, by whom, how, and the motivation behind it, it is important to understand all aspect of information provided by its surroundings and local people. Place-names can act as the basic compass of how people perceive the nature of the places they were at and their relationship with it; they communicate identity, power, location, and culture in a variety of ways that connect geography and language (Humphreys, 1993; Williamson, 2023). On the other hand, the bound that people associated with their place bring forth the other reason why place-names is worth the time understanding it. Most people would agree that the connotation of place-names is related to identities. It is a dual idea of collective identity and memory of the people who live and shared the same way of life and feeling (Helleland, 2012; Tuan, 2001).

The United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), an organization formed under the auspices of the UN’s United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC) has emphasized that toponymy is indispensable for managing social and economic issues. The UNGEGN resolution considers the function of local names which provide various information about the history of settlements, natural conditions, vegetation, and residents’ activities so that local history and culture can be preserved, including information on migration of people in the past (Kerfoot & Närhi, 2006).

The legal framework for Indonesian’s place naming is standardized based on three main directives of either using the national language, the regional indigenous language, and the foreign language. The Indonesian Agency for the Development of

Language derived a comprehensive conclusion mentioning that there is specific pattern used on place-naming vocabulary in Indonesia. Over 1.500 villages in the country that were named in the local languages, three generic terms of identification are commonly used: mountain, river, and bay (Lauder & Lauder, 2015).

By far, while there were some researches about place naming in Aceh, there is no research conducted to document the history of toponyms and the problems of taxonomy and etymology of place-names in the Acehnese language. Hence, this research was conducted to reflect the etymology of place-names in the area studied by reflecting on the history and the geographical location of the place from the perspective of the people who live in the area. Based on this etymology, we tried to delve further into the historic aspects of the names, associate the naming to the linguistic aspects, and narrate the possible meaning of words combination of the toponyms. The results are expected to provide new literature in this field. Thus, this research aims at the process of naming places in Aceh, the genesis of the naming, the generic patterns and their relationship to its history, thus hopefully provide an insight into the possibility of migration route that occurred.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Place Names

Place name is the name of a geographical location, such as town, lake, or a range of hills. The use of language in linguistic landscape has appeared in several languages. The language used in linguistic landscape is surely different from one country to another. It is understandable since the genesis of toponyms itself is on par with the concept of 'sole ownership'. Place naming lies in the hands of people who inherit their own unique diverse culture, specific way of living, specific skill practices, intellectual concept and belief, and specific set language hence the toponyms is the manifestation of the memory of all those come together (Hausner, 2017). For this reason, the significant relation and representation between linguistics, culture, social relations, and environment are evident in place names. The extant of place names is omnipresence in society; a place name is a self-constructed concept that represents a person's socio-cultural link to their physical surroundings (Lengen et al., 2019).

The general approach of toponymy is characterized into the descriptive toponymy and the critical toponymy. The first type deals with the description and historical narrative as well as the linguistic structure behind the name of the place. Descriptive backing denotes the connotative meaning of the place which in turn conveys the emotional overtones of the said name-place's important history (Alasli, 2019). *Badan Informasi Geospasial* or the Geospatial Information Agency of Indonesia had established five steps of standardization on geographical names which comprises of preparation and inventory, toponymy survey, data entry, data verification, and recommendation and standardization (*Badan Informasi Geospasial*, 2017). On the other hand, the second type mostly pays attention on the influence of the socio-cultural aspect behind the place naming practice, such as ideology, politics, intention, society, economy, motive, etc. (Nurhayati, 2018). In short, it is a twofold intersection between culture as a whole and political aspect imposed on name given which in turn shaped place names, new names, or even name changes as a result of

social interaction and linguistics. As a matter of fact, now a greater recognition and acknowledgment were given to the principle that name places should be grounded on the critical theories that take into consideration of space, place, and landscape (Rose-Redwood et al., 2010) as key elements and consideration of cultural heritage.

Stewart (2012) offers classifications of place names where he declares as a practical and nearly all-inclusive sort of category. Any toponymist can use them to build a useful categorization of toponym typology that is appropriate for their region of study (Daniel & Mátyás, 2023). They are (Stewart, 2012, pp. 47-53):

1. Descriptive names: an attribute that can be appreciated by however any senses may serve, e.g., Echo Rock,
2. Possessive names: rest upon the 'ownership' and personal sentiment regardless of the right of discovery, e.g., Chinese Town,
3. Incident names: as opposite to descriptive, it records its naming based on the temporary characteristic or occurrence associated with the place from a result of particular occasion, e.g., Wolf Creek and Antelope Spring. They merely note a specific occasion on which the animal was met, not that the animal was extraordinarily abundant there or particularly distinctive of it.
4. Commemorative names: a place-renaming process for an honorific end, e.g., Lancaster to Lincoln in honor to Abraham Lincoln,
5. Euphemistic names: few in number, this type was born out of pure logic that usually refers to future expectation, e.g., Greenland, Eden, or Paradise, because if the county had a good name, men would go there more frequently,
6. Manufactured names: a constructed morphological name that may resulted in new lexicon, new sounds, from backward spelling, and so forth, e.g., Saybrook, Connecticut, from Lord Say and Sele and Lord Brook,
7. Shift names: an alteration adjustment of one generic name to others within a close vicinity, e.g., White Lake, White River, Whiteville,
8. Folk etymologies: a well-recognized process is that of folk etymology, e.g., *CayoHueso* to Key West; and
9. Mistake names: a naming process out of mere mistake, e.g., Darrington (Washington) from Barrington.

Naming has mainly followed two paths: (1) spontaneous (popular naming) and (2) baptism (planned naming). The former is the result of the lexicalization process in which the starting point is the description of the subject, object, circumstance, and environment bearing the name. Meanwhile, the latter are names given through authorities, formalized status, special resolution, administrative activity, and time consideration that reflect the place and its given name (Helleland, 2002). Humphreys (1993) mentions that people's perception plays a huge role in constructing a place name. One of the case studies he presented was a detailed study of name places in the northern Cape vicinity where the names of the places were coined from the word that associated with water, such as e.g., *lab* 'river', *laus* 'spring', *xora* 'spade water'. He notes that the reason behind this particular word emphasizes were because the water is considered as the high commodity around the geographical area.

2.2 Place-Naming Process

The main reason a place-names exist is to sort out the fundamental cognitive level of understanding over the need of naming a specific location as an address in

order to assert its main function and novelty as a specific place. Furthermore, it reckons the level of emotive feeling over the place, the ideological level that relate to said place, and the community-creating level of naming one place all include in the place-naming process (Helleland, 2002). Lengen et al. (2019) explains that the development of events in memory and imagination depends heavily on place. The autobiographical memory is thought to support a sense of self and place identity. They go on to say that “characteristics of identity associated with the perception and comprehension of the spatial environment are often summarized in the term ‘place identity’” (Lengen, 2016; Langen et al., 2019, p. 21; Proshansky et al., 1983).

If we round it up, the significance of place naming is a response to the relationship and representation between linguistics and the spatial spaces, also known as linguistic landscape (LL). It is the “visibility and salience of language on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region” (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, p. 23). Shohamy and Gorter (2009, p. 1) define linguistic landscape as “language in the environment, words and images displayed and exposed in public spaces”. These definitions imply that linguistic landscape can give us a glimpse of how inhabitants (visitors) use linguistic diversity, local linguistic practices, and linguistic ideologies to create a name of place (Berezkina, 2016).

Migration also posts its own narratives in place-naming. Gjesdal (2019) believed that migration represents mobility between worlds of before and after. He explains that people use language to make sense of the world around them and the circumstances they are currently in, i.e., the bonds and situation they uphold with home before the move may influence and construe places of arrival or transition thus interpret and elaborate the memory of both states. This is usually how the name of a place is constructed and textualized. Furthermore, the spatial movements between place of arrival and home, as well as the nature of the journey undertaken, may modify the semiotic resources in order to understand the *spatio* dimension of people in it (Schiller & Salazar, 2013). In addition, the experience of exile and all its related memory stimulate reminiscence to relate shared characteristics of the new place for naming. Moreover, the specific aesthetic and linguistic modes in migratory setting may also reflect and influence the naming process (Phipps & Kay, 2014).

Pertiwi et al. (2020) conducted an anthropolinguistic approach with the ethnographic descriptive method to look for the pattern of place-naming in Ponorogo Regency’s villages. The results showed that the villages (83 villages) in this area were named based on three toponymous aspects, namely the cultural aspects (11 villages), the manifestation aspects (34 villages), and the social aspects (39 villages). Two years later, Triana et al. (2022) conducted a qualitative descriptive study based on a corpus linguistic approach that tried to map out the thematization of place-naming on the West Coast of Sumatera Island.

3. METHODS

This is descriptive qualitative research to describe the phenomena naturally without any manipulation (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). In such research fashion, it involves a collection of techniques used to specify, delineate, or describe naturally occurring phenomena without experimental manipulation.

3.1 Research Sites

Sources of data for this research are village names in Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh districts in Indonesia. According to *Badan Pusat Statistik* or Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics, as of 2019, there are 604 villages in Greater Aceh Regency and 90 villages in Banda Aceh Regency (*Badan Pusat Statistik, 2022*). In this study, the researchers play a crucial role as a primary data collector, in other words the key instrument (*Ary et al., 2010*).

The main instruments in collecting the data were observation and in-depth interviews. *Cohen et al. (2007)* have suggested that the particular feature of observation as a research process is that an opportunity is offered to an investigator to gather live data from naturally occurring social situations. During the observation, the names of villages in Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh districts were recorded and listed into the list.

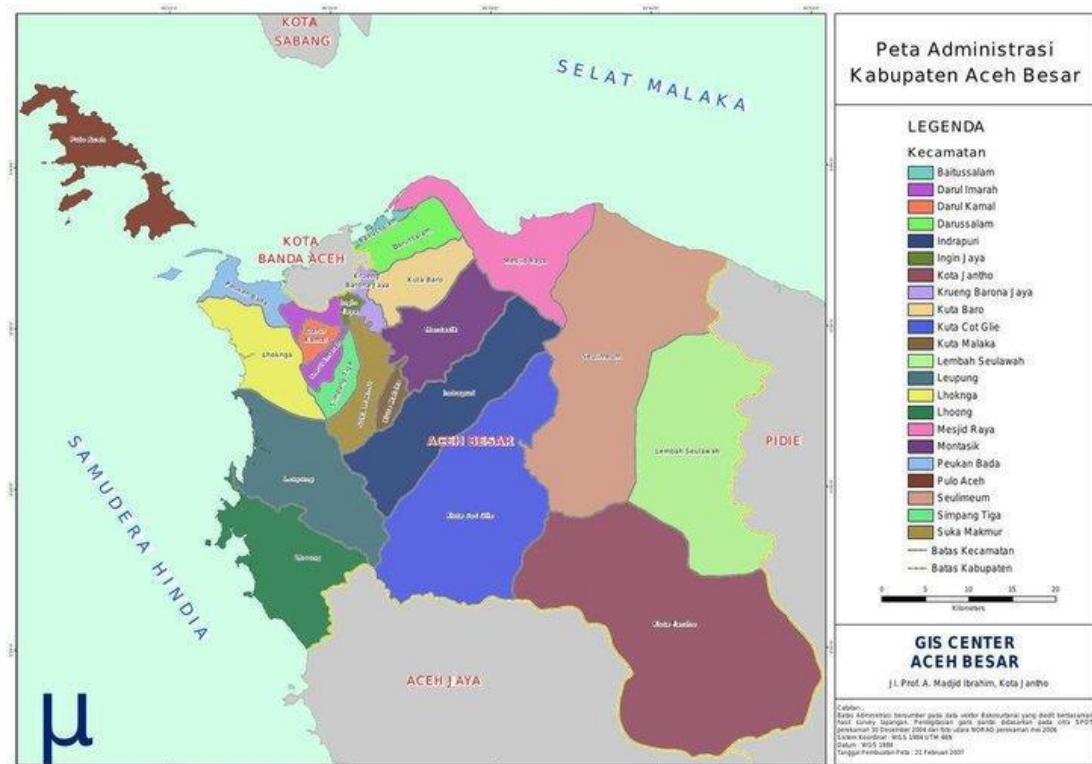


Figure 1. Administrative Map in Aceh Besar District

(source: <https://uptbgis.bandaacehkota.go.id/katalog/peta/detail/admin-aceh-besar>).

3.2 Data Collection Techniques

The data were collected based on the names of villages in Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh districts, and looking for names that are relevant or arguably related to determine their relationship so that migration patterns can be drawn. We conducted the data collection process using two main instruments that incorporate documentation and interviews.

The main documentary archives were related to tracing the movement of people, either from the preserved archives or orally narrative story accounted by the natives of

the places studied. Not only that, usually archives also contains information about the history of settlements and place-naming. As [Bowen \(2009\)](#) notes, documents can offer historical context and extensive data coverage, which helps one place their research within the context of their subject or field. All of the information then proceeds to be used in learning the naming processes of places studied and the formation of place-naming procedures.

We also conducted interviews on both experts and the communities to support the claims of the information that gathered from the archives. In this regard, we asked respondents selected from the residents of Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh districts to disclose information on the origin of place names in the intended research area. [Cohen et al. \(2007\)](#) state interview makes participants possible to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live and grow and to express how they view situations from their own point of view. In other words, the interview process is expected to provide information on the perspectives of the interviewees about the research topic and also to investigate the reasons for that perspective. For this study, a total of 18 participants were purposively selected and agreed to be interviewed. The selected respondents must be the residents of the village they reside in. We narrowed down the criteria to those that have been living at least 40 years in the village. Our reasoning was to avoid unintended narrative and preserved the original history of a place. People who have taken up permanent residence in a place for a long time tend to know or at least have heard the reason behind the naming, not to mention if they grew up in the said place. Furthermore, the older the participants were interviewed so we could get a glimpse of the original history of the place. However, for villages that was narratively new or was an expansion, we particularly looked for its local government authorities since they could actually provide document and explanation for the name.

3.3 Data Analysis Techniques

In this study, the data were analyzed in three stages as proposed by [Miles et al. \(2014\)](#), which include data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification. In the first stage of data analysis, we summarized the findings of the study to further analyze the information hence helping us provide a final conclusion of the research. At this stage, all of the data from the interview transcripts, notes, and documents were carefully examined and compared to form a matrix display of data. Subsequently, these data were systematically arranged and organized to permit a coherence corpus to answer the research question using the NVivo software. The results were presented in sub-points of different titles per village. Finally, the last step is concluding the result of the study by making good sense of the overall information.

4. RESULTS

According to the Local Government and Law No. 5 of 1979 on Village Governance Principles about areas uniformity in Indonesia, the Order makes sure that the place-naming in Aceh is ought to be started with the word *Desa* ‘village’, not *Kampung* ‘village’. Meanwhile, the hierarchy for the region in Aceh during the sultanate period consisted of *Gampong*, *Mukim*, *Ulee Balang Cut*, *Ulee Balang Rayek*, and *Sultan*. The use of *Kecamatan* ‘district’ from the Indonesian language is

assimilated to the naming process due to the influence of the language as the national language. The term *Gampong* is now used in Aceh Province.

4.1 The Genesis of Toponyms in Aceh

It is definite that the genesis of all place names connects with the specific cultures people live in that precise location. Their unique cultures, practices, skills, intellectual, and ways of living all creates a synonymous harmony behind the reason of place naming. Setyo et al. (2022) explain that the normal pattern of toponymy was based on the physical traits (such as geographical, biological, and hydrological aspects) and the social-cultural traits (namely the historical and language aspects). Based on the results of the study, it showed that places in Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh Districts were named following these traits that are separated into five dialectical relations between physical geography, specific object or entity (plant names), historical reasons or past events, specific-word oriented, and duplication.

Most of the places in both districts were named based on the physical geography of the domain. The people perceive the nature of some locations and find relationship of these places and its names. At the most basic level of place naming in Aceh, the location markers are related to one generic element of geographical features that provide symbolic information about the place. For example, the name of a place that derives from the word *Lhok* and *Lam*. The former means ‘deep’ in general, and the latter means ‘inside’. Although when the word is linked to the area of *Lhok* and *Lham*, it points out the general terrain of the place which means that it is located below and lower than other areas. Both names are significant variations of the geographical distributions that distinguish the physiographical characteristics of land and its geological composition that put meaning and represent one location. The distinction in perception of the words refers to the surrounded area of the place hence triggered the people to name the place according to the physical association of the domain. Generally, both *Lhok* and *Lam* appear almost exclusively at the start of the name. For example, *Lam Awe*, *Lam Bleut*, *Lam Cot*, etc.

The second most common approach of place naming in Aceh is associated with specific object or entity. In this study, we found that the most universal toponymy undergoes a process of assimilation of constant association with an object. In this case, the entity itself is a tree that is characteristic to the place. However, the native put an attention to detail by only linking the process of place naming to the trees that particularly grow in the *meunasah* ‘Islamic prayer building’, public places, and graveyards. For example, *bak buloh* ‘the bamboo tree’, *bak setui* ‘the santol tree’, and *bak sukun* ‘the breadfruit tree’. Although the existence of plants associated with the places is difficult to find, the residents believe that these plants once dominated the area.

Another pattern of place naming in Aceh is based on the historical reasons. Based on the data analysis, we found that the residents from some villages named the place according to the past events. The results show that the chronological facts were a prominent blueprint in many names of places. The names chosen were once meaningful and symbolize an important event to the community. In a way, it was constructed around those events to be useful and informative for the future even though it was becoming obscure from the memory overtime. For example, the village of *Batee Linteung*, *Pinto Khop*, etc. Morphologically, *Batee Linteung* was derived from two

different words, *batee* ‘stone’ and *linteung* ‘blocking’. The exact narrative accounted to the history behind the village name was lost to the current generation however we can construct an idea or a story behind the name from the combination of the two words. The same occurrence can be said to the village of *Pinto Khop*. It was developed from two particular words of *pinto* ‘door’ and *khop* ‘close’.

Interestingly, Acehnese people appear to use specific-word oriented in place naming, such as the use of word *meunasah* ‘Islamic prayer building’ at the start of the name. In general, a place that was named with *meunasah* is related to regional expansion where old population settlements immigrated to the new area. In addition, it can also be associated with building construction of a new *meunasah* within the area which is the main cause of expansion. Subsequently, these numerous different *meunasah* buildings are what cause confusion among the settlements thus they add an additional word in front of the word *meunasah*. For example, *Meunasah Manyang*, *Meunasah Tutong*, *Meunasah Bak Ue*, etc. *Manyang* means ‘high’, *tutong* means ‘burning’, and *bak ue* means ‘coconut tree’.

The problem with place names is that they are often not unique. Many different places may share the same name and Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh Districts are no difference. There are numerous cases of toponymic homonym problem or identical names can be found. There are two villages whose name is *Meunasah Baro*, and two villages that share a similar name of *Gampong Baro*, and two villages with the name of *Lam Cot*, to name a few.

4.2 Generic Pattern of Toponyms in Aceh

4.2.1 Linguistic structure patterns

The name of places in Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh Districts are based on word forming elements that followed different pattern of lexicon combinations. To avoid any sort of confusion, it is important to emphasize that the place names consist of head names that are used in almost all/all generic pattern of toponyms discussed. Additionally, there are head names taken from an actual building but does not mean that the villages are the buildings itself. It was merely a name. Below are the data of the language structure pattern in place names.

(1) *Cot/Lam/Meunasah*, etc. → adjective

One of the most frequent generic naming patterns in Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh Districts was based on the formation of word elements that started with the words *Cot*, *Lam*, and *Meunasah*, followed by an adjective, e.g., *Cot Cut*, *Lam Raya*, *Meunasah Tuha*, etc. In term of the words *Cot* and *Lam*, both words denote to the topographical features of the place, *Cot* means ‘peak’ and *Lam* means ‘inside, below, lower’. Both words are used to describe the surrounding landscape of the settlement as well as explicitly stating the terrain background of the place. The adjective lexicon that followed the words are those that describe to modify the first word.

In terms of semantic contents, the adjective words that follow the first element record the same sets of descriptive information of the terrain of both *Cot* and *Lam*. Similarly, the word pair chosen usually recount the narrative of an adjective that describe a proportion of an area, such as big, small, deep, etc. *Cut* is an adjective that

means ‘small’, so *Cot Cut* literally means ‘small peak’. It is a term that specifically refers to a topographical area that is close to a peak, be it a hill, a mountain or simply a higher area.

In term of adjective word that comes after *Meunasah*, the lexicon usually explains the current condition of the building. *Meunasah* is a noun that means ‘Islamic prayer house’. One of the villages whose name started with this word is *Meunasah Tuha*. *Tuha* is an adjective means ‘old’ so the combination of these two words literally means an old Islamic prayer house.

(2) *Cot/Lam*/, etc. → adjective + noun

Comparable to the first pattern, toponyms for this second structure starts with the same words as the first pattern; *Cot*, *Lam*, but not *Meunasah*. However, unlike the first one, this pattern comprises three-word elements that is followed by an adjective and a noun, for example *Lambaro Kueh*, and *Lambaro Sukon*. Several examples mentioned show that even though that these base variations are unrelated in location proximity to be called an expansion area of the first place of its namesake (*Lam*), semantically it is a part of an extended meaning of such. However, while the use of adjective in the first pattern was to describe *Lam*, the function of adjective in this pattern was to describe the noun after it.

Lambaro is formed from two words, *lam* and *baro*. *Lam* means ‘inside, below, lower’, while *baro* is an adjective lexicon that means ‘new’. However, there is no relationship between these two words in which its composition can create a new lexicon with new meaning. Its combination is no more than for word combination that creates rhyme to simplify and ease the pronunciation. On the other hand, *baro* describes the noun *Kueh* and *Sukon* in *Lambaro Kueh*, and *Lambaro Sukon*. *Kueh* means ‘cake’ and *sukon* mean ‘breadfruit’, so *Baro Kueh* and *Baro Sukon* literally mean ‘new cake’ and ‘new breadfruit. However, bear in mind that these definitions do not reflect the history of the naming process.

(3) *Cot/Lam/Meunasah*/, etc. → noun

The elements analysis identified proper noun as the most frequently occurring naming structure after the head name. There are a total of 160 place names based on various head names in Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh. The head names are ranged from the most common of *Cot*, *Lam*, and *Meunasah* to the newest entry such as *Aneuk* ‘child’, *Lampoh* ‘land’, etc. All these head names are particularly acute in names containing noun elements afterwards, such as *Lam Bate* ‘stone’. The specific singular forms of all type of entity are used in this section and are not assigned to any particular topographical features (i.e., lake, mountain, hill, etc.) or affiliated with any notable attributes (i.e., water, stone, tree, etc.).

Names range from *Lam Kawee* ‘fishing rod’, *Cot Kareung* ‘coral’, *Cot Karieng* ‘salted fish’, *Meunasah Kulam* ‘pool’, *Meunasah Keudee* ‘shop’, *Lampoh Raja* ‘king’ to *Aneuk Glee* ‘forest’. Some names belong to places that are close to each other but share no similar noticeable characteristics that imply their similarity traits or connections, such as *Lam Panah* ‘arrow’ and *Lam Teuba* (it can be derived from Bahasa Indonesia *tiba* ‘arrive’ or Acehnese *tuba* ‘poison’). Both places are close to each other and are settlements that are close to the hillside area but none of the noun

markers are affiliated to the hillside. It is most likely that the nouns are chosen based on past events or merely native to the place.

(4) *Cot/Lam/Ateuk*, etc. → noun + noun

The fourth type of place naming structure in Aceh adjusts to the solid compound formation of language structure. However, unlike the constant of meaning changing after words combination in which we are usually familiar with in regard of compound, Acehnese place naming took an opposite turn in this aspect. First, it is a compound of two nouns but without nouns combination hence disregards the law of morphology. For example, ‘airport’ in English is derived from two different words, ‘air’ and ‘port’, that opens a new meaning for a new lexicon. However, village toponyms in Aceh adjusts this rule by separating two nouns that stand for and refer to one meaning. Here, we arrive to the second rule of place naming based on nouns formation in Aceh toponyms that is two different and separate nouns referring to one meaning. In addition, the meaning of these ‘compound’ words does not necessarily point out to one specific article but allude to the intact intended definition it represents. Meaning, the fourth rule is related to what the nouns combination corresponds to as a whole picture in terms of what it represents and the interpretation of the representation. For example, *Krueng Kala*, where *krueng* means ‘river’ and *kala* means ‘bamboo sprout’ but it does not produce a new meaning should it be combined. However, in this context, *Krueng Kala* refers to a river where many bamboo sprouts are found.

Just like the other three generic patterns above, this structure and frequency of place names in Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh also start with *Lam* and *Meunasah* with additional occurrence of *Ateuk*. For example, *Lam Blang Trieng*, *Meunasah Krueng Kala*, *Ateuk Lung Ie*, *Ateuk Mon Panah*, etc. Interestingly, there is a common pattern that can be found in this naming structure in which almost all of the names have an affiliation with water or a place that is associated with water. For example, *Krueng*, *Lung*, and *Mon*.

Table 1. Generic pattern of place naming in Aceh.

Place name	Literal meaning	Interpretation
<i>Lam Blang Trieng</i>	<i>Lam</i> ‘inside’, <i>Blang</i> ‘paddy field’, <i>Trieng</i> ‘bamboo tree’	(A place) that was built near a paddy field where many bamboo trees are found.
<i>Meunasah Krueng Kala</i>	<i>Meunasah</i> ‘Islamic prayer house’, <i>Krueng</i> ‘river’, <i>Kala</i> ‘bamboo sprout’	An Islamic prayer house that was built near a river where many bamboo sprouts can be found.
<i>Ateuk Lung Ie</i>	<i>Ateuk</i> ‘dike’, <i>Lung</i> ‘ditch’, <i>Ie</i> ‘water’	The dike of a ditch.
<i>Ateuk Mon Panah</i>	<i>Ateuk</i> ‘dike’, <i>Mon</i> ‘well’, <i>Panah</i> ‘jackfruit’	A well that was dug beside a ditch where many jackfruits grow.

(5) *Cot/Lam/Meunasah*, etc. → noun + noun + noun

We have learned in point four that a non-combination compound noun place names in Acehnese language do not create a new word but rather correspond to the intended definition it represents. Akin to the previous point, all three different non-combined nouns that form a place name stand for a complete representation of the

place. For example, *Lambarih Meunasah Blang Mee*. There are three nouns after the head name of *Lambarih*, they are *Meunasah* ‘Islamic prayer house’, *Blang* ‘paddy field’, *Mee* ‘tamarind’. When the words are put together, it means ‘an Islamic prayer house that was built where the tamarind grow’. However, *Lambarih* itself consists of two words, *lam* ‘inside, in’ and *barih* ‘row’, derived from the word *bareh* ‘row’. As a whole, semantically, the meaning of the village name is ‘an Islamic prayer house that is built around a row of tamarind trees’.

(6) *Cot/Lam/Meunasah*, etc. → noun + adjective

There are also place names which pattern comprise of a head name, noun, and adjective. The adjective is used to describe both the noun and the head name. Examples are such as:

- *Cot Lampoh Soh*, in which *cot* is ‘peak’, *lampoh* is ‘land’, and *soh* is ‘empty’
- *Lam Alue Cut*, in which *lam* is ‘inside’, *alue* is ‘ditch’, and *cut* is ‘small’
- *Lam Asan Klieng*, in which *lam* is ‘inside’, *asan* is ‘narra tree’, and *klieng* is ‘dark (color)’

The last words are always an adjective and it is used to modify the previous two words before it. Subsequently, the combination of the three words produces a meaning that describes the referent. *Cot Lampoh Soh* means ‘an empty land that is located at a high place’, *Lam Alue Cut* means ‘(a place) that is built inside a ditch’, and *Lam Asan Klieng* means ‘(a place) that is built where the dark narra trees grow’.

4.2.2 Other structure patterns

Another not so common structure pattern of place names in Aceh starts with a noun and followed by plant names, geographical elements, and cardinal direction. Most toponyms named after these three markers describe locality of the place. Plant names are usually associated with a property of a specific plant that is well-known to the area, such as *Gampong Pineung* from *gampong* ‘village’ and *pineung* ‘betel palm’. There is high possibility that this plant is the main agricultural feature of the area hence the name.

The second one is the geographical elements. When it comes to landscape features as the reason behind the naming, there is such a common pattern of generic specific in the process that is glaringly similar to all names. *Lam Cot* (‘inside’ and ‘peak’), *Gampong Blang* (‘village’ and ‘paddy field’), *Cot Paya* (‘peak’ and ‘swamp’), *Aneuk Paya* (‘child’ and ‘swamp’), *Aneuk Glee* (‘child’ and ‘forest’) are some of the examples. Yet all the names start with nouns but the point is the identifiers after the noun. If we look closely, all the words after the nouns are those that describe the geographical terrain of the particular village, not of the entire settlement. For example, places in the region of a hillside as its surrounding areas starts with the word ‘hill’ then is followed by another word. However, both Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh villages only take the geographical features that belong solely to the said villages that describe them.

The last one is place names based on cardinal direction, such as *Gampong Baroh* (‘village’ and ‘north’), *Meunasah Tunong* (‘Islamic prayer house’ and ‘south’), *Iboh Tunong* (‘a type of palm tree’ and ‘south’), etc. Usually, there are two reasons why a place is named based on the four main points of a compass. One, strategically and

geographically, the place is located in one of the four points. Second, it is to specifically state the location of a place that share a similar head name within one settlement. For example, *Lamteumen Timur* (*timur* is 'east') and *Lamteumen Barat* (*barat* is 'west').

4.2.3 Loan words

There are some villages which names are loaned from other languages. In Aceh, place naming based on loan words is indisputably traced from the Bahasa Indonesia influences. The most common pattern of word borrowing that can be traced over Acehnese toponyms mapped out two frequent patterns of language structures that form a village name. One, when one of the elements from the two separated lexicons that form a place name is directly loaned from Bahasa Indonesia. The frequent pattern of this type of place name starts with an Acehnese word that is followed by Bahasa Indonesia, such as *Jantho Baru*, *Lam Raya*, and *Cot Raya*. The second one is those in which both word elements are derived from Bahasa Indonesia, such as *Data Makmur* ('data' and 'prosperous'), *Tanjung Selamat* ('peak' and 'safe'), *Suka Damai* ('like' and 'peace'), *Suka Tani* ('like' and 'farmer'), *Bandar Baru* ('city' and 'new'), and *Kota Baru* ('city' and 'new').

When it comes to inverted elements of loan words process of place naming in Aceh, there is a big possibility that transmigration was the big factor. The main reasoning for this conclusion relies on the fact that many settlements of new villages that adopt the Bahasa Indonesia word for a place are not native people of Acehnese. In term of direct language contact, this is not an impressive feat considering that the borrowing of an element does not require intense contact and a prolong time of changes. In fact, the word comes from those whose native language is Bahasa Indonesia.

5. DISCUSSION

Attempts to trace the chronological motives of special inevitable reasons on place naming in Aceh involve much speculation. However, there are patterns that lead to three specific methods that people used to name a place. Although the results are an oversimplification of a complex historical reality, the general patterns show a much logical conformity on the reasoning behind the decided name of a place long forgotten in the past.

First, people associated a place with the history behind it. It reflects a tie to the past about the important history of the places where people settled. It mirrors the historical richness of the place and contribute to the roots of motives behind the naming (Helleland, 2012). These past events are told in both written and handed down orally from generation to generation. Therefore, name place is a part of cultural heritage in that they tell us about the place.

Second, the name of a place responds to the geographical reflection of a landscape. This process of place naming is the result of human and the nature relationship in the most conscious way. People usually correlate the physical aspect of an environment to put a name to a place. While they might deliberately name it because of the said surrounding attribution, sometimes geographical name can also happen

unconsciously. This conscious act refers to the concept of nature. It is a process of visualizing the geographical aspects of the surrounding that influence the decided linguistic modifier (Nurhayati, 2018). Furthermore, their apparent attribution as a referential role in place naming sometimes is also correlated with a symbolic meaning of an event.

Third, the direct reference of geographical surrounding and the history can also represent the direct link between language and the thing it represents. It means that the surrounding landscape, history, people, etc. affect the choice of words in name giving. Kövecses (2005, 2006) believes that language reflect world outlook of people and express the cultural reality of our surrounding. Some scholars argue that toponyms create new coinage (Bright, 2003) that was used by people even after the one who coined it passed away. In this regard, coinage symbolizes the link and interaction between language and culture (Onchoke, 2021).

While we did mention that migration might be a big factor in loan words process of place naming in Aceh, we also want to make it clear that there was no migration factor that comes to play in toponyms regarding specific ethnic group distribution that come to Aceh to build their own settlements. What happened was the effect of language contact (Bahasa Indonesia) and modernization. That being said, loan words from Indonesia, such as *baru* 'new', are the result of modernization of language contact and language shift within the community (Leodora, 2013).

In addition, there were no correlation between the origin of the population and the similarity in place names of some villages. In fact, when two settlements that are far in distance share similar names, it is merely a pure coincidence. In some cases, when two places close to each other share the same name, there is an additional attribute to differentiate them. For example, *Lamteumen Barat* and *Lamteumen Timur* are both located in *Jaya Baru* sector. However, *timur* 'east' and *barat* 'west' were assigned to establish a set marker that marked the eastern part and the western part of the place.

The results of this study show that *Lam* and *Cot* were two of the most common head names of places in Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh. Both refers to the geographical surrounding of the places and reflects the landscape condition of the location before the naming. Thus, the element of naming a place in both districts cannot be far off from how the physical proof of the place in the past (Duizenberg, 2020). We are talking about the terrain and the record of the natural topography of the place. There must be a reason why people named a place with words that usually connotes to high (*cot*) and low (*lam*) implication. In one testimony, a respondent said that *lam* in his village name (*Lamcot*) is associated with the location of where it was built. In the past, the terrain was located far from the crowded area and slightly indented, hence the word *lam* (inside, below, and lower) was used, but at the same time, there was a higher area around the middle part of the space, hence the word *cot* (peak) was used. However, landscape and geographical factors do not always act as the decisive aspect of toponymy in Aceh.

In the previous explanations, we have generalized 'inside, below, and lower' as the definite three meanings of *lam*. We arrive at the conclusion that (1) the most common genesis of place naming was based on the physical geographic of an area and the object/entity that is unique to that area. This reasoning contributes to the fact that (2) the word matched the structural meaning of the linguistics pattern when the generic pattern of naming process was laid out. However, the reality is a little bit different.

Some of the places named after the word *lam* indeed have different meanings albeit the geographical characteristic it alludes to. From interviews, we found out that some of that naming processes related to *lam* was based on past events. The respondent emphasized that in some cases, *lam* was a “rhyme word” that gradually experience change overtime. What he really meant was that there are some words in Acehnese that almost sound the same as *lam* when it is pronounced quickly but has different meaning. Over the years, this pronunciation eclipsed the real sound of the word and the history of the naming (Kearns & Berg, 2002). Because of that, many people have now forgotten the real name of the place itself.

A closer look is at the name of *Lampisang*, a village in the Suka Makmur Sub-district. The original name of the place was *Lham Bak Pisang*. However, since it was a bit difficult to pronounce, over time it changed to *Lampisang*. The initial word was *lham* which means ‘drowned’, not *lam* ‘inside’. Then there is a place name *Lamteuba Mukim*. In this name, *Lamteuba* itself comes from the word *lham* which refers to the ‘hoe that is used to dig a well’. There is also *Lamteungoh* (in the Ingin Jaya Sub-district), which, according to the respondent, the place was named after a snake’s name; *uleue lan* ‘a large python’. The word *lan* changed overtime to *lam*. There are also *Lampaseh Lhok* and *Lampasah Krueng*. According to the informants, *lampaseh* is one word, and not from *lam* and *paseh*. It is an Acehnese word that means ‘land clearing’, usually carried out in areas that were originally forests and not owned by anyone, then the land was cleared and made into settlements or fields.

6. CONCLUSION

This study shows that toponyms consist of a multi-faceted structure, which entails different features according to situations. Analyzing the genesis of toponyms in Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh has brought us to a five-point conclusion of how a place is originally named in Aceh. Two of these five features were nature origin in which physical geography and specific object or entity is involved. In physical geography, this is mainly when a name of a place is taken from the depiction and representation of its surrounding area, landscape, or terrain that describes and characterizes the geographical condition of the area. Meanwhile, in specific object or entity, this is related to distinctive object information that is unique to that area and usually the entities are those related to plant names. The last three features are human made based names, namely historical reasons or past events, specific-word oriented, and duplication. Acehnese people tend to create the names of their settlements based from past events. These events symbolize important occurrences to the community and have a historical affiliation and sentiments to the place. Additionally, toponyms in Aceh followed a specific-word oriented pattern where some words are used countless of times in the naming process, such as *Lam*, *Cot*, and *Meunasah*. However, these recurrent choices on words are only for the head name part. Some words are common to the point of causing confusion of whether duplication was involved. Certainly, in this case, not a direct repetition but some places do practice loan words to name their places albeit unintentionally. This word borrowing is mainly the results of area expansion, modernization, and direct language contact. Lastly, it is found that Acehnese toponyms are not caused by migration.

Concerning the generic pattern of toponyms in Aceh, this study shows that the naming process followed four specific patterns. The first one is the linguistics structure pattern. In Aceh, name elements are constructed from noun and adjective. It usually consists of two words or more that is preceded by a head name, i.e., *Lam*, *Cot*, and *Meunasah*. The number of word elements and type of patterns may vary but a head name is definite. There are six common patterns, namely (1) head name + adjective, the adjective contains the descriptive information of the head name, (2) head name + adjective + noun, the adjective is to describe the noun after, (3) head name + noun, the noun becomes a proper noun (not morphologically. of course) in meaning when paired with the head name, (4) head name + noun + noun, the noun combination corresponds to the representation of the name as a unit and the whole meaning, (5) head name + noun + noun + noun, the noun combination corresponds to the intended definition it represents, and (6) head name + adjective + noun, the adjective modifies the noun and the head name.

While physical geography and specific object or entity play a significant role in place naming, an immediate challenge that seems vital for comparison is the scale of a place that is referred to the naming entity. We are talking about the measurement of territory of a place it is named of, in this case, a village. If a place is named following the physical proof around it, how big of a scale of the said place is devoted to the name? For example, the village of *Gampong Pineung* ‘village of areca palm tree’ whose name is derived from the main agricultural feature of the area. If the village is named after the said feature, i.e., the Areca Palm tree area, of a small scale of terrain within the land that latter on included as one village, how did the range calculation of one village measured? There is limitation in this that we failed to understand the partition scales considered best suited to the mapping scale of one village name. It will be interesting if future research can serve this type of study on the table.

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Dysphemism in the Form of Hatred and Profanity Towards Forest Destroyers in Indonesian Poetry

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Abstract

Environmental challenges have inspired poets to use poetry as media to convey protest, sadness, or anger toward environmental damage. As a form of artistic expression, poetry is a powerful medium to convey concerns about ecology. This study aims to describe expressions of dysphemism in the form of hatred and profanity towards forest destroyers in Indonesian poetry. This qualitative study collected data from the three anthologies, namely (1) Riwayat Asap Membungkam Jerebu Lewat Sastra (The History of Smoke Silencing Haze through Literature), (2) Puisi Hijau Resonansi Serindit (Green Poetry: The Resonance of the Magpie Robin), and (3) Metamorfosis Rimba Sehipun Puisi Hijau Warga SMA Cendana dan Penyair Tamu (Metamorphosis of the Jungle: A Collection of Green Poetry by Cendana High School Students and Guest Poets). The data were analyzed based on the theory of ecocriticism. The study shows that Indonesian poets (1) expressed hatred using the diction of greed combined with avarice expressions, and (2) expressed profanity using curse expressions. These dictions or expressions show that Indonesian poets are concerned about nature's existence. If the situation is reversed, i.e., the forest and the earth are damaged, poets can act harshly according to the context and situation; they hate and condemn through their poetry. Through the use of dysphemism, environmental poetry encourages

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reflection and awareness of environmental damage caused by irresponsible human actions. The poem invites readers to consider the consequences of these actions and encourages changes in behavior to protect nature.

Keywords: Dysphemism, hatred, Indonesian poetry, forest destroyers, profanity.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the countries having severe environmental damage. One of them is caused by land and forest fires that may lead to die-offs, declines, and in general, influence the development of abundant soil fauna on the ground (Wasis et al., 2018). Besides that, Indonesian forest fires have produced thick haze that disturbed neighboring countries, such as Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, and Thailand, between 2017 to 2019 (Wardanaputri, 2021). The haze caused by forest fires had stopped learning activities and caused various chronic lung and breathing-related diseases. Schools in Indonesia, especially in Riau and its surroundings, were closed. Many children and pregnant women fell sick, and some even died. This condition lasted long enough that some people protested against the government, which was suspected of conspiring with forest destroyers. It was often said that the forest caught fire on its own; however, people find it hard to believe.

Environmental challenges have inspired poets to use poetry as media to convey protest, sadness, or anger toward environmental damage because poetry can enhance ecological awareness (Varutti, 2023). As a form of artistic expression, poetry is a powerful medium to convey concerns about ecology. Through language, poetry has the power to express emotions, create strong images, and present deep aesthetic experiences. Poetry can help draw attention to crucial environmental issues and encourage action by presenting strong and emotional imagery (Harun, 2016).

Indonesian poets have produced at least three anthologies that recorded and protested the damage caused by human activities. The literature-loving community in Riau Province, the center of environmental disaster, initiated these works. Other forest fire centers were the provinces of Central Kalimantan and West Kalimantan. However, there were no anthologies found in these two provinces, except for standalone poems published in print and electronic mass media. Interestingly, the poems in the three anthologies above contain numerous harsh dictions or profane language in the form of hatred, curses, and reproaches (Hasbullah & Fathromi, 2015; Kariyawan, 2016, 2017). These kinds of expressions are known as dysphemism.

Dysphemism is an expression used by poets to describe the negative impact of human actions sharply and impressively on nature. Allan and Burridge (2006, p. 29) describe it as “speaking offensively” because it is an unpleasant expression to someone who is the subject of conversation. In ecolinguistics, it can be used to express dissatisfaction and anger toward human treatment of nature. Besides, dysphemism can highlight indifference, cruelty, or injustice in the environment. An example of dysphemism can be found in the following poem, *Titah Negeri Berasap* (Mandate of the Hazy Nation) by Roziyah (2015) from *Kumpulan Riwayat Asap Membungkam*

Jerebu Lewat Sastra (Compilation of Haze's Silent History through Literature) (Hasbullah & Fathromi, 2015).

<i>Ternyata inilah negeriku</i>	This is my country
<i>Negeri angkuh dengan utang-utang tak terbayar</i>	An arrogant country with unpaid debts
<i>Pemimpin tak berperasaan melihat hina aku kelaparan</i>	The heartless leaders saw me starving despicably
<i>Senyum penuh teka-teki penuh misteri</i>	A smile full of enigma full of mystery
<i>Hati hati telah mati karena iri dengki</i>	The heart has died due to envy
(Titah Negeri Berasap, Roziah, 2015)	

The words, such as *negeri angkuh* 'arrogant country', *pemimpin tak berperasaan* 'heartless leaders', and *hati hati telah mati karena iri dengki* 'the hearts die due to envy', express the poet's harsh opinion. The diction is used to remind the political party that the people using polite and implicit language have not been effective. This fact is contrary to the 'should-be' character of the Malay community in Indonesia, which is courteous and modest. Their motto, *bahasa menunjukan bangsa* 'the language represents the nation', reminds people to be careful in using language in life (Effendy, 2014). This kind of language is interesting to study because poetry is typically delivered beautifully and implicitly; thus, this is the contradiction.

The study of dysphemism in poetry can be studied using a literary eco-critic approach. Ecocriticism is a literary approach that analyzes literary works from an environmental perspective (Arianto et al., 2021). Thus, the study of dysphemism with literary ecocriticism describes the use of harsh words or phrases that express pain, anger, disappointment, or dissatisfaction with human treatment of nature.

Studies on environmental damage, specifically related to forest and climate change, have been carried out in many countries (Astigarraga et al., 2020; D'Agata et al., 2020), García-Valdés et al., 2020; Gattuso et al., 2018; Miles-Novelo & Anderson, 2019). Meanwhile, expressions of dysphemism have been carried out by Nisak (2022). None of these studies had poetry as the object of study. Likewise, regarding dysphemism, none of which is related to forest destruction.

To fill this lacuna, the present study aims to examine the forms of dysphemism used by poets in poetry. The study of dysphemism in literary works can help build a strong narrative about environmental protection and provide persuasive messages to the public (Laili, 2013), in this case, poetry. The result of this study is expected to positively contribute to efforts to remind forest destroyers and other people to care for and restore the forest environment as a part of men and other living beings. Hence, more specifically, this paper attempts to answer the following research how use of dysphemism in Indonesian poetry related to the environment?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Poetry as Media for Criticizing Environmental Damage

Forest destruction, often triggered by over-exploitation of natural resources, including fossil fuel and firewood, mining (Worlanyo & Jiangfeng, 2021), and conversion to agricultural and industrial land, causes environmental damage. In addition, it burdens nature beyond its capacity and damages the ecosystem for various

human interests. Forest destruction causes extreme climate change, which can trigger the extinction of several living beings, the emergence of tropical storms, droughts and floods, loss of biodiversity, and land degradation (Wahyuni & Suranto, 2021).

Poetry can be utilized as effective media to criticize forest damage because poetry has the power to express emotions, create strong images, and convey messages in elegant and creative ways (Chavis, 2011). Poets can use strong words and deep images to describe forest destruction, its impact on nature and life, and concern for the future of the environment. Through the beauty of the language of poetry, a poet can arouse readers' empathy and awareness of forest damage. Poetry can also explore themes such as deforestation, illegal logging, forest fires, loss of habitat for flora and fauna, and other negative impacts. The combination of the right choice of words and creative language style can strengthen the message of criticism of forest destruction.

What's more, poetry can trigger reflection and a change of attitude (Koopman & Hakemulder, 2015). Furthermore, it can make the readers feel the pain and concern contained in it. This encourages them to think more deeply about the importance of forest conservation and realize that they have an important role in maintaining the balance of the ecosystem. By contemplating poetry that criticizes forest destruction, it is expected that readers are inspired to take action to preserve forests. For example, they can participate in environmental campaigns, reduce the use of illegal wood, support forest restoration programs, or even volunteer in environmental conservation projects. Thus, poetry is not just a beautiful work of art, but also media to change the world by inspiring changes in attitudes and actions to preserve forests.

2.2 Dysphemism

Dysphemism is an expression with harsh and impolite words and derogatory or unpleasant expressions that are used to replace kind expressions addressed to a particular person or group. Dysphemism is used in communication to deliver criticism, aiming to create a negative image of a person or event (Allan & Burridge, 1991). Furthermore, Chaer (2002) argued that dysphemism is an attempt to replace polite or ordinary words with harsh word meanings. Examples of dysphemism include the word *kalah* 'lose' being replaced by *masuk kotak* 'literally translated as get in a box', the word *menduduki wilayah* 'occupies a territory' being replaced by *mencaplok* 'to seize, to grab', and the word *memenjarakan* 'imprison' is replaced by *menjebloskan ke penjara* 'thrown in jail'.

Glück (1983, as cited in Kurniawati, 2011) stated that dysphemism is an ominous, obscene, blasphemous utterance or sentence. It is also biased, hurtful, and offensive, and expresses taboo things using profane or vulgar words. In addition, Sutarman (2013) mentioned that dysphemism is the use of harsh and emotional words that evoke the emotions of those who read or hear. However, its expression by cursing, swearing, yelling, and scolding, is not always related to the speaker's emotions, but sometimes it is used to attract public attention. And so, dysphemism is used in a particular context according to the speaker's purpose. The expression is generally used when someone is upset, angry, disappointed, hateful, or frustrated to offend or hurt someone's feelings. The antonym of this word is euphemism.

Dysphemism emerged due to various reasons. It is expressed due to anger, intending to mock, ask, comment, grumble, reply, joke, tease, remind, answer calls, respond to questions, see others frown, give, respond to criticism, repeat requests,

accuse, blame, express disappointment, corner, offend, refuse to accept warnings, and disagree (Utami, 2010). It can also be expressed when surprised, amused, in disbelief, having fun, and in pain. Lastly, dysphemism can be expressed due to a habit.

Dysphemism serves to draw attention to someone, show disrespect, aggressive or provocative traits, make fun of authorities, or persuade verbally (Kurniawati, 2011; Wardhaugh, 1990). Meanwhile, several reasons for using dysphemism are to (1) demean or express contempt, (2) show dislike or disapproval of someone or something, (3) deliver strong insults, (4) provide a negative portrayal of political opponents, either views, attitudes, or achievements, (5) expressing anger and annoyance, as well as (6) swearing or showing power.

Allan and Burridge (1991) propose eight types of dysphemism: (1) taboo terms that are used to hurt, ridicule, nickname, or curse, (2) obscene cursing and swearing, in this case, obscene swearing is considered dysphemism if it uses terms related to blasphemy on the name of God, (3) comparison of humans and animals that are considered to have negative behavior; nicknames or greetings taken from visible physical characteristics so that speakers are considered as if they are abnormal people, (4) cursing using terms derived from abnormality, (5) –IST dysphemism (racist, etc.) that serves as ridicule, (6) terms showing ridicule or disrespect using a non-insulting tone to the character of the person addressed, and (7) use of terms borrowed from another language, e.g., ‘skepsel creature’ for black people or the Negro race (used for discriminatory purposes race).

3. METHODS

This study employed qualitative document research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 1994; Moleong, 2004; Muhajir, 2000). The data are from three Indonesian anthologies, they are:

- (1) *Riwayat Asap Membungkam Jerebu Lewat Sastra* (The History of Smoke Silencing Haze through Literature), edited by Ahmad Ijazi Hasbullah and Fathromi R., 206 pages, published by FLP Wilayah Riau & Soega Publishing Bojonegoro in 2015. In this paper, it is abbreviated as RAMJLS.
- (2) *Puisi Hijau Resonansi Serindit* (Green Poetry: The Resonance of the Magpie Robin), edited by Bambang Kariyawan Ys, 182 pages, published by Cendana High School Pekanbaru in collaboration with Soega Publishing Bojonegoro in 2016. In this paper, it is abbreviated as PHRS.
- (3) *Metamorfosis Rimba Sehimpun Puisi Hijau Warga SMA Cendana dan Penyair Tamu* (Metamorphosis of the Jungle: A Collection of Green Poetry by Cendana High School Students and Guest Poets), edited by Bambang Kariyawan Ys, 246 pages, published by Cendana High School Pekanbaru in 2017. In this paper, it is abbreviated as MRSPH.

The data included words, phrases, clauses, idioms, figures of speech, or lines of a poem that contain dysphemistic expressions of hatred and profanity against forest destroyers.

Data was collected using a documentation technique (Ibnu, 2003) with the steps of (a) reading the data source repeatedly, (b) marking the parts that contain hatred and profanity, and (c) classifying the data into hatred or profanity. The data were analyzed based on the theory of ecocriticism, a study of the relationship between literature and

the environment (Clark, 2011; Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996; Meeker, 1972;). Ecocriticism is interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary (Sudikan, 2016). It is based on literary theory, specifically mimetic theory, assuming that literary works are related to nature and ecological theory. In this context, poetry can document various environmental problems; hence, it can be viewed from the perspective of ecocriticism.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is discovered that two types of dysphemism expressions were dominantly used by the Indonesian poets, i.e., in the form of hatred and profanity.

4.1 Expression of Dysphemism in the Form of Hatred

Expression of hatred is an element of dysphemism dominantly used in Indonesian poetry to denounce forest destroyers. *Serakah* ‘greedy’ is the dominant diction found in seven poems. The word *serakah* means always wanting to have more than someone already owns. Forest destroyers are considered the most dangerous people in social life from an economic aspect. Their forest plundering and destruction can trigger social disasters because they always want to dominate the economic sector more than they can control. In the socio-cultural life of Indonesian society, the diction *serakah* is a highly negative word that describes useless people; therefore, it is the most hated word. Some even consider these *serakah* people as criminals; thus, they deserve to be hated.

The poets’ hatred can be delivered explicitly and implicitly. The last stanza of the poem, *Di Mana* ‘Where’ by Anindita Kusumawardani in PHRS describes hatred towards forest destroyers as shown in (1):

(1) <i>Hijau</i>	Green
<i>Sejuk</i>	Cool
<i>Asri</i>	Beautiful
<i>Semua tidak lagi ditemukan</i>	All are no longer found
<i>Perlahan hilang dibunuh keserakahan</i>	Slowly lost, killed by greed
<i>(Di Mana, Kusumawardani, 2016, p. 74)</i>	

The poet wishes to convey that the peaceful forest environment (such as *hijau* ‘green’, *sejuk* ‘cool’, and *asri* ‘beautiful’) is gone. Everything has disappeared. It has been gradually damaged by greedy humans. The dysphemism in the verse in (1) can be found in the last line, *Perlahan hilang dibunuh keserakahan* ‘Slowly lost killed by greed’. The use of the word *hilang* ‘lost’ describes the loss of something valuable, while the word *dibunuh* ‘killed’ by Kusumawardani (2016) gives the connotation of murder which implies a cruel act. In this context, dysphemism functions to dramatically describe the destruction of nature and provoke feelings of rejection or condemnation of such actions.

Various facts in Riau show that forest destroyers have killed or destroyed trees, and killed hundreds of small and large creatures. The pattern of likely species extinctions depends on the proportion of forests altered and destroyed (Mullu, 2016; Sayer and Whitmore, 1991). Besides that, forest destroyers damage air and water circulation, and change the behavior of protected animals such as elephants and tigers.

These facts were observed from numerous pieces of information due to the haze in Indonesia, which also affected several neighboring countries, especially Malaysia and Singapore (Heilmann, 2015).

The word *serakah* ‘greedy’ is also found in the first stanza of the poem *Syair Luka Bumi II* ‘Poems on Wounds of the Earth II’ by Sion Sianipar in PHRS.

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|--|--|
| <p>(2) <i>Semua karena keserakahan manusia</i>
 <i>Yang tak mendengar setiap kata</i>
 <i>Seakan tak sadar akan menderita</i>
 <i>Akibat perbuatan sesuka mereka</i>
 (Syair Luka Bumi II, Sianipar, 2016, p. 106)</p> | <p>All because of human greed
 Who never hear a word
 As if not aware of the suffering
 Due to their actions at will</p> |
|--|--|

The dysphemism in the verse of the poetry in (2) can be found in the last line, *sesuka mereka* ‘at will, as they like, according to their preferences’. The use of the words *sesuka mereka* by Sianipar (2016) gives the connotation that human actions are carried out without considering the negative impacts. Dysphemism is used to highlight human guilt and unawareness of the suffering caused by their actions.

The word *keserakahan* ‘greed’ inherently carries a negative meaning, referring to the quality of greed and dissatisfaction that can harm others or the environment. The use of this word directly expresses a negative view towards humans, portraying them as selfish and irresponsible parties (Muniroch et al., 2020). The fragment of the poem shows that Sianipar (2016) blames greedy humans for destroying nature at will, causing the suffering of humans and other living beings, by using simple language. The clause *akibat perbuatan sesuka mereka* ‘due to their actions as they like’ indicates that forest destroyers seemed to have the legality to destroy. It means they are fearless of the law because law enforcers are on their side. Hence, the phrase *sesuka mereka* indicates that their action is done according to their preferences, without considering that their careless actions are done on the indigenous people’s property and belong to protected creatures, such as elephants, tigers, and deer.

Next, *serakah* ‘greedy’ is used by Desnawati in her poem, ‘The Earth’s Cry’ in PHRS.

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|--|---|
| <p>(3) Tak sadarkah engkau itulah petaka
 Akibat serakah dan gila harta
 Tanpa peduli alam tersiksa
 Tanpa peduli makhluk terluka.
 (The Earth’s Cry, Desnawati, 2016, p. 115)</p> | <p>Don’t you realize that it is a disaster?
 Due to greed and obsession with wealth
 Not caring about the tormented nature
 Not caring about the injured beings</p> |
|--|---|

Desnawati’s (2016) description in the form of a hateful question is more pronounced due to the addition of *gila harta* ‘obsessed with wealth’ after the word *serakah* ‘greedy’: *akibat serakah dan gila harta* ‘due to greed and obsessed with wealth’. The poet wants to state that all environmental disasters are caused by human greed. Therefore, the poet tries to challenge the awareness of forest destroyers: *Tak sadarkah engkau itulah petaka* ‘Don’t you realize that it is a disaster?’. The disaster referred to, among other things, the thick fog from the face of the earth that emerged due to greed and money madness. Just because they want to dominate the economy on a large scale, they turn mad, i.e., mad about wealth. Someone who has reached madness often ignores the applicable rules because he or she is labeled crazy.

The word *serakah* ‘greedy’ is also used in the second stanza of the poem by Athaya Ghaida Nadhifa, *Hutan* ‘Forest’ in MRSPH. The following is her expression of hatred.

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|-----|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (4) | <i>Kini hutan terancam</i> | Now the forest is under threat |
| | <i>Ulah manusia serakah</i> | Acts of greedy human |
| | <i>Merusak demi keuntungan</i> | Destroy for profit |
| | (Hutan, Nadhifa, 2017, p. 45) | |

Nadhifa (2017) uses simple language to say that *kini hutan semakin terancam* ‘the forest is increasingly under threat’. It is damaged by greedy people who only care about personal gain and ignore the common interest. Prily Azhari expressed a similar view through her poem *Ketika Alam Berbicara* ‘When Nature Speaks’ in MRSPH.

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|-----|--|--------------------------------|
| (5) | <i>Sungguh</i> | Really |
| | <i>Keserakahan telah menjiwaimu</i> | Greed has enlivened you |
| | (Ketika Alam Berbicara, Azhari, 2017, p. 71) | |

Azhari (2017) wants to tell the readers that many people deem environmental destruction as ‘normal’ or a common phenomenon. This message is emphasized in the diction *menjiwaimu* ‘enliven you (presented as a character)’, an effort to appreciate something wrong positively. Forest destroyers feel reverent about their continued destructive efforts because they have ‘enlivened’ their corrupt work.

Zamhir Arifin used *serakah* ‘greedy’ in the poem *Telah Kau Babat Hutan Kami* ‘You Cleared Our Forest’ in MRSPH.

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|-----|--|------------------------------------|
| (6) | <i>Tapi pada bebatanmu yang serakah</i> | But in your greedy grasping |
| | <i>Padamu yang merenggut paksa</i> | To you who took it by force |
| | (Telah Kau Babat Hutan Kami, Arifin, 2017, p. 234) | |

Arifin (2017) affirms that the poets hate forest destroyers. They clear forests with greed and coercion. These expressions in poems inform that many *ulayat* (customary land) and protected forests have been destroyed by groups of people to open rubber and oil palm plantations (Heilmann, 2015).

Muarif Ashari used the diction *serakah* ‘greedy’ in his poem, *Ada Apa dengan Hutan* ‘What Happened with the Forest’ in MRSPH.

- | | | |
|-----|---|------------------------------------|
| (7) | <i>Hutanku resah</i> | My forest is restless |
| | <i>Membuatku gundah</i> | Makes me nervous |
| | <i>Kasiatmu telah payah</i> | Your efficacy has failed |
| | <i>Semua karena para bedebah</i> | All because of the bastards |
| | <i>Yang serakah</i> | The greedy ones |
| | (Ada Apa dengan Hutan, Ashari, 2017, p. 63) | |

Ashari (2017) strongly expresses his hatred for forest destroyers. The forest has provided an abundant supply of medicinal raw materials, as well as peace and benefits to life. This condition is marked by the word *kasiatmu* ‘your efficacy’. The word *serakah* ‘greedy’ is an incomparable accentuation of hatred initiated with the diction *bedebah* ‘bastard’. The combination of *bedebah* and *serakah* transcends all degrees of hatred in Indonesian culture.

Irina Prima expressed another feeling of hatred in her poem *Kotaku yang Indah* ‘My Beautiful Town’ in MRSPH. This poem wants to convey memories and wishes that a once beautiful town has become rubbish. The poet demonstrates the expression of hatred in the following four lines.

- | | |
|---|--|
| (8) <i>Di mana semua itu?</i>
<i>Semua telah dirampas</i>
<i>Wahai engkau para pejabat</i>
<i>Hatimu membusuk bersama sampah</i>
(<i>Kotaku yang Indah</i> , Prima, 2017, p. 58) | Where is it?
All have been confiscated
O you officials
Your heart rots with rubbish |
|---|--|

Several expressions indicate the use of dysphemism, namely the phrases *dirampas* ‘confiscated’ *wahai engkau para pejabat* ‘o you officials’ and *hatimu membusuk bersama sampah* ‘your heart rots with rubbish’. The word *dirampas* carries connotations of violence or oppression (Komalasari, 2018). In this context, it portrays that something has been forcibly taken by the officials. Furthermore, the phrase *hatimu membusuk bersama sampah* refers to the corrupt or immoral nature of the officials. Prima (2017) mentions that the officials, i.e., the low to the top-level leaders, confiscated it, using satirical language. The officials are viewed as individuals with rotten hearts among the litter of life. They made their town filled with rubbish from dust and haze.

Another poet, Fakhrunnas M. A. Jabbar, expressed the following in the fifth stanza of *Doa Terubuk dan Sekalian Ikan di Lautan* ‘Prayer of the Mudskipper and All Fish in the Ocean’ in PHRS.

- | | |
|--|--|
| (9) <i>Ya Tuhan, jangan lahirkan lagi para kriminal</i>
<i>lautan</i>
<i>Yang setia setiap saat mencabut nyawa kami</i>
(<i>Doa Terubuk dan Sekalian Ikan di Lautan</i> , Jabbar, 2016, p. 42) | Oh God, never give birth to ocean criminals

They are loyal to take our lives anytime |
|--|--|

The phrase *kriminal lautan* ‘ocean criminals’ manifests people’s hatred voiced by the poet as the spokesperson. The diction ‘criminal’ is exceptionally harsh, which expresses hate. Criminals have committed crimes and are troublemakers, wrongdoers, thieves, vandals, or impudent. The plural expression in the phrase ‘*para kriminal lautan*’ ‘ocean criminals’ tells the reader that criminals are a particular group of people who conspire to destroy the marine environment consciously and intentionally (Kurnia, 2016). They are assumed to be insolent beings who torment ordinary people, even to death, which the poet describes as *yang setia setiap saat mencabut nyawa kami* ‘they are loyal to take our lives anytime’.

In Indonesian culture, the word *serakah* ‘greedy’ is close in meaning to the words *loba*, *tamak*, or *rakus*, in which all three words mean ‘greedy’ (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2021). *Tamak* means always wanting to get a lot for oneself, which is close to the meaning of *loba* (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2021). A greedy man believes that his life must be better than others, especially regarding material things. Greed eliminates shame, and destroys ethics and morals, and those with greed behave hypocritically.

Hatred also arises due to people’s resentment towards them. In Indonesian, these people are *kesal*, which means ‘annoyed, disappointed, irritated’ (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2021). Irritation usually appears for a reason, such as arrogance

and greed, which has become someone's character. So, it has become a daily behavior and therefore happens repeatedly. In other words, people harbor hatred for a long time because they were repeatedly betrayed, harassed, and belittled.

4.2 Expression of Dysphemism in the Form of Profanities

Language is sometimes used to condemn or swear at a person or group of people who are considered impudent or have behavior that damages social norms. Swearing means various bad words accompanied by curses (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2021). Thus, swear words are classified into epithet, profanity, obscenity, cursing, blasphemy, taboo, vulgarity or the use of substandard vulgar terms, slang, insults, scatology, semantic derogation, ethnic/racial/ gender slurs, animal names mentioning, ancestral allusions, and propositional and non-propositional swearing which include dysphemistic, euphemistic, abusive, idiomatic, cathartic and emphatic swearing (Jdetawy, 2019).

Eight poems express curses or swearing. Profanities addressed to forest destroyers are expressed in the vocabularies or phrases such as *manusia biadab* 'savage humans', *manusia pendosa* 'sinners', *bedebah* 'bastards', *sumpah serapah* 'swearing', *buta* 'blind', *tuli* 'deaf', *tangan dan kuasa si penzalim* 'the hands and power of the tyrants', *tiada nurani* 'heartless', *tak bernurani* 'heartless', *mati* 'dead', *ulah si angkara murka* 'the act of insolence', *bertopeng kepalsuan* 'the mask of falsehood', *mengutuk* 'curses', *nafsu yang paling teruk* 'the worst lust', *binatang rimba* 'jungle animal', *iblis* 'demons', *setan* 'satan', and *negeri ini menjadi kuburan* 'this land is a graveyard'.

Junaidi expressed curses in the following poem, *Hantu Jerebu* 'Haze Ghost' in PHRS.

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| (10) |
<i>kalian semakin dungu</i>
<i>tak tahu malu</i>
<i>tak tahan kias dan palu</i>
<i>kalian hantu jerebu</i> |
you are getting dumber
shameless
cannot stand the knife and hammer
you are the haze ghosts |
| | <i>kalian hantu selalu berburu</i>
<i>tak tahu adat meramu</i>
<i>tak sadar diri sebagai tamu</i>
<i>kalianlah hantu jerebu</i> | you ghosts are always hunting
do not know the custom of concocting
unconscious as a guest
you are the haze ghosts |
- (*Hantu Jerebu*, Junaidi, 2016, p. 54)

The *hantu jerebu* 'haze ghost' is an allegory of forest destroyers who always disturb by carrying smoke. *Jerebu* means smoke or haze in Indonesian. *Jerebu* often causes limited vision and can even cause various diseases (Ahmad & Hashim, 2006). Junaidi's (2016) anger was expressed by *jadilah kalian hantu jerebu; ruh jahat yang dilaknati* 'be haze ghosts; cursed evil spirits'.

The worst haze disaster in Indonesia happened in 2014 and 2015, especially in Riau (Alfajri et al., 2019). It was estimated to have resulted in the most significant losses, surpassing even the 1997 outbreak, with a total of 200 billion Rupiah in damages, and it sadly led to the loss of 19 lives, including 5 individuals from Riau Province (Alfajri et al., 2019).

Syair Luka Bumi 1 ‘Poems of Wounds of the Earth 1’ by Muhammad Ilham consists of ten quatrains. It describes the forest as a place for animals, plants, and humans to live. The poet highlights the current state of the forest, which has been destroyed, cut down, and burned. He calls forest destroyers *manusia tidak berotak* ‘brainless men’. It is a curse because the forest destroyer’s actions cause *hati hutan sudah retak* ‘the heart of the forest has cracked’. He writes the following.

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| (11) | <i>Kini hati hutan sudah retak</i>
<i>Akibat manusia tak berotak</i>
<i>(Syair Luka Bumi 1, Ilham, 2016, p. 90)</i> | Now the heart of the forest has cracked
Consequences of brainless men |
|------|--|---|

Kazain Izativa expresses curses in the poem *Makhluk Asapien* in RAMJLS, referring to rats as an expression of insult for destroying the environment.

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| (12) | <i>Kelam makin bermain di sisi</i>
<i>Para tumbal tenggelam ilusi</i>
<i>Tikus makin gencar mencari tumbal lagi</i>
<i>(Makhluk Asapien, Izativa, , 2015, p. 47)</i> | <i>Darkness is increasingly playing on the side</i>
<i>The illusory drowning victims</i>
<i>The rats are increasingly looking for sacrifice again</i> |
|------|--|--|

Izativa (2015) gives the label ‘asapien’ to creatures now living in a smoky environment. The mice, which incidentally are sycophants in the poem, are described to continue eating up people and these people are used as sacrifices, as shown in *tikus makin gencar mencari tumbal lagi* ‘rats are increasingly looking for sacrifice again’. In addition, Aulia Nabila in MRSPH struck the hearts of environmental destroyers with very expressive words in the poem *Kemanakah* ‘Where are you going?’

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| (13) | <i>Semua karena kau</i>
<i>Musnah hijau karena kau</i>
<i>Hitam membara karena kau</i>
<i>Negeri berjelaga karena kau</i>
<i>(Kemanakah, Nabila, 2017, p. 71)</i> | <i>All because of you</i>
<i>Green annihilation because of you</i>
<i>Black burning because of you</i>
<i>The country is filthy because of you</i> |
|------|---|--|

This poem is very personal. The poet seems to be standing tall in front of the forest destroyers. With anger, she seems to say that “you are the cause of disaster” based on the lines of *musnah hijau karena kau* ‘green annihilation because of you’ so that *negeri berjelaga karena kau* ‘the country is filthy because of you’. The phrase ‘because of you’ is a form of overflowing anger from a young child to an old forest destroyers who has no feelings.

The next curse is in the poem *Irony* ‘Ironi’ by Adi Hendarta in PHRS. The dysphemism in his poetry can be found in the word ‘human being without a brain’. This phrase is a greeting taken from physical characteristics so that humans of forest destroyers are considered abnormal people.

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| (12) | <i>Jiwa-jiwa resah gelisah pasrah</i>
<i>Akankah negeri ini menjadi kuburan</i>
<i>Hanya tinggal tertoreh di ingatan</i>
<i>Karena tangan dan kuasa si penzalim</i>
<i>Hancurkan alam tiada nurani</i>
<i>(Irony, Hendarta, 2016, p. 64)</i> | <i>Souls-restless and nervous, surrender their hope</i>
<i>Will this country become a graveyard</i>
<i>It only remains in the memory</i>
<i>Because of the hands and power of the tyrant</i>
<i>Destroy nature heartlessly</i> |
|------|---|--|

The expression *negeri ini menjadi kuburan* ‘this country becomes a graveyard’ of Hendarta’s (2016) poem in PHRS is chosen as a curse for increasingly unfavorable conditions due to environmental damage. The use of the diction *kuburan* ‘graveyard’ holds a symbolic meaning as the end of something or a significant disaster (Sultoni, 2020). The poet condemns the attitude of the country’s leaders, who are tyrannical and heartless because they do not use power to protect nature. The following lines end the poem.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>(13) <i>Akankah negeri ini hanya tinggal kenangan</i>
 <i>Karena ulah si angkara murka</i>
 <i>Bertopeng kepalsuan di balik rayuan demi</i>
 <i>kemakmuran</i></p> <p>(Irony, Hendarta, 2016, p. 64)</p> | <p><i>Will this country remain a memory?</i>
 <i>Because the act of the insolent</i>
 <i>Masked falsehood behind prosperous</i>
 <i>seduction</i></p> |
|---|---|

The dictions *si angkara murka* ‘the insolent one’ and *bertopeng kepalsuan* ‘masked by falsehood’ are used to curse. These dictions are expletive expressions aimed at state rulers who prioritize personal gain, namely personal *rayuan kemakmuran* ‘prosperous seduction’, rather than managing the people and all natural resources properly and fairly.

The dysphemism in the verse of the poetry in (13) can be found in the dictions *si angkara murka* ‘the insolent’. This word is used to describe an act of extreme anger and cruelty. In addition, *si angkara murka* gives the impression that this individual or entity has evil qualities, and his behavior can be threatening or destructive (Agan & Dermawan, 2020).

In *Pemburu Rimba* ‘Jungle Hunter’ by Alam Terkembang in PHRS, a more precise diction was chosen to express the curse. It describes that people are increasingly *mengutuk* ‘condemning’ the rulers for showing the *perangai* ‘behavior’ of a human being who is *takluk* ‘subject’ to *nafsu* ‘lust’. They become like *binatang rimba* ‘jungle animals’, a powerful profane language. The following is the poem.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>(14) <i>Tetapi perkataan orang tentangmu kian</i>
 <i>mengutuk</i>
 <i>Perangaimu takluk di nafsu yang paling</i>
 <i>teruk</i>
 <i>Lebih liar dari binatang rimba</i></p> <p>(Pemburu Rimba, Terkembang, 2016, p. 135)</p> | <p><i>But what people say about you is increasingly</i>
 <i>condemning</i>
 <i>Your temperament, succumbing to the worst</i>
 <i>of lust</i>
 <i>Wilder than jungle animals</i></p> |
|--|---|

Rulers have the ‘worst’ or *teruk* character or lust. *Teruk* means severe, hard, related to pain, blows, fights, and work. In this case, the word *teruk* describes agonizing human behavior. This diction is rarely used by Indonesian people, particularly by the ethnic Malay, who are known to be courteous in speech.

Muarif Ashari writes the following in the last two stanzas of his poem, *Ada Apa dengan Hutan* ‘What Happened with the Forest’ in PHRS.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>(15) <i>Hutanku resah</i>
 <i>Membuatku gundah</i>
 <i>Kasiatmu telah payah</i>
 <i>Semua karena para bedebah</i></p> <p>(Ada Apa dengan Hutan, Ashari, 2016, p. 64)</p> | <p><i>My forest is restless</i>
 <i>Makes me nervous</i>
 <i>Your efficacy has failed</i>
 <i>All because of the bastards</i></p> |
|--|--|

Curses or swears using the word *bedebah* ‘bastard’ are addressed to humans who have destroyed forests. The word *bedebah* ‘bastard’ represents the meaning of wretchedness for one’s bad qualities. The expression condemns someone as a *bedebah*, an impudent and useless person for humanity and the universe.

Bedebah can also be found in the penultimate stanza of the poem *Tak Sekadar Igau* ‘Not Just Delirious’ which Sitti Syathariah writes in MRSPH. The poet wrote the following using a similar language.

- | | |
|---|--|
| (16) <i>Segala tumpah dari tangan para bedebah</i>

<i>Perih membungkam resah atas hidup di dalamnya!</i>
(<i>Tak Sekadar Igau</i> , Syatharia, 2017, p. 102) | <i>Everything spilled from the hands of the bastards</i>

<i>Pain silenced the restless over life in it!</i> |
|---|--|

Ashari (2016) and Syatharia (2017) chose the diction *bedebah* ‘bastard’ as their artistic expression of forest destroyers. In Indonesian, the word *bedebah* is equivalent to wretched and is used to curse (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2021).

Another poem containing curses, *Ketika Alam Berbicara* ‘When Nature Speaks’ is by Prily Azhari. The poet condemns the forest destroyers using the words *buta* ‘blind’ and *tuli* ‘deaf’. The following are the lines of the poem.

- | | |
|---|---|
| (17) <i>Kau itu buta</i>
<i>Kau itu tuli</i>
<i>Kau tidak bisa mendengar jeritan ini</i>
<i>Kau tidak bisa melihat kehancuran ini</i>
(<i>Ketika Alam Berbicara</i> , Azhari, 2017, p. 71) | You are blind
You are deaf
You cannot hear the screams.
You cannot see the destroyed |
|---|---|

The words *kau itu buta* ‘you are blind’ and *kau itu tuli* ‘you are deaf’ in this poem are not addressed to real blind and deaf people. This expression is addressed to people who do not use their eyes to see the damage they have done, as well as not use their ears to listen to the heartbreaking screams, protests, and cries of the persecuted ones whose environment had been destroyed. Therefore, using natural metaphors, the poet curses people who do not use their eyes and ears anymore. The words *buta* ‘blind’ and *tuli* ‘deaf’ in this context are idiomatic expressions, i.e., *buta* ‘blind’ is aimed at those having blinded hearts, and *tuli* ‘deaf’ means humans who no longer value humanity.

The poem *Izinkan Aku Hidup* ‘Let Me Live’ by Yulia Shafina in MRSPH also expresses curses explicitly. The poet wrote the following.

- | | |
|--|---|
| (18) <i>Tidak cukupkah oksigenku?</i>
<i>Tidak cukupkah diriku bagimu?</i>
<i>Kenapa kau hancurkan aku?</i>
<i>Padahal aku tak pernah berhenti memberi oksigen dan segala hasil diri</i>
<i>Kau benar-benar tak bernurani</i>
<i>Mati!!</i>
(<i>Izinkan Aku Hidup</i> , Shafina, 2017, p. 87) | Isn’t my oxygen enough?
Am I not enough for you?
Why did you destroy me?
Yet I never stop giving oxygen, and all that self-results
You’re so heartless
Die!! |
|--|---|

Shafina (2017) personifies the forest as a creature capable of providing something continuously, i.e., oxygen for life. However, she eventually curses with

kau benar-benar tak bernurani ‘you are so heartless’ because of destructive human behavior. In the end, the poet prays and curses the forest destroyer to *mati* ‘die’.

Rieal el Young also expressed curses in the poem *Bumi Menangis* ‘The Crying Earth’ in MRSPH.

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| (19) | <i>Menyusuri deras darah manusia pendosa</i> | <i>Tracing the blood of sinners</i> |
| | <i>Membanjiri bumi yang murka</i> | <i>Flooding the wrathful earth</i> |
| | | |
| | <i>Lalu mati di pangkuan iblis yang tertawa</i> | <i>Then die on the lap of a laughing demon</i> |
| | <i>Bumi menangis dan langit merintih</i> | <i>The earth cries and the sky groans</i> |
| | (Bumi Menangis, Young, 2017, p. 197) | |

The devil is an invisible being who tries to mislead people away from God’s guidance. However, the *manusia pendosa* ‘sinner’ instead died in the *pangkuan iblis* ‘devil’s lap’ because his actions destroyed the environment. The *iblis yang tertawa* ‘laughing devils’ are dumb people who no longer have feelings like humans. The poet’s statement is interesting because, from an Islamic perspective, there are two kinds of devils: the *jinn* and the human. It is unclear which kind of devil is meant in this poem.

Curses are also expressed in the poem *Tak Sudah-Sudah* ‘Never Ends’ by Sitti Syathariah. She writes the following.

- | | | |
|------|---|--------------------------------|
| (20) | <i>Sumpah serapah</i> | Curses and rants |
| | <i>Tlah jadi latah</i> | <i>Have become a habit</i> |
| | <i>Ketika segala petuah</i> | <i>When all advice</i> |
| | <i>Jadi sampah</i> | <i>Turns to garbage</i> |
| | <i>Membuai resah</i> | <i>Enveloping restlessness</i> |
| | <i>Memmingkai gundah</i> | <i>Framing sorrow</i> |
| | <i>Tak sudah-sudah</i> | <i>It never ends</i> |
| | (Tak Sudah-Sudah, Syathariah, 2017, p. 100) | |

The poet used the word *sumpah serapah* ‘curses and rants’ to forest destroyers. She intends to say that when gentle and wise words, as well as customary and religious rules, are no longer able to reach the conscience of the environmental perpetrators, then profane language has to be used to curse them. It depicts the lives of people who live in natural areas that have been destroyed and have caused natural and humanitarian disasters, such as in Riau, Indonesia.

5. CONCLUSION

The dysphemism of Indonesian poets toward forest destroyers in the form of hatred and profanity is manifested through various expressions. These variations follow the context of their use, i.e., *dibunuh keserakahan* ‘murder by greed’, *keserakahan manusia* ‘human greed’, *akibat serakah* ‘the impact of greed’, *ulah manusia serakah* ‘greedy human behavior’, *bebatanmu yang serakah*, *karena para bedebah yang serakah* ‘because of greedy bastards’, *hati keras bagai besi* ‘heart as hard as iron/unyielding heart’, *gila harta* ‘obsessed with wealth’, *padamu yang merenggut paksa* ‘you who took by force’, *hatimu membusuk bersama sampah* ‘your heart rots with rubbish’, and *para kriminal lautan* ‘the ocean criminals’. There are also *karena tangan dan kuasa si penzalim* ‘because of the hands and power of the

wrongdoer', *tiada nurani* 'heartless', *ulah si angkara murka* 'the actions of the insolent', *bertopeng kepalsuan* 'the mask of falsehood', *perkataan orang tentangmu kian mengutuk* 'people's words about you are increasingly condemning', *perangaimu nafsu yang paling teruk* 'your temperament is the worst of lust', *lebih liar dari binatang rimba* 'wilder than a jungle animal', *bedebah yang serakah* 'a greedy bastard', *kau itu buta* 'you are blind', *kau itu tuli* 'you are deaf', *kau benar-benar tak bernurani* 'you are so heartless', *mati* 'die', *para bedebah* 'bastards', *manusia pendosa* 'sinners', *iblis yang tertawa* 'laughing devils', and *sumpah serapah* 'curses'.

These dictions or expressions show that Indonesian poets are concerned about nature's existence. If the situation is reversed, i.e., the forest and the earth are damaged, poets can act harshly according to the context and situation; they hate and condemn through their poetry. Through the use of dysphemism, environmental poetry encourages reflection and awareness of environmental damage caused by irresponsible human actions. Their poems invite readers to consider the consequences of these actions and encourage changes in behavior to protect and save nature.

The aspects of forest destruction described in the poetry of Indonesian poets are very diverse. Research results related to this include (1) air quality, which refers to conditions of air temperature, pollutants, oxygen content, and humidity, (2) water quality, which refers to the clarity of water that can be utilized by living things (physical, chemical and biological conditions), (3) soil quality, which refers to the physical condition of the soil, waste and nutrients contained, (4) forest ecosystems, which refers to the loss of flora and fauna, decreased plant density, and types of vegetation, and (5) land use and exploitation, which relates to the use of forest land for agricultural, recreational and mining exploitation. Therefore, it is recommended that further research be carried out regarding these aspects.

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Abraham Maslow's Hierarchical Needs in *No Friend but the Mountains:* *Writing from Manus Prison* by Behrouz Boochani

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Abstract

The paper attempted to analyze the character of Boochani in his memoir No Friend but the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison, in the light of Abraham Maslow's Theory of Hierarchical Needs. Boochani wrote his novel while he was still locked in the Manus Island detention center. It narrates the story of a man who followed his dream to reach his dreamland. The study was carried out using a descriptive qualitative research methodology through textual analysis design. Since the study was text-based, a meticulous reading process of the text was done. We used the text as the primary source for data collection. Therefore, a portion of the sentences, paragraphs, and phrases related to the study's objective were taken as examples and excerpts and analyzed using Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The results revealed that Boochani, like all humans, was driven by physiological and psychological needs, ranging from the most fundamental to the most extreme. His journey aimed to get self-actualization but never could get it and hardly fulfilled other basic needs completely. Boochani's voyage is depicted as a series of rising and falling waves. He occasionally satisfies some needs, but he never succeeds in meeting the need for self-actualization and self-esteem. And hardly does

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he fulfill the other three levels of the hierarchy of needs. His entire story serves as a metaphor for everyone who strives for self-actualization yet encounters obstacles.

Keywords: Abraham Maslow, Behrouz Boochani, novel, psychology, hierarchy of needs, theory of motivation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The most significant and influential American psychologist after William James and even possibly Carl Jung was Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) (Valiunas, 2011). Maslow worked on the psychological aspects of human beings; beyond his major, he had a great role in enlightening other aspects such as society and education. He built some theoretical understandings as basic tools to endeavor more flexibility for those who want to obtain more elaboration regarding the difficulties in the experience of their lives to reach the highest point, which is seen as the most reliable spot in life that can be pronounced as Self-Actualization (Cherry, 2020).

Regarding socio-psychology, Maslow, with the dependence on his education that was a strain studying psychology at college, made up his mind to offer some informative methods regarding the different sides of life. In his noticeable texts, *Motivation and Personality* (Maslow, 1954) and *Toward a Psychology of Being* (Maslow, 1962), he discussed that everyone in life requires some necessities without which the life of humanity will not be on the right path. Eventually, he collected the basic needs in a structure that was later known as 'hierarchy needs'. Maslow thought that every healthy person is self-actualized because s/he has the potential for application. As a humanistic psychologist, Maslow has guided everyone toward positive potentiality (Schacter et al., 2011).

Maslow (1954) shed light on the life lessons that eventually emerged in the theory which is known as the 'hierarchy of needs'; he introduced another approach to psychological motivation which is beneficial for human beings. The foundation of the hierarchy of needs is the idea that human behavior is driven by a desire to satisfy particular needs that exist in society (Aruma & Hanachor, 2017). Based on this idea, some human needs are more fundamental than other needs in society. Maslow created a pyramid to visualize his theory and show the hierarchy of needs (McGuire, 2012), as shown in Figure 1.

Literature is exquisite in how it unites the diversity of life to provide another window of thinking and vision that creates various meanings of life. It is common knowledge that literature reflects society (Wildan et al., 2023). In other words, it tells the story of life. It acts as a means for the authors to express their feelings and experiences. Many writers have used a range of literary techniques to express their feelings, describe their experiences, and inform readers about the difficulties they confront. Boochani (2018) followed the same path as the previous authors. He shared his experiences on Manus Prison in *No Friend but the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison*. As he was trying to get asylum in Australia, he was imprisoned on Manus Island, Australia, for six years. Boochani used a smartphone to write his novel. He used WhatsApp messaging to send the chapters and sections of his book through text and voice messages to his colleague, Omid Tofighian (Leurs & Patterson, 2020). Then

he translated from Farsi into English (Scobie, 2021). His experience can be seen as representative of hundreds of other immigrants who endured a similar calamity. The novel illustrates a part of the Eastern people's life in a way that every single human being gets affected easily; it drives our psyche to be motivated and curious concerning the concrete fact of being that is known as freedom, which the story characters' lack (Baldi, 2021).

1.1 Maslow's Five Components of The Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow, a renowned researcher in the field of psychology and motivation, believed that people in life are motivated by five different levels of needs, namely (1) physiological needs, (2) safety needs, (3) belonging needs, (4) esteem needs and (5) self-actualization needs (Aruma & Hanachor, 2017). Human motivation can be viewed as a lifelong pursuit for satisfaction, depicted by a pyramid-shaped diagram with self-actualization at the top. However, before one may realize their full potential, basic human needs must be appropriately satisfied. Each level of Maslow's hierarchy explained these fundamental needs in terms of psychological tensions that one must overcome to progress toward self-actualization (New & Cochran, 2007).

People desire to fulfill their basic needs and then move up to the next level until they get to the highest one and get self-actualized (see Figure 1). Maslow (1943) first argued that before addressing higher-level growth needs, people must first fulfill lower-level deficit needs. He acknowledged that his prior words may have given the impression that satisfying a need is an 'all-or-none' phenomenon, but he later stressed that this is not the case. He believed that people sometimes, try to get satisfied on different levels at the same time, and seek fulfillment at a higher level of needs before lower levels of needs have been fully—or even partially—met (D'Souza & Gurin, 2017).

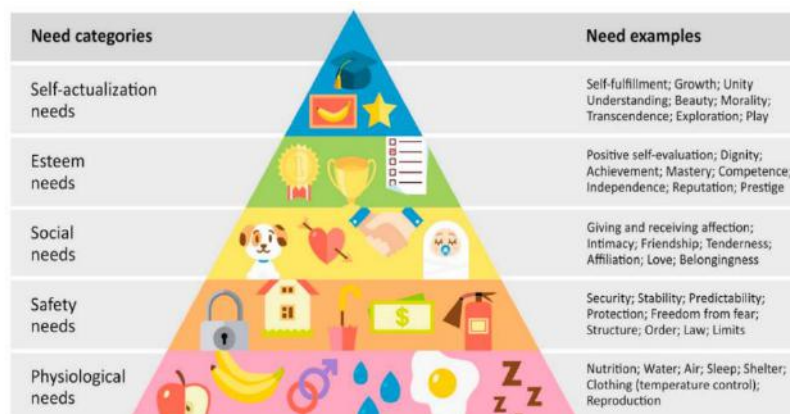


Figure 1. Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Desmet & Fokkinga, 2020, p. 4).

Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs has been applied to many different fields including psychology, education, economics, marketing, management, sociology, political science, and others. Wherever it is taught, it has deeply ingrained itself into the minds of the public and left its mark (Bouzenita & Boulanouar, 2016). Maslow's theory has been used in literature as well, including novels. Many different researchers (Bahuwu, 2018; Ghazali, 2020; Lestari et al., 2019; Lubis, & Satria, 2021; Ronie & Hellystia, 2020; Sitepu & Putri, 2020) have used the theory as a lens to read

many different novels. Mostly, the researchers who applied Maslow's theory tried to focus on one character, which is the main character of the novels being investigated.

1.2 Behrouz Boochani's *No Friend but the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison*

We attempted to bring Maslow's hierarchy of needs and use it as a tool to explain how Boochani ventured and left his birthplace in order to reach the top of the pyramid and get self-actualization in *No Friend but the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison*. To understand the application of the theory in the novel, we tried to find paragraphs and sentences in the novel that illustrate the journey of motivation of Boochani and how each level of the hierarchy is shown in the text. As a result, each of the five levels of the hierarchy of needs is thoroughly examined.

Boochani is an Iranian-Kurdish writer, journalist, and refugee. His novel is based on his experience as an asylum seeker (a person who has left their home country as a political refugee and is seeking asylum in another) that ended up in the Australian offshore detention center on Manus Island. He stayed there for six years. In the story, he narrates the risky journey of reaching the land of his dreams and the harsh conditions he and his fellow refugees encountered while detained in Manus Prison. He clearly illustrates the abuse and brutality they experienced in the detention center. The story is not only a simple account of life in prison but explore the physical, psychological, and emotional effect of the indefinite suffering, isolation, and abuse experienced by the refugees (Tofighian, 2018).

In concern to this research significance, it is necessary to work on this text: Boochani's perilous journey. His story can be seen as a representative of the risky journeys of all the asylum seekers, of people from war-ravaged areas to find a better place to live. It focuses on the collective human struggle for dignity and justice (Kaiku, 2020). On the other hand, there was Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs, which is about how human beings in life try and fulfill their needs from the basic ones to the highest ones. The novelty of the study lies in the fact that Boochani's text has not yet been a subject for investigation by scholars from a psychological perspective. We tried to bridge the discipline of literature and psychology and investigate the novel from the perspective of a psychological theory, Maslow's hierarchy of needs. We tried to address the question of how Boochani attempted to fulfill and get satisfied with his needs from the beginning of the journey in Indonesia in 2013 to the end of the story on Manus Island Prison (Ali MC, 2023; Gessen, 2019). The significance of the application of Maslow's theory to the novel can be perceived from two aspects; the first one is to prove and show that the theory is still important and relevant today. The second one is to understand how Boochani as a human being driven by his motivation and reacts differently in different situations.

3. METHODS

In this paper, we used a descriptive qualitative method to conduct the study. Jeyaraj (2016) stated that most of the literary papers used textual analysis methods in their research. Smith (2017) defines textual analysis as a method of study utilized by researchers to examine messages as they appear through a variety of mediums. Works

of literature, documents, films, and newspapers can be a source of data for researchers. As researchers apply textual analysis to a text, they try to make their guesses and give their interpretation of the message of the text. As there is not a single correct interpretation of any text, no researchers should claim to have reached the final and correct meaning of the text (McKee, 2003). Hence, we employed the textual analysis method to conduct this study.

3.1 Source of Data

For the study, an online version of the novel has been used as the primary source. *No Friend but the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison* by Behrouz Boochani (Boochani, 2018) was written while he was imprisoned on Manus Island, Australia. The novel was published in 2018 by Picador in Australia, spanning 374 pages, translated from Farsi by Omid Tofighian. Behrouz Boochani, a young Kurdish writer and poet who fled Iran and sought asylum in Australia, wrote the novel while he was imprisoned on Manus Island, an Australian Offshore detention center. The author narrates the story of his risky journey from Iran to Australia. The first two chapters are devoted to his two attempts to reach Australia through Indonesian waters, the greatest challenge for asylum seekers. Boochani faces many difficulties, sometimes very close to death. The other chapters narrate the brutality, cruelty, and inhuman situations he and his fellow asylum seekers encountered at the hands of the detention center guards and managers. The story is a careful and truthful witness to the dehumanization and abuse of the refugees on the island. We focused on the author's reaction toward different situations and applied Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs to interpret how each reaction depends on his motivations and desires. We read the text of this novel many times to have a clear understanding of the text.

3.2 Technique of Data Collection and Analysis

The novel, *No Friend but the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison*, was used as the primary source to collect the data. The procedure was divided into different stages. The first stage was the first reading of the novel to get familiarized with the plot, characters, and setting of the novel. The second reading was to identify and highlight the excerpts relevant to the hierarchy of needs. The third reading was to separate the highlighted excerpts and categorize each one according to the five levels of the hierarchy of needs, namely physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness, and love needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization needs (see Desmet & Fokkinga, 2020, p. 4).

We conducted a thematic analysis to find out how the character's actions, emotions, behaviors, and decisions align with Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Then we analyzed and provided a descriptive interpretation of the relevant data according to the five levels of needs, starting by satisfying the basic one, physiological needs, and then moving on to others until reaching the highest one, self-actualization. Hatch (2002) believes that data analysis is a 'systematic search' to find meaning. We analyzed and interpreted the text to find its meaning, but our meaning is not the only correct one. As Belsey (2013) clarifies any unique textual analysis is conducted from within a certain cultural context and historical period.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Physiological Needs

Physiological needs contain the prior needs that are known as the life pillars, such as food, water, a place to sleep, and breathing. Maslow thinks and proves that such needs are the very basic ones, and all other types of needs are regarded as secondary ones, and as long as human beings are alive they need physiological supplements to stay alive and breathe (Maslow, 1954).

Regarding the bottom of the pyramid, it is obvious that Boochani does not have a problem meeting his physiological needs in his hometown—at least, nothing is mentioned about the lack of this need. Thus, it is not the satisfaction of this desire but rather the other demands that we encounter in the subsequent sections that motivate the author to leave Iran. However, when he begins his perilous journey, he finds himself in circumstances where he is unable to meet his most fundamental physiological needs like food, water, breathing, shelter, clothing, and sleep. During his stay in Kendari, Indonesia, he says:

- (1) My life during these last three months has been mainly fear, stress, starvation and displacement—but also those short hours sitting on the log in the divine plantation. (Boochani, 2018, p. 21)

Starvation and displacement are physiological needs. The narrator openly admits that sometimes he was unable to satisfy them. Despite the psychological problems, such as fear and stress, he suffered in fulfilling his physiological needs. There was a lack of food and shelter. However, his condition changed with time, sometimes for better and sometimes for worse.

When the voyage begins, we see more terrifying scenes, especially the time the boat sinks. Phrases like 'reach for oxygen', 'am out of breath', 'gasping for air', and 'I am suffocating' illuminate that Boochani finds himself in a condition where he just wants to survive. When survival matters, the ready to fight and raid anyone with food is there, as is crystal clear in the following quote when Boochani threatens other passengers.

- (2) I recall the exact phrase I blurted: 'Look here, I'm hungry and it's completely natural for me to raid anyone with food...I'm about to do it!' (Boochani, 2018, p. 39)

In pursuit of his self-actualization, in the end, he finds himself in Australia, but not the one he dreamed of, but on an island that resembles a prison, Manus Island. The author on this island faces hardships and difficulties that are no less than the Indonesian shores and the ocean's tides. Food and shelter are provided but not enough and mostly they are used as mechanisms for torturing rather than as basic needs for survival. Even though, according to the rules of Manus Prison, the physiological needs are provided as it says:

- (3)
 - Every prisoner needs to eat.
 - Every prisoner who smokes needs cigarettes.
 - Every prisoner needs access to the phone sometimes.
 - Every prisoner might fall ill and require medicine. (Boochani, 2018, p. 103)

But the author recounts something opposite to the readers. Most of the time, a very small portion of food is provided in a way that would not satisfy them. That is why Boochani refers to the prisoners as ‘hungry prisoners’ and he explains that “hungry actually means starving” (Boochani, 2018, p. 95). Although it is clear that Boochani started his journey to self-actualization, in many circumstances, he discovers that he cannot meet the most basic physiological needs and sees the face of death.

4.2 Safety and Security Needs

Security needs to contain the effort for safety and security. Security needs are significant in staying alive and surviving, but they are not as important as physiological needs, such as fighting to make good money, a healthy lifestyle, a good and safe place for a living, and a safe environment. These needs are higher than the physiological needs but not as important as them. They are a bit more complicated. When the first level of needs is fulfilled, people think and make efforts that they need more focus on their life qualities with high safety, which can be seen in Boochani’s story very clearly (Mukuka, 2010).

Despite not being explicitly acknowledged during the course of the novel, Boochani’s status as a Kurd does not allow him to fulfill this need under the rule of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He never feels secure back in Iran as his people, the Kurdish people, are governed by Iranian Persians. They are secure only if they do not express their national, political views. These all together oblige him to leave Iran and begin his risky journey. It can easily be noted in the translator’s story at the very beginning of the book, as it is shown in the following excerpt:

- (4) Everything you need to know about his life in Iran is encapsulated in the tale about the first boat journey. Everything you need to understand about oppression and discrimination back in Iran is right there in the ocean. All the political turmoil is narrated when he describes the waves. All the state suppression is explained when he depicts the vortex in the sea. (Omid Tofghian, in Boochani, 2018, p. 14)

Therefore, when a person is in such a position, they obviously cannot meet this type of need. According to Poston (2009), individuals from nations where establishing a stable way of life is difficult would feel ‘stuck’ at this level and lack the motivation to advance to the next. Behrouz departed from Iran to satisfy all of his needs and became a self-actualized being. However, the journey’s path would quickly turn into a nightmare for him, and he would encounter numerous difficult situations where he would be on the verge of losing his safety and security.

In Chapter 2, it is made clear that when it comes to gaining or losing safety and security, people are willing to use violence when necessary.

- (5) When humans struggle over territory /
It always reeks of violence and bloodshed /
Even if the conflict is over a location the size of one body /
On a small boat /
And only for a period of two days.
(Boochani, 2018, p. 22)

Everyone strives to find a safe and secure space for themselves aboard the boat when it leaves the shore. Even though it will only be for two days and be on a small

boat, they are willing to fight for a small place, because they know that securing a location for themselves means fulfilling their safety and security needs.

This level of need, according to [Poston \(2009\)](#), is flexible rather than fossilized. Depending on the people and circumstances, different people would have different safety needs. A child's perceived need for safety may not be the same as an adult's need. This requirement changes for Boochani and his boatmates as they are ready to embark on a risky voyage. The sole objective for them, when they get on the boat, is to locate and find a good and comfortable position to sit, but for some of them, that task is the most difficult because things are about to go wrong, as demonstrated in:

- (6) A conflict between frenzied men vying for a place to sit has reached fever pitch. ([Boochani, 2018, p. 23](#))

Fulfilling this need is more difficult when they get to Manus Prison. Boochani abandoned his family and has not spoken to them since. His health is in danger and occasionally teeters on the brink of death. Manus Prison, as the narrator calls it, is a 'soul-destroying prison', a place of 'an unknown land, and a prison of 'filth and heat'. Additionally, as if all the physical and psychological torture were not enough, the Kyriarchal System is deployed in the prison. He explains it as:

- (7) This is the objective of the prison's Kyriarchal System, to drive prisoners to extreme distrust so that they become lonelier and more isolated, until the prison's Kyriarchal Logic triumphs with their collapse and demise. ([Boochani, 2018, p. 70](#))

In Manus Prison, the inhuman system, and nature are harsh and ruthless towards Boochani and his fellows. The managers of the prison could provide coolers and reduce the tough conditions the refugees lived in. Through using a simile, Boochani provides an incredible description of their chamber and the heat of the location.

- (8) On some days when the clouds are thinner than usual, or the sky is filled with only sparse pockets of cloud, the heat in the tunnel reaches temperatures that could cook a human body. Prisoners are like pieces of meat in a metal pressure-cooker. During the day almost no one dares sleep or lie down on their beds inside the tunnel. No-one even feels like sitting down inside because every second spent in there means experiencing heat that sears eyeballs. ([Boochani, 2018, p. 81](#)).

It is not only the prison guards and administrations who put their safety at risk, also nature is merciless and harsh for them. The heat and weather are simply part of the natural world, but they have a profound impact on the refugees' lives. They turn the tunnel into an inhospitable and insecure place. The prison administrators do not provide anything to reduce the harshness of nature because they already dehumanized the prisoners and consider them as objects 'pieces of meat', not a human beings.

4.3 The Belongingness and Love Needs

Social needs consist of needs for belonging and affection that are seen in relationships such as romantic, friendship, family, intimacy, sense of connection, and affiliations such as religious, political, and social ones. These needs are less important than the previous two other needs of physiology and safety ([Mawere et al., 2016](#)). The person realizes the absence of friends, a sweetheart, a wife, or children more keenly than ever before. He desires affectionate relationships with people in general,

specifically a place in his group or family, and he will work hard to achieve this goal. He will desire such a position more than anything else in the world, and he may even forget that once when he was hungry, he sneered at love as unreal, unnecessary, or unimportant (Maslow, 1954).

We can see that Boochani hardly develops friendships with the other migrants throughout the course of the narrative. When the author is in Indonesia, his sense of isolation is obvious. He never brings up previous romantic or friendly relationships. During their journey to Australia, the social and affection needs of the other characters would encounter dangers and difficulties. The author paints a picture of the time in the following excerpt:

- (9) The sovereignty of the waves has collapsed the moral framework. Even the young Sri Lankan family, whose bond is maybe the strongest of all on board, has fallen apart. The husband is in the arms of the man next to him, the wife has her head on the bicep of another man, and their child has ended up across the thighs of a different woman. (Boochani, 2018, p. 24)

It is clear that humans only give some consideration to the third level of requirements if the first two levels of needs are met. The Sri Lankan family is extremely attached and has the strongest bond at the beginning of the adventure, but as the aggressive waves hit and exhausted them, their strong relationship breaks down. When Boochani finds himself in a situation that is engulfed by death, as stated in:

- (10) I accept death, and while engulfed in this maelstrom of noise and oppressive anxieties... (Boochani, 2018, p. 29)

We can tell how much he needs love in that painful moment. He senses that his mother is standing on top of the waves next to him as they become stronger. She displays a range of emotions, including a smile, sobs, grief, and joy. Even though we know it is all in Boochani's imagination, we are aware of how thirsty he is for his mother's love and close family connections. Alternatively, we can say that the image is the result of his unconscious mind becoming active and conjuring it up.

The Kurds are one of the nations present in the Manus jail. The need for affection and belonging drives the Kurdish prisoners to form relationships based on their nationality. They are all gathered in 'Corridor M' which is known as 'Little Kurdistan'.

- (11) Kurdish prisoners live in the rows of rooms alongside these fences. They have brought their repressed political aspirations with them into the prison and adorned one of the rooms with the tricolour flag: white, red, blue, with the image of the sun painted brightly on it. It is interesting how even though they have been deprived of even a single pen, on one morning they awake to find the Kurdish flag emblazoned on the door. Something akin to a miracle. (Boochani, 2018, p. 112)

It is interesting to see how they band together and create an 'unspoken fraternity' for themselves based on their ethnicity. They share and split the mango fruit among themselves as a sign of respect for one another. However, this solid connection only holds when the two additional demands from the preceding level are not in danger. The next excerpt demonstrates how their strong bonds and sense of belonging to the group start to collapse as their lives get more challenging and they struggle to find enough food for their daily lives.

- (12) This terrain is marked as Kurdistan. Whoever knows the Kurds understands very well the level of respect they have for one another. But the respect embedded in their culture begins to wane as

hunger takes its toll, day after day. Slowly but surely starvation lowers their flag from the pole. (Boochani, 2018, p. 114)

This excerpt illustrates how humans put priority on physiological and safety needs over belongingness and love. When humans encounter risks to their own physiological well-being and safety, their survival instinct emerges, and try to focus on self-preservation and ensure their safety. The excerpt clearly shows how the strong connection, respect, and love between the Kurds 'begins to wane' only when their physiological needs are in danger. It is the starvation lowers their flag of unity and connection. Fear and anxiety, about losing their physical well-being and security, shift their priority from higher levels of needs to fundamental needs. It is the instinct that leads them to prioritize their survival over social connection and belonging.

4.4 Self-Esteem Needs

After the first three needs are accomplished, esteem needs are required. Esteem needs contain the need for things that make up self-esteem, personal requirements, and social position. At this level, it is very needed to get the reinforcement and enhance others. People need to accomplish things and then have their efforts recognized. People sometimes subscribe to or participate in professional activities to get this need. When people are satisfied with this need in society and among their groups leads to feelings of 'self-confidence', 'worth', 'strength', 'capability', and 'adequacy' of being a useful individual in the world. But failing to get satisfaction creates a feeling 'of inferiority', 'of weakness', and 'of being helpless (Maslow, 1954).

We observe that Boochani has more difficulties meeting his needs as we ascend the hierarchical structure. He experiences suffering throughout the entire novel and barely ever has the opportunity to consider meeting this need. Their boat battles the ocean's 'mountain waves' as they go through the deep oceans toward Australia. The asylum seekers are trapped in their boat as it slowly fills with water and have no chance of rescue. Boochani ponders the absurdity of existence, his fear of dying, and the mortality of his fate. Instead of 'crying and surrendering to the oppressive fear', this causes him to accept and embrace death. When he gets to that point, he displays his courage and confidence by saying:

- (13) This realisation makes me brave. So, right at that moment, I light a cigarette, take a few drags, and inhale the smoke into my lungs, into the most abused organs of my body. I have accepted death. (Boochani, 2018, p. 29)

The excerpt above shows his self-confidence when 'terror reigns' and there are 'oppressive anxieties', which is situational irony. According to Hopper (2020), a person can only satisfy this need when they feel good about themselves, and other people appreciate them in return. The narrator finds himself in a position that is far from what he imagined when he gets to Manus Island. The prison staff never treats the asylum seekers like humans. They adhere to a philosophy that consistently dehumanizes inmates. Never think of them as being human, Boochani says, providing numerous examples.

- (14) The prisoners are aware that at the start of the queue in front of the tent, a few G4S guys sit on chairs and order groups of five to enter the dining area. The Manus Prison Logic is about domination. (Boochani, 2018, p. 95)

Another method of torturing prisoners physically and psychologically is to make them wait in lines. They had to wait in lengthy lines every day to use the restroom and get food. The prison's Kyriarchal System, according to Boochani, never saw them as human beings and always expected them to live like animals. In addition, as stated in:

- (15) The Kyriarchal System presents the prisoner with the blueprint. That's right. And that blueprint is manifested in The Cow. In simpler terms: whoever wants to endure less suffering must live like The Cow. Eat. Sleep. Don't come up with any questions. (Boochani, 2018, p. 103)

They should not contemplate or question the cruel prison regulations. Boochani incredibly illustrates this situation, he says:

- (16) There are so many times the prisoner is forced to straddle the border between human and animal. One has to decide whether to uphold human values or live life like The Cow. In most cases, the human is reduced to an animal in order to survive. However, not the kind of animal that is totally dependent on its instincts and acts according to its predetermined condition. Rather, an animal with intelligence and will, a human being. (Boochani, 2018, p. 111)

The cruel treatment of the system obliged the prisoners to live 'like The Cow'. When the asylum seekers face oppression and inhuman treatment to choose 'the border between human and animal' survival instinct arise and they choose to live like animal to increase their chance of survival rather than focusing on their self-esteem need, like dignity or respect. In such a situation, it is difficult to say that one can satisfy the fourth level of needs because he does not feel good about himself, and others do not value or show any respect to him.

4.5 Self-Actualization Needs

Even when we are fully satisfied with the other needs, we may still feel that there is 'a new discontent and restlessness' in our life. Satisfaction with this need varies from one individual to another. Each may find self-actualization in a different form, one may find it in being an ideal actor, an athlete, a writer, or a mother (Maslow, 1954). Self-actualization, as defined by Maslow, signifies an individual's progression toward satisfying their highest needs, especially those related to finding meaning in life. The traits of self-actualizing individuals include personal creativity, the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment, a thirst for knowledge, realism, acceptance, problem-solving focus, autonomy, a sense of humor, and strong interpersonal relations (Gholamnejad et al., 2019). It is important to note that not everyone needs to possess all these qualities. This level is the hardest and highest level one can get in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Hopper (2020) asserts that how each individual is satisfied with this need varies. For one person, self-actualization might mean 'helping others', while for another, it might mean 'achievements in an artistic or creative field'. Boochani, a Kurd in Iran, finds it challenging to ascend to all levels of the hierarchy and achieve self-actualization. For Boochani, getting there is achieving self-actualization, which is why we believe he takes the dangerous trek to his desired destination of Australia. But in the end, Manus, a place that can be described as dystopian, is where he finds himself. Tofighian (2018) described Manus prison as 'a modern manifestation of systematic torture'. Boochani's experience in prison thus turned into a nightmare making self-actualization nearly impossible. He illustrated the difficult existence he had endured in the horrifying,

harsh, and brutal Manus jail by recounting numerous incidents, as illustrated in the following excerpt.

- (17) Once dinner is over, no-one can find anything else to eat. In the dead of night, the smell of hunger wafts through the entire prison. No-one is allowed to take even one potato from the dining area. Anything that can be eaten has to be eaten right there under the tent. It is the last chance to fill their stomachs, stomachs that take over from the mind, stomachs with full authority over the body. (Boochani, 2018, p. 95)

This excerpt demonstrates the hardships of prison life quite well. Even the most fundamental necessity for sustenance is problematic for the prisoners. They do not have enough food to last until their next meal in the morning. They were all so ravenously hungry that their thoughts were only focused on food and their stomachs. Therefore, it would be hard to think of self-actualization when your stomach had control over your intellect. Boochani adds further, saying in:

- (18) The Manus Prison Logic is about domination.
Domination: five people need to leave the dining area so that five people can take their places. The community has to wait until five people leave, and then the officer can control the next five with his finger, giving permission to enter. We are like puppets on a string, put in motion with the flick of a finger. Every mind is caught up in a process, a process that has become normalised. A domesticating process. (Boochani, 2018, p. 95)

How can self-actualization occur to you when you are being dominated? According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, asylum seekers are unable to advance and remain at the bottom of the pyramid since the prison administrators never want them to think of anything other than meeting their basic needs.

5. CONCLUSION

Behrouz Boochani wrote *No Friend but the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison* from Manus Prison about his risky journey to get to Australia, his dreamland. We used Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs to examine how Boochani in his trip faced many difficulties and tried to fulfill the different levels of the hierarchy starting from the basic at the bottom to the highest one, self-actualization. It can be concluded that Boochani even had difficulty in fulfilling the basic needs, physiological needs. He is partially satisfied with the first three levels of the hierarchy, physiological needs, safety and security needs, and belongingness and love needs. However, Boochani never fulfilled the last two levels, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization needs as these needs require much higher and stronger motivations. The paper highlights the fact that when individual faces an extreme threat to their physiological needs and safety needs, their priority shifts toward self-preservation, and they leave very little room for cultivating social connection and other higher levels of needs.

Boochani's voyage is depicted as a series of rising and falling waves. He occasionally satisfies some needs, but he never succeeds in meeting the need for self-actualization and self-esteem. And hardly does he fulfill the other three levels of the hierarchy of needs. We can simply say Boochani's entire story serves as a metaphor for everyone who strives for self-actualization yet encounters obstacles.

The implication depicted in this paper lies in the fact that Abraham Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs is still a valuable framework for understanding human motivations and behaviors. Boochani's *No Friend but the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison* is a real testament to the theory's validity. It demonstrates how individuals give priority to the basic needs over the higher ones as Maslow discussed. On the practical level, humanitarian organizations and authorities need to deal with displaced people to understand human motivations and desires. They need to know how individuals react and behave based on their needs. In a context where their physiological and safety needs are at risk, they cannot think of other higher-level needs such as belongingness, self-esteem, and self-actualization.

The paper had its limitations, and it lies in focusing only on the main character of the study. Also, only specific excerpts were chosen from the text to avoid unnecessary details. Future studies can delve deeper into research topics, including how the novel portrays the experience of refugees and how colonialism and imperialism contributed to the imprisonment of refugees.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Subheading of the Content

1.1.1 Subheading of the content

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1 author (Clarke, 2010)

2 authors (Lightbown & Spada, 1993)

3 authors (Reid et al., 1989)

Short quotations (less than 40 words):

Deterding (1997, p. 54) said that “connected speech represents somewhat more natural data than the rather artificial vowels derived from specially articulated citation speech”.

Long quotations (more than 40 words):

From the acoustic standpoint, even the sounds of words used by a speaker are one of the forms of his or her identity. Accordingly, Jacobi (2009) explained that:

Along with communicating meaning, the acoustic signal is a product of physical properties and changes, as well as of more generally all those factors that form the identity of the speaker, such as social affiliation or family origin. The choice of words but also the way they are realized differs from speaker to speaker, as well as within a speaker. Even more, from an acoustic point of view, each utterance is unique. (Jacobi, 2009, p. 2)

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Figure 1 illustrates the process from the manuscript submission stage to publication.

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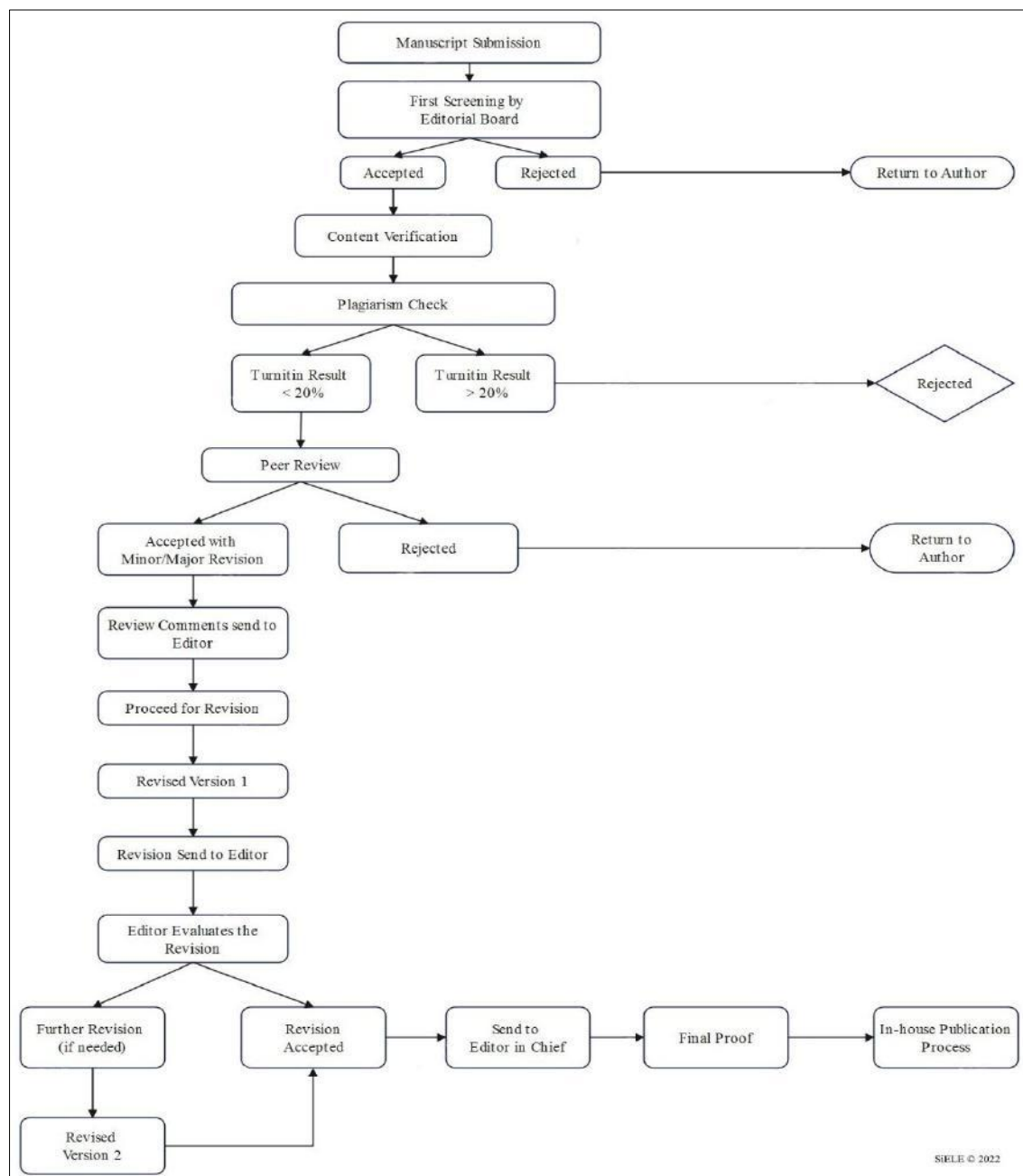


Figure 1. The process from the manuscript submission stage to publication.

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