E-ISSN 2723-7273

Linguistics and Literature Journal

Vol. 6, No. 2, December 2025.

Published by
English Literature Study Program
Faculty of Arts and Education
UNIVERSITAS TEKNOKRAT INDONESIA
Zainal Abidin Pagaralam No. 9 – 11 Bandarlampung

LINGUISTICS AND LITERATURE JOURNAL
Vol. 6, No. 2, December 2025

Linguistics and Literature Journal is a peer-reviewed journal published in Indonesia by the Faculty of Arts and Education, Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia. This journal aims to facilitate and promote the dissemination of scholarly information on research and development in the field of linguistics, literature, and language teaching and learning. The articles published in this journal can be the result of research, conceptual thinking, ideas, innovations, best practices, and book reviews.

Editor and Administration Address: **LINGUISTICS AND LITERATURE JOUNAL.** **E-ISSN: 2723-7273.** Publication Division, Arts and Education Faculty, Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia. H. Zainal Abidin Pagaralam No. 9-11. Kedaton, Bandarlampung. Telephone (0721) 702022, 774061*(hunting)* 784945. E-mail: llist@teknokrat.ac.id.

LINGUISTICS AND LITERATURE JOURNAL

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Published by
Faculty of Arts and Education
UNIVERSITAS TEKNOKRAT INDONESIA
Bandarlampung

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E-ISSN: 2723-7273

available online at: http://jim.teknokrat.ac.id/index.php/linguistics_and_literature/index

A WOMAN'S OPPRESSION IN *THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA* MOVIE

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Received: (October 2025) **Accepted**: (November 2025) **Published :** (December 2025)

Abstract

This thesis examines the oppression and resistance of a woman in The Devil Wears Prada (2006) movie, using Virginia Woolf's feminist theory from A Room of One's Own (2021). This study focuses on two main issues: how oppression is depicted in the movie, and how the female main character resists the oppression. The method used in this study is qualitative, with the movie as the main source of data. The findings show that the main character, Andrea Sachs, experiences oppression through financial dependence and restrictions on her personal boundaries. Additionally, this study highlights her resistance, achieved through gaining financial independence and claiming her personal space. These acts of resistance reflect Woolf's idea that women need both money and personal space to be free. This study is expected to provide a better understanding of women's struggles in everyday life and contribute to literary studies on feminism, gender, identity, power, and equality.

Keywords: feminist, women's oppression, women's resistance

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, women are still expected to stay at home and depend on their partners for money. This expectation makes it hard for women to have financial freedom and personal space. To avoid this, many women work outside the home to earn their own money. However, in certain workplaces, such as the fashion industry, they face extra pressure to look attractive and be highly skilled just to gain respect. These expectations show that women still deal with oppression that limits their control over their own lives. Woolf (2021, p. 1) argues, "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction." This means women need both financial independence and personal space to express themselves and achieve their dreams fully.

Furthermore, people often believe that women are not as strong or as intelligent as men, which makes it more difficult for women to be treated equally. In many workplaces, leadership positions are still mostly given to men, leaving women with fewer opportunities to grow in their careers. This unequal division of power keeps women from having influence and decision-making authority. Arahmah (2024, p. 2) explains that men often get top jobs, such as managers, which creates an imbalance of power. Woolf (2021, p. 10) supports this idea, saying, "women have always been poor; from the beginning of time." It highlights how women have been held back from opportunities for centuries. For centuries, women were denied education, the right to own property, and even the ability to make decisions about their own lives. This unfair treatment is called oppression. "Oppression is defined as injustice in which groups of people are systematically and unfairly restrained, burdened, or reduced by one or more causes" (Djohar et al, 2023, p. 180). For example, women are exploited because capitalism benefits by paying them less and using their labor cheaply while patriarchy forces them to do unpaid home work (Mohajan, 2022, p. 14). These systems work together to limit women's freedom, especially in careers and relationships. In relationships, women cannot make their own choices because they are expected to follow their partner's opinions.

For real change to happen, women must be free to earn money, make their own decisions, and grow as individuals. Women can contribute fully to society when they have equal access to education, training, and leadership roles. Issalillah, Khayru, & Wisnujati (2022, p. 36) emphasize that "…women must have full access to their development or even contribute…". This means women can only think, create, and succeed when their basic needs, such as

money and personal space, are met. Moreover, the 2006 movie The Devil Wears Prada is based on Lauren Weisberger's 2003 novel. It portrays the struggles of a young woman working in a fashion company where strict rules and high demands affect her personal life. Her relationship also impacts her career, showing how both workplace challenges and relationship expectations often shape women's lives. The movie highlights the negative effects of the fashion industry's oppressive environment and male dominance in relationships on the female main character. This study examines how The Devil Wears Prada shows a woman's oppression and how the main character resists and overcomes it.

Previous research on women's oppression has offered diverse perspectives across literature and film. Astuti and Kistanto (2021) analyzed Shenoy's novel The Secret Wish List using Simone de Beauvoir's existentialist feminism. Their study revealed how the main character suffers verbal abuse, loss of decision-making power, and forced gender roles in a male-dominated Indian culture, yet shows resistance by reclaiming her rights. Baroy et al. (2022) examined Hidden Figures through George Eliot's feminist theory, Friedrich Engels' conflict theory, and Lindsey German's patriarchy theory, showing how women face bullying, discrimination, and the undervaluing of intelligence within a male-dominated workplace. Yanti and Anggraini (2022), applying Marion Iris Young's oppression theory along with Alison Jaggar's radical feminism and Patricia Hill Collins' multicultural feminism, explored Jennifer Mathieu's Moxie and found oppression in the form of sexism, emotional abuse, and racial injustice, while resistance emerges through community building and rejecting patriarchal rules.

In contrast, this research applies Virginia Woolf's feminist theory to the movie The Devil Wears Prada, focusing specifically on financial independence and personal freedom. Unlike earlier studies that examined oppression in cultural, social, or educational contexts, this study highlights how Woolf's ideas uncover the importance of women's autonomy in managing their finances and personal lives, as well as their strength in resisting oppressive systems within the workplace and beyond.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative method to look at women's oppression in the movie The Devil Wears Prada (2006) by using Virginia Woolf's feminist theory. Grossoehme (2014, p. 109) explains that it is important to look at written materials like interview notes and focus group talks to learn about what people go through. This method helps us understand people's experiences and how they live in society. Fossey et al. (2002, p. 717) also say that qualitative research helps explore the meaning behind people's personal lives and the world around them. The research focused on the main character, Andrea Sachs. The writer chose important scenes and dialogues on purpose (purposive sampling) that showed oppression and resistance.

Furthermore, the writer was the main tool in this research, helped by the movie script and scenes to organize the data. According to Höller et al (2014, p. 141), "data sources refer to the broad variety of sources that may now be available to build enterprise solutions". It implies that data sources are different places that collect information, which they use to build systems and make informed decisions. The main data came from the movie, while books and journals were used as extra sources. To collect the data, the writer watched the movie many times, picked the scenes that showed oppression and resistance, and grouped them into categories. Then the data were studied using simple steps: reducing, showing, interpreting, and making conclusions, so the results could explain women's oppression and resistance clearly.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Oppression in A Woman's Financial Conditions

In the movie, a man in a higher position than Andy, like the company's chairman, puts pressure on her to be thankful for her job and work hard as an assistant in a famous company. This shows how people in power can oppress a woman's financial freedom by making them feel like they must accept the pressure to keep their job. It highlights how women's independence is sometimes limited by those who expect them to stay quiet and follow orders.

Irv congratulated Andy, yet pressured her (Minute 21:34)

In this scene, Nigel introduces Andy to Irv Ravitz, the chairman of the fashion industry. Nigel says, **"This is Andy Sachs, Miranda's new assistant"** (Frankel, 2006, 21:31–21:34). Irv replies, **"Oh, congratulations, young lady. A million girls would kill for that job"** (Frankel, 2006, 21:34–21:38). Even though his words sound nice, his body language says something else. He points his finger at Andy, which makes it seem like he's putting pressure on her to do well, no matter how she feels. Usually, this happens where women feel stuck in jobs they don't like because the cost of saying no feels too high. Woolf (2021, p. 18) asserts that it's hard to feel excited about doing work you don't enjoy, especially when doing it to make others happy. It implies women feel trapped, like they have no choice. Sometimes, they feel they have to be extra nice or pretend to agree with others, even when they don't want to. Andy wants to be a journalist, but she is taking this job to earn money and support herself; she doesn't enjoy the job.

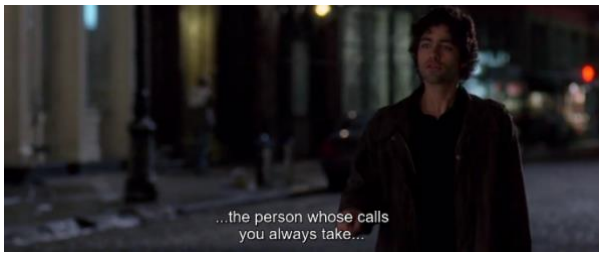
Besides, when Andy feels unhappy with her job, she talks to her coworker Nigel, hoping he can give her advice and help her find a way out of her problem. Even though she is upset, Andy feels stuck in her job because she needs the money to pay her rent, so quitting seems impossible. She feels trapped between her needs and her happiness. This makes her confused about what choice to make. Andy starts to wonder if staying in the job is worth the stress.

Nigel shows his ignorance towards Andy's problem (Minute 32:34)

Note. From In this scene, Nigel's uninterested response, **"So quit"** (Frankel, 2006, 32:28-32:30), surprises Andy. **"What?"** she asks (Frankel, 2006, 32:30-32:32). He repeats, **"Quit"** (Frankel, 2006, 32:32-32:34). Still perplexed, Andy asks, **"Qui..."** (Frankel, 2006, 32:32-32:34). Demonstrating his ignorance, Nigel then adds, **"I can get a girl to take your job in five minutes"** (Frankel, 2006, 32:34-32:36). In the fast-moving fashion world, Nigel, who is the art director at *Runway* Magazine, could easily replace Andy at any time. This shows that her hard work is not truly valued. The influential people like Nigel often ignore how hard others work, making it even harder for Andy to succeed. Meanwhile, Nigel's actions toward Andy show that she has few choices if she wants to keep her job. As the art director, he acts like Andy must follow his rules, or she could lose her position. Woolf (2021, p. 16) says, "He had the influence, the money, and the power," which shows how men often have control over jobs and resources. Andy feels stuck in the company system that treats her as replaceable, showing she has little control over her life. She feels pressure to act in ways that are not true to herself, which makes her lose confidence in her own choices. Even when she works very hard, it never seems fully enough to gain respect or security in her job. This situation shows how the workplace can trap women in roles where they are easily replaced and not valued for who they are.

Moreover, a boyfriend is someone a woman often depends on. Nate can't support Andy focusing on her job. He feels hurt because Andy seems to care more about her busy fashion job than their relationship. Even though fashion isn't her dream, Andy starts to enjoy it. Andy works there to earn money and gain experience for her real career in the future. She believes every skill she learns now will be useful later. She wants to build a strong base before reaching her dream. Andy understands that success takes time and patience. She also knows that every step matters, even small ones. With this job, she is learning about hard work and discipline.

Nate is sick of Andy's transformation (Minute 1:17:16-1:17:20)



In this scene, Nate pressures Andy by saying it feels like Andy's superior is her real partner. He complains that she always answers her superior's calls and puts work before their relationship, which causes big fights between them. During an argument, Andy's superior calls, and she feels she has no choice but to answer. Nate then says, **"...the person whose calls you always take..."** (Frankel, 2006, 1:17:16–1:17:18) and adds, **"...that's the relationship you're in."** (Frankel, 2006, 1:17:18–1:17:20). His words show that he's jealous because it seems like Andy cares more about her job than him. Yet, Andy is not doing this because she loves the job; conversely, she needs the money to live. Andy and Nate argue because Nate doesn't understand how important her job is. This shows that it can be hard for women to earn money when their partners get in the way. Vice versa for men, making money is often easier and less stressful. Woolf (2021, p. 10) says, "to earn money was impossible for them." This means that even women in the past were not allowed to earn their own money, which is why they couldn't be fully free or independent. That kind of oppression still happens today.

The Oppression in A Woman's Personal Boundaries

The early example of a woman's oppression of personal boundaries at work happens to Andy. While eating in the office canteen, her co-worker Nigel comments on her food. He points out that she is eating too many carbs and says that most women in the *Runway* usually eat salads to stay thin. This shows that the fashion industry expects women to have a certain body shape to fit into stylish clothes, and that's why the other women at the company do not eat like Andy does. Meanwhile, Andy does not care much about following those strict beauty rules and eats the food she wants. By doing this, she shows that she values her own comfort and choices over the industry's unrealistic standards. However, her actions also make her stand out as different, which later leads to pressure to change herself in order to fit in.

Nigel tells Andy why the girls in the Runway do not eat much (Minute 20:13)

When Nigel notices that Andy has chosen the corn chowder, he remarks, **"Corn chowder. That's an interesting choice"** (Frankel, 2006, 19:58-20:01). He further comments, **"You do know that cellulite is one of the main ingredients in corn chowder?"** (Frankel, 2006, 20:01-20:06). Andy, who understands the implication and feels uncomfortable due to his remark, replies, **"None of the girls here eat anything?"** (Frankel, 2006, 20:11-20:13). Immediately, Nigel sarcastically by saying, **"Not since two became the new four and zero became the new two"** (Frankel, 2006, 20:13-20:17). It shows how strict the fashion company is about body size. Nigel's comment is a clear example of how a woman's personal space is not respected, showing how she can be judged insanely. He tells Andy that if she wants to succeed in the fashion world, she has to change her appearance to match the company's idea of beauty. This shows how women are often judged more by their looks than their skills. Men often create the rules and expectations that women are forced to follow. This scene connects to Woolf (2021, p. 36) adds, "it is obvious that the values of women differ...from the values which have been made by the other sex". It implies that Nigel's comments about body size and cellulite show how strong the pressure is for women to meet these unrealistic beauty standards in the fashion world. Andy's experience shows how the workplace and male domination control women, limit their freedom, and make it harder for them to accept who they are.

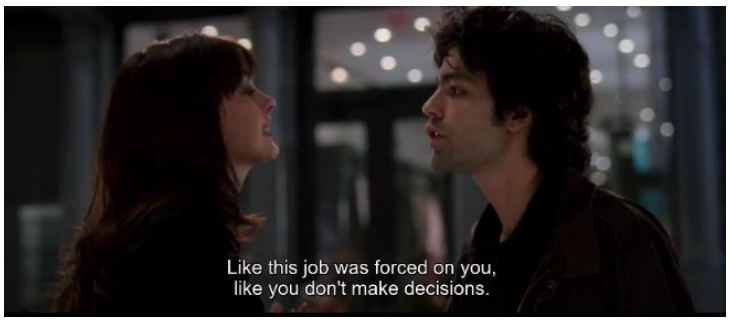
Nevertheless, Andy spills food on her sweater during lunch, Nigel uses the moment to make fun of her. He speaks in a sarcastic way, telling her not to worry, as if she owns many sweaters like that. At that moment, Andy feels embarrassed and weak, realizing that Nigel's jokes are meant to make her feel unconfident. The laughter around her makes the situation even worse. Andy starts to doubt if she really belongs in that place. This moment shows how Nigel's words can hurt her self-esteem.

Nigel tells Andy not to worry about the corn chowder's stain (Minute 20:27)

In this scene, Nigel shows a form of oppression by interfering with Andy's personal space. He makes fun of the way she dresses by saying, **"I'm sure you have plenty more poly blend where that came from"** (Frankel, 2006, 20:27-20:31). It portrays how the company's standard makes Andy humiliated by her male co-worker. This also shows how men always judge women's personal choices, like what they wear. This scene connects to what Woolf said. Woolf (2021, p. 13) disputes, "why are women, judging from this catalogue, so much more interesting to men than men are to women?". This means that women are often seen mainly for how they look and how much men like them, instead of for who they are. In the fashion company, women are judged more for their appearance than their abilities. This kind of thinking makes women lose confidence in themselves.

Moreover, Nate doesn't like it when she becomes too focused on her work. He feels like Andy has changed and no longer gives him enough time or attention. He thinks she doesn't care about him as much as before. Meanwhile, Andy is just working very hard to do well in her career. Andy becomes focused on her work because she wants a better future.

Nate is frustrated with Andy's behavioral changes (Minute 1:15:51)



In this scene, Andy meets Nate at an exhibition. Nate found out that Andy was going to Paris which shows her dedication in her job yet, he gets angry and says**, "Like this job was forced on you, like you don't make decisions"** (Frankel, 2006, 1:15:51–1:15:54). This shows that Nate doubts Andy's ability to make her own choices. He thinks she is just going along with what others want, and he ignores the fact that Andy is working hard and making her own path. Nate's reaction is a form of interrupting her personal space and independence, just like when a woman is interrupted while trying to speak. This scene reflects a bigger problem where women's choices are often questioned or controlled by people around them, making it harder for them to follow their dreams fully. Nate's behavior shows what it's like when a boyfriend doesn't truly support his partner. She kept getting interrupted (Woolf, 2021, p. 32). It's not just about words; it also means that women's opinions, choices, and independence are not respected. When a woman is interrupted, it shows that others don't fully listen to her or believe in her ability to decide for herself.

Financial Freedom

The first sign of Andy's commitment to financial independence is her decision to stay at her job for one year. Despite having other opportunities, she chooses to remain at the well-known company because she believes it will enhance her professional growth and provide valuable experience for her future career. This choice reflects her dedication to achieving long-term goals while gaining stability and skills.

Andy decided to keep doing the job for a year (Minute 25:33)

In this scene, Andy makes a big decision. Even though she feels like she doesn't belong in the fashion world and doesn't like the job, she chooses to stay for one year. She says, **"I just need to stick it out for a year. One year"** (Frankel, 2006, 25:33-25:36). This shows that Andy is starting to think the job might help her in the future. Even if it's hard and not what she truly wants, she stays because it could lead to better things later. She follows the rules for now, not because she agrees, but it might help her reach her goals. This idea matches the true meaning of financial freedom, when a woman can choose her life and career based on her values, not because of money problems or pressure from society. Woolf (2021, p. 52) says that no one can know if what you want will last forever or only for a while. This reminds us that financial freedom allows women to live, work, and create on their terms, without being forced to follow others' expectations. It shows the primary goal of resistance, for women to have the power to make their financial choices.

Andy's change in appearance and behavior is intentional and meaningful. It is not just about fitting in but about survival and shaping her future. Her effort reflects her goal of gaining financial freedom.

Andy commits to changing herself (Minute 34:36)

In this scene, after many people underestimate Andy because she is expected to pursue journalism instead of fashion, she changes her appearance to secure a promotion and take on more serious work. She asks Nigel for help in choosing her outfit. This is why she says, **"Nigel? Nigel, Nigel."** (Frankel, 2006, 34:36-34:40). It shows her smiley face indicates that she is prepared for a significant transformation that will change her financial situation. She feels more confident about herself. She is ready for the transformation and has adjusted herself to reach promotion in her job. This is similar to what Woolf (2021, p. 18) says about how "no force in the world can take from me my five hundred pounds." It describes that Andy doesn't allow people to replace her or look down on her just because of how she dresses or because she doesn't know much about fashion at first. Instead of giving up, she changes her appearance to match what the company expects. She works hard to fit in, learns what is needed, and shows that she can do her job well. She wants to prove that she belongs and can succeed, even if it means trying new things. By doing this, she gains respect and slowly earns the trust of others. It shows that effort and persistence can help a person overcome challenges.

Meanwhile, Andy returned home late from the *Runway*'s event despite being expected to celebrate Nate's birthday party. She was unable to arrive on time because attending the event was necessary for networking with individuals who could influence her career. Lacking the courage to refuse to meet these potential contacts ultimately resulted in her late arrival at Nate's party. Nate felt upset because he had been waiting for Andy to celebrate with him. He believed that her job at Runway was taking too much of her time and attention.

Andy explains herself (Minute 1:06:08)

In this scene, Andy explains why she was late by saying she had no real choice about how to attend the event. She defends her decision by pointing out how important the gathering was for her career. She says, **"I kept trying to leave, but there was a lot going on"** (Frankel, 2006, 1:06:04–1:06:08), and then adds, **"…and you know I didn't have a choice"** (Frankel, 2006, 1:06:08–1:06:10). These dialogues show that even though she planned to leave early to be at Nate's birthday, she felt she had to stay because important people were there, people who could help her grow professionally and possibly get a better salary in the future. This scene connects to Woolf (2021, p. 52) argues, "... it is necessary for one side to beat another side..." This quote shows how important Andy to prioritize her job event over her boyfriend's occasion, for her better future. It shows that for women to have real freedom with money or their jobs, they need to stand up to their partners if those partners try to hamper them. To have financial freedom, women need to earn their own money. They must fight through these challenges to reach success in their own way. They may face pressure from people who do not understand their choices. Sometimes this pressure comes from family, friends, or even their partner. Still, women must stay strong and believe in their goals. If they give up, they lose the chance to grow. By staying firm, they can build a future that truly belongs to them.

Personal Space

At the beginning of her journey, Andy pushes back against the expectations of those around her. Her friend enthusiastically claims that her job at a prestigious fashion magazine is something "a million girls would kill for." Yet, Andy insists she's not like everyone else and doesn't view this position as her dream. This shows the beginning of Andy's inner conflict between what society expects from her and what she truly wants.

Andy emphasizes that she is different (Minute 10:40)

In this scene, Andy is hanging out with her friends at a restaurant after just completing a job interview at *Runway*. One of Andy's friends, Doug, is shocked by the news because it is the best fashion magazine company, and many girls would die to work there. However, Andy emphasizes that she is different from the girls at *Runway* who would kill to be in her position as the personal assistant. Doug says, **"A million girls would kill for that job"** (Frankel, 2006, 10:38-10:40). Andy replies, **"Yeah, great. The thing is, I'm not one of them"** (Frankel, 2006, 10:38-10:43). It shows that Andy wouldn't try too hard to be in that company, which means if she weren't accepted, it would be fine for her because it's not her passion. This scene shows that people should not let outside pressure control their thoughts. Woolf (2021, p. 37) says that even if we think freely, we might not be able to change how others think. Real freedom means thinking for yourself, not just following what society wants. Although Andy works at *Runway*, a top fashion magazine, she doesn't let it define who she is. Andy doesn't see it as her goal, unlike others who dream of that job. She also cannot change what her friend thought about her job, which "a million girls would kill for". She wants to stay true to herself and not just follow what others think success should be.

Unfortunately, Nigel also oppresses her because of her appearance in a lousy sweater. Yet, Andy stands up to him by saying she won't change just because she works in the fashion industry. Andy thinks that she is enough and she commits not to change herself. Andy shows that she values who she is on the inside more than what she wears. She knows that true worth is not measured by clothes or style. This moment proves her strength to resist outside pressure. Even though others try to control her, she chooses her own path. Andy believes that staying true to herself is more important than pleasing others. This gives her confidence to face challenges in her job. In the end, her choice shows real independence and self-respect.

Andy stresses her commitment to Nigel (Minute 20:39)

In this scene, Andy talks honestly to Nigel about her commitment. She knows he doesn't like her clothes and says, **"You think my clothes are hideous, I get it."** (Frankel, 2006, 20:34–20:36). But then she explains what she believes in: **"But, you know, I'm not going to be in fashion forever..."** (Frankel, 2006, 20:36–20:39). She ends by saying, **"...so I don't see the point of changing myself just because I have this job."** (Frankel, 2006, 20:39–20:43). This shows that Andy doesn't think she should change who she is just to fit into the fashion world. Andy wants to stay true to herself even if others expect her to act differently. She shows that a job should not control her identity. Andy believes that her values and character matter more than fashion trends. She wants to focus on her goals and not lose herself in the process. This proves she has confidence in who she really is. This scene connects with Woolf (2021, p. 54), argues that being true to yourself is more important than pretending to be someone you're not. Andy's choice not to change how she looks just to fit into the fashion world sends a strong message about women's freedom of expression. By sticking to her beliefs, Andy shows that she is free to be herself. She sends the message that women don't have to change who they are to make others happy, they have to stand against the oppression.

Furthermore, Andy stands up to Nate for not supporting her and shows he doesn't respect her job. Nate makes fun of Andy's new look and her success in the fashion world. He forced her and claimed her job doesn't matter. This shows that he doesn't understand or value the hard work she puts into her career.

Andy speaks out about her frustration (Minute 1:16:02)

In this scene, Nate makes fun of her upcoming trip to Paris, saying she took a chance that should have gone to her co-worker, Emily. Yet Andy points out that he doesn't like her job in the fashion world. Nate doesn't see how much she's grown or changed when she says, "**And you think fashion is silly. You've made that clear"** (Frankel, 2006, 1:16:02–1:16:05). Nate tries to invade that space by mocking Andy's choices and making her feel guilty for her success. But Andy's honest words push back, reclaiming her right to be proud of her achievements. Like the quote suggests, it becomes a powerful and meaningful moment when she tells the truth because it shows her growth and her refusal to let someone else define her worth. This situation fits the idea that "be truthful, one would say, and the result is bound to be amazingly interesting" (Woolf, 2021, p. 44). It reflects the moment when Andy finally speaks up about her frustration with Nate. In this scene, Andy stops hiding her real feelings and tells Nate the truth that he does not respect her job or understand how hard she has worked. By being honest, Andy resists the pressure to stay silent just to protect Nate's ego. Her truth-telling becomes a form of resistance because she refuses to shrink herself or act as if her career is less important.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, this thesis explains how The Devil Wears Prada (2006) movie portrays a woman's oppression and resistance through the character of Andy. She experiences restrictions in both her workplace and personal relationship, which limit her freedom financially and personally. By using Virginia Woolf's feminist theory (2021), this study highlights that women need financial independence and personal space to live freely and grow. Andy's story becomes an example of how women can resist oppression by making their own choices and pursuing independence. The advantage of this study is that it connects a popular cultural text with feminist theory, making abstract ideas from Virginia Woolf more concrete and relatable for modern audiences. It shows how feminist theory remains relevant when applied to contemporary media. However, the limitation is that the analysis focuses

only on one movie, which may not represent the wider range of women's experiences in other contexts. This study can be applied to further research in literature, film, and gender studies by using feminist theory to explore how media reflects women's struggles and resistance. It can also serve as a reminder for society to support women's rights, independence, and equality in both professional and personal life.

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Linguistics and Literature Journal
Vol. 6, No. 2, 150 - 157
E-ISSN: 2723-7273

available online at: http://jim.teknokrat.ac.id/index.php/linguistics_and_literature/index

EXPRESSIVE ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS IN TAYLOR SWIFT'S COMMENCEMENT SPEECH AT NEW YORK UNIVERSITY 2022

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Received: (October 2025) **Accepted**: (November 2025) **Published :** (December 2025)

Abstract

This study analyzes the types and functions of expressive illocutionary acts found in Taylor Swift's 2022 commencement speech at New York University. The research applied Searle's (1979) speech act theory as the main framework and used a qualitative descriptive method. The data were collected from Swift's speech transcript and analyzed based on the classification of expressive acts and their felicity conditions. The findings revealed that there are 42 expressive illocutionary acts representing 9 types of expressive acts, namely thanking, apologizing, congratulating, praising, complaining, protesting, boasting, lamenting, and welcoming. Among these, praising appears as the most dominant function, followed by complaining. The dominance of praising motivates the audience and strengthens emotional connection, as well expresses admiration. On the other hand, complaining and lamenting acts are used strategically to express vulnerability and authenticity, which made the speech more relatable and persuasive to the audience. The research findings indicate that Taylor Swift employs expressive illocutionary acts to maintain a balance between emotion, humor, and authority in her message, which can help her to build solidarity with the audience, deliver inspiration, and emphasize the values of resilience and self-acceptance. Furthermore, this study can enhance the understanding of how expressive acts are used in public speaking and provide useful insights for further studies in pragmatics and speech analysis.

Keywords: commencement speech, expressive illocutionary acts, pragmatics, qualitative study, speech act theory, Taylor Swift

INTRODUCTION

Speech is a fundamental form of human communication that enables individuals to express thoughts, share experiences, and interact effectively with others (Al-Mamoory & Hussein, 2023). Beyond the exchange of information, speech also serves as a tool to inspire, persuade, and influence the emotions or actions of an audience (Cohen, 1994). Among its functions, the ability to inspire is critical, as speakers can create strong emotional connections with listeners by sharing personal stories, values, or ideas (Grice & Skinner, 1993). This emotional bond can motivate individuals to reflect, take action, or adopt new perspectives, which is especially evident in graduation or commencement speeches. Such speeches are designed to motivate graduates who are entering a new stage of life by combining personal anecdotes, recognition of achievements, and encouragement to pursue future goals (Cohen, 1994).

Speeches can be categorized according to their purpose and context into several types, including informative, persuasive, demonstrative, impromptu, special-occasion speeches, and debates (Grice & Skinner, 1993). Each type has a distinct goal and requires specific techniques to engage the audience effectively. For example, informative speeches aim to educate, persuasive ones seek to influence, while special-occasion speeches, such as graduations, focus on emotional resonance (Gring, 2006). Understanding these categories helps speakers communicate effectively and ensures that messages are clear and meaningful (Burek & Losos, 2014). However, some scholars argue that combining different types of speech can enhance creativity and effectiveness.

A notable example of an inspiring graduation speech is Taylor Swift's commencement address at New York University in 2022. The speech gained wide attention for its blend of humor, personal reflection, and motivational message that resonated with young audiences. It demonstrates how a public figure can use language strategically to attract attention, inspire, and motivate listeners while maintaining relatability and authenticity (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). Taylor Swift is considered one of the most influential musicians globally. According to GoodStats (2023), Jakarta ranks first worldwide for the number of Taylor Swift listeners, with over two million by June 2023. This indicates her global appeal, including among Indonesian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Her speeches, therefore, provide valuable linguistic and pragmatic insights for understanding how expressive language is used to build emotional engagement.

To understand how language functions in Swift's speech, this study refers to pragmatics the branch of linguistics that studies meaning in context. Pragmatics focuses on the speaker's intention, the listener's interpretation, and contextual factors that shape meaning (Yule, 1996). Within this field, speech act theory plays an essential role. Austin (1962) introduced the concept that every utterance constitutes an action, while Searle (1969) later classified speech acts into five categories: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. These theories emphasize that communication involves not just saying something but doing something through language.

This study adopts Searle's (1969) theory of speech acts as the main framework to analyze how speakers achieve their communicative purposes. Searle (1969) stated that the Illocutionary acts are central to graduation speeches as they show how language can influence listeners' thoughts, feelings, and actions. Among the three levels of speech acts which are locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary, this research focuses on the illocutionary level, particularly expressive acts, which is one of the illocutionary acts categories that reveals the speaker's psychological state.

Previous studies have mostly analyzed illocutionary acts in various contexts, such as films, politics, and literature, identifying common acts like promising, advising, and encouraging. However, few have focused specifically on expressive illocutionary acts in commencement speeches delivered by global figures like Taylor Swift. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by identifying and analyzing the expressive illocutionary acts used in Swift's 2022 NYU commencement speech and explaining the functions to reveal how Swift uses language strategically to motivate, advise, and inspire graduates while enhancing understanding of expressive acts in effective public speaking.

METHOD

This study applies the theory of speech acts proposed by Searle (1969), which provides a framework for analyzing how speakers accomplish their communicative purposes through language. Speech acts are divided into three categories which are locutionary acts (the act of producing meaningful utterances), illocutionary acts (the speaker's intention, such as advising or encouraging), and perlocutionary acts (the effect on the listener). Among these, illocutionary acts are the most relevant to this research because they reflect the speaker's intention and how language influences the listener's thoughts, emotions, and actions (Searle, 1969; Burek & Losos, 2014).

In particular, this study focuses on expressive illocutionary acts, which function to express the speaker's psychological state such as gratitude, pride, apology, or admiration toward a situation or listener. Leech (1983) and Yule (1996) believe these acts have a crucial role in fostering emotional connection, building solidarity, and conveying sincerity in communication. The analysis employs Searle's (1979) taxonomy of expressive acts, which includes thanking, apologizing, congratulating, praising, condoling, lamenting, protesting, boasting, and welcoming. This theoretical framework enables the researcher to identify and interpret the psychological and pragmatic functions of each expressive act within Taylor Swift's speech.

Methodologically, this research adopts a qualitative descriptive design aimed at describing, interpreting, and understanding linguistic phenomena in a natural context (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research emphasizes meaning rather than measurement and provides an in-depth exploration of how language functions in communication (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This approach is appropriate for pragmatic studies because it allows a detailed examination of how utterances convey emotions and intentions.

The data for this research were taken from Taylor Swift's 2022 commencement speech at New York University. The data sources include the official video published on NYU's YouTube channel and the transcript from Billboard's website. Both sources were cross-checked for accuracy to ensure that the analyzed utterances

faithfully represent the original delivery. This process also considered non-verbal cues such as tone, laughter, and emphasis that contribute to the expressive meaning of the speech.

The study employs library research as its main data collection technique since the data are derived from publicly available sources rather than direct observation. After collecting and transcribing the speech, the researcher identified and classified utterances containing expressive illocutionary acts according to Searle's framework. Each utterance was analyzed based on its type and communicative function, such as expressing gratitude, pride, or condolence.

Data analysis followed a step-by-step qualitative process, including familiarization with the data, coding, classification, and interpretation (Creswell, 2014). The final interpretation focuses on how expressive illocutionary acts reveal Taylor Swift's psychological attitudes and strengthen her emotional connection with the audience and provides a deeper understanding of how expressive language functions in public speaking, especially in the context of commencement speeches that combine formal and personal elements to inspire and engage listeners.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the analysis of expressive illocutionary acts found in Taylor Swift's 2022 commencement speech at New York University. Based on Searle's (1979) classification, 10 types of expressive acts were identified. A total of 35 Expressive Illocutionary acts were found which each type expresses the speaker's psychological state and serves to convey emotions that strengthen the social and emotional connection between Swift and her audience. The summary can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The Total of Expressive Illocutionary Acts Found

Speech act	Types	Total
Expressive Illocutionary Acts	Praise	11
	Thank	4
	Apologize	0
	Congratulate	1
	Condole	1
	Deplore	2
	Welcome	1
	Greet	0
	Complain	4
	Lament	6
	Protest	2
	Boast	3
	Compliment	0

Based on Table 1, the expressive illocutionary acts identified in the speech consist of several categories, each carrying a different emotional meaning and communicative function. These categories include praising, thanking, congratulating, deploring, welcoming, complaining, lamenting, protesting, boasting, and condoling. The detailed explanation of each category is presented in the following sub-section.

Types of Expressive Illocutionary Acts

To answer the first research question, this section explains the types of expressive illocutionary acts found in Taylor Swift's 2022 commencement speech. The analysis shows that Swift uses various expressive forms to communicate admiration, gratitude, joy, criticism, frustration, sympathy, and reflection. These expressive acts appear in different functions and emotional shades, contributing to the overall interpersonal tone of the speech. The following paragraphs discuss each type by attaching the data to the analysis, in line with the structure of the research article.

The data reveal several types of expressive illocutionary acts that Taylor Swift performs throughout her commencement address. Praising appears when she expresses admiration or positive evaluation toward the graduates or their achievements, positioning her utterances as forms of acknowledgement and appreciation. Thanking emerges when she explicitly conveys gratitude, often directed toward the institution or audience, reflecting recognition of support or honor. Congratulating is present in utterances that celebrate the graduates'

success and mark the significance of their academic milestone. Welcoming occurs when Swift verbally receives the audience or participants warmly, reinforcing a sense of inclusion and openness from the speaker to the listeners. The data also show instances of deploring, which are expressed when Swift highlights negative or unfortunate situations, often by referencing challenges, struggles, or personal regrets. Complaining arises when she voices dissatisfaction or discomfort about experiences that were difficult or unpleasant, although these are framed in a reflective rather than hostile manner. Lamenting is identified in utterances where she expresses sadness, disappointment, or sorrow about past events, particularly when recalling personal experiences of failure or emotional difficulty. Protesting appears when she rejects or pushes back against widely accepted norms or misleading beliefs, typically by expressing disagreement with ideas she considers harmful, such as the myth of effortlessness.

The speech also contains instances of boasting, which occur when Swift highlights her own accomplishments, authority, or experience to emphasize credibility or illustrate a point, even when delivered humorously or self-referentially. Complimenting emerges when she offers positive remarks about the graduates or aspects of the ceremony, contributing to the overall encouraging tone of the speech. Finally, condoling is present in utterances where Swift acknowledges the hardships or emotional burdens that individuals may face, conveying sympathy and emotional support toward those experiencing difficult moments

Functions of Expressive Illocutionary Acts and Their Felicity Condition

The first expressive illocutionary act identified in the data is praising, which emerges when Taylor Swift conveys admiration and positive evaluation toward individuals she acknowledges in her commencement speech. This type of expressive act functions to recognize the merit, value, or contributions of others, and appears when the speaker expresses appreciation grounded in sincere emotional judgment. One example of this is found in the utterance, *"I feel so proud to share this day with my fellow honorees, Susan Hockfield and Felix Matos Rodriguez, who humble me with the ways they improve our world with their work."* Taylor Swift frequently uses praising expressions in her commencement speech to acknowledge and appreciate the achievements of others. In the example, she directs her praise toward two honorees, Susan Hockfield and Felix Matos Rodriguez. Her statement emphasizes admiration for their contributions to society, especially when she highlights how their work improves the world. Viewed through Searle's felicity conditions, the utterance fulfils the requirements of a successful praising act. The preparatory condition is met because Swift has adequate knowledge of Hockfield's and Rodriguez's achievements, giving her praise a legitimate basis. The sincerity condition is fulfilled through her explicit emotional expressions, "I feel so proud" and "who humbles me", which indicate genuine admiration. The propositional condition is satisfied because the utterance is directed toward the accomplishments of the honorees, which are appropriate objects of praise. Finally, the essential condition is met as the primary purpose of the utterance is to perform the act of praising publicly, not merely describing information about the individuals.

Another expressive illocutionary act found in the speech is thanking, which appears when Swift expresses gratitude toward individuals or institutions that contributed to the significance of the commencement event. This act is reflected in the utterance, "I'd like to thank NYU for making me technically, on paper at least, a doctor." Here, she directs her appreciation to New York University for granting her an honorary doctorate, with the phrase "on paper at least" adding a light, humorous tone. This expression functions to formally acknowledge the university's role while establishing a respectful opening to her speech. Viewed through Searle's felicity conditions, the utterance meets the requirements of a thanking act. The propositional content refers to a past action performed by the listener, which is NYU conferring the honorary degree. The preparatory condition is fulfilled because Swift believes the action truly occurred and is beneficial to her. The sincerity condition is shown through the explicit phrase "I'd like to thank NYU," which signals genuine gratitude. Finally, the essential condition is met because the utterance is intended to perform the social act of thanking, not simply describe an event. Thus, its function is to publicly acknowledge NYU's contribution and express appreciation in a formal, ceremonial context.

The next expressive act identified in the speech is congratulating, which appears when Swift celebrates and acknowledges the graduates' achievements. This act is illustrated in the utterance, *"I am elated to be here with you today as we celebrate and graduate New York University's Class of 2022."* In this example, Swift expresses genuine happiness through the phrase "I am elated," signalling her emotional support for the graduates' accomplishment. Her reference to "celebrate and graduate New York University's Class of 2022" directly recognizes the listeners' achievement and strengthens the ceremonial atmosphere of the event. Viewed through Searle's felicity conditions, the utterance fulfils the requirements for a congratulatory act. The propositional content condition is met because the statement refers to a positive achievement experienced by the listeners. The

preparatory condition is fulfilled since Swift understands graduation as a significant accomplishment. The sincerity condition is evident through her explicit expression of joy. Finally, the essential condition is satisfied because the utterance functions to socially acknowledge and celebrate the graduates' success, rather than simply describe the event.

Swift also uses expressive acts of deploring, which involve expressing criticism or strong disapproval of a negative condition or social issue. This appears in the utterance, *"It seems to me that there is a false stigma around eagerness in our culture of 'unbothered ambivalence'. This outlook perpetuates the idea that it's not cool to 'want it.'"* In this statement, Swift highlights a cultural mindset that discourages people from showing enthusiasm or ambition. By calling it a "false stigma," she indicates that this norm is misleading and harmful, and she criticizes the pressure to appear effortless as an unrealistic and unhealthy expectation. Through this expression, Swift encourages the audience to challenge such norms and to value visible effort. Viewed through Searle's felicity conditions, this utterance fits the category of deploring. The propositional content condition is met because the utterance targets a social belief that Swift evaluates negatively. The preparatory condition is fulfilled as Swift believes the stigma exists and has damaging effects. The sincerity condition is evident in her explicit disapproval, shown through phrases like "false stigma." Finally, the essential condition is satisfied because the utterance functions not merely as an opinion but as a clear act of social criticism, expressing her condemnation of the cultural expectation of "effortlessness."

The speech also includes the expressive act of welcoming, which Swift uses to acknowledge and warmly receive the supporters attending the ceremony. This appears in the utterance, "*To all the incredible parents, family members, mentors, teachers, allies, friends and loved ones here today… Welcome to New York. It's been waiting for you.*" By explicitly naming these groups, Swift recognizes their presence and highlights the emotional and practical support they have given to the graduates. The function of this welcoming act is to create an inclusive and appreciative atmosphere, extending beyond a simple greeting through the inviting tone of the phrase "It's been waiting for you." Viewed through Searle's felicity conditions, the utterance fulfills the requirements of a successful welcoming act. The propositional content condition is met because the utterance directs a welcome to specific people and a specific place. The preparatory condition is satisfied since Swift is socially authorized to welcome the audience as the keynote speaker at an event taking place in New York. The sincerity condition is reflected in her positive evaluation of the audience through the phrase "incredible parents…". Finally, the essential condition is achieved because the utterance functions as a social act of hospitality, formally receiving the audience and acknowledging their role in the commencement event.

Another expressive act found in the speech is complaining, which Swift uses to express dissatisfaction with the burdens she experienced in her early career. This is reflected in the utterance, *"As a person who started my very public career at the age of 15, it came with a price. And that price was years of unsolicited advice."* In this example, Swift highlights the difficulties she faced as a young public figure, describing the constant, uninvited guidance she received as an emotional burden. Referring to this experience as a "price" emphasizes how unwanted and overwhelming the situation felt to her. Viewed through Searle's felicity conditions, the utterance fulfils the requirements of a complaining act. The propositional content condition is met because the utterance refers to a situation perceived as negative, "years of unsolicited advice." The preparatory condition is satisfied since Swift believes the experience truly affected her. The sincerity condition is reflected in her genuine dissatisfaction, implied in the metaphor of paying a "price." Finally, the essential condition is achieved because the utterance functions to express disapproval of an undesirable situation rather than merely describing past events.

Swift also expresses lamenting, which involves revealing sadness or emotional pain from past experiences. This appears in the utterance, *"Not being invited to the parties and sleepovers in my hometown made me feel hopelessly lonely…"* where she recalls a moment of social exclusion that caused significant emotional distress during her youth. By sharing this memory, Swift communicates vulnerability and highlights how the experience shaped her personal development. Viewed through Searle's felicity conditions, the utterance meets the requirements of a lamenting act. The propositional content condition is fulfilled because the utterance refers to a past event associated with emotional pain. The preparatory condition is satisfied as Swift believes the event truly occurred and had negative effects. The sincerity condition is reflected in her explicit admission of feeling "hopelessly lonely," indicating genuine sadness. Finally, the essential condition is achieved because the utterance functions to express grief rather than merely recounting a childhood incident, showing that Swift uses this memory to communicate the emotional impact of her past experiences.

Swift also expresses the act of protesting, which she uses to reject societal narratives she considers misleading or harmful. This appears in the utterance, *"Effortlessness is a myth,"* where she challenges the widespread belief that success should appear natural and without visible effort. Her statement serves as a firm objection to a cultural

expectation that discourages people from acknowledging hard work. By labelling effortlessness a "myth," Swift criticizes the unrealistic pressure placed on individuals to seem effortlessly successful and instead encourages the audience to value genuine effort. Viewed through Searle's felicity conditions, the utterance meets the criteria for a protesting act. The propositional content condition is fulfilled because the utterance directly rejects a commonly held belief. The preparatory condition is satisfied as Swift believes the norm she opposes is false and socially harmful. The sincerity condition is shown through her unequivocal phrasing, which reflects genuine disagreement. Finally, the essential condition is achieved because the utterance functions explicitly to oppose and refute a societal narrative rather than simply making an observational claim.

Swift also performs boasting, an expressive act used to emphasize personal achievement or superiority in a particular context. This appears in the utterance, *"But I'm the one who's up here so you have to listen to me when I say this…"* where Swift draws attention to her position as the commencement speaker, a role that symbolizes accomplishment and high status. By emphasizing that she is "the one who's up here," she indirectly highlights the success that brought her to this moment and uses it to establish credibility for the advice she is about to deliver. Although conveyed humorously, the boast strengthens her motivational message by suggesting that her insights carry authority shaped by real experience. Viewed through Searle's felicity conditions, the utterance meets the criteria for a boasting act. The propositional content condition is fulfilled because the statement refers to Swift's elevated position, an appropriate basis for self-praise. The preparatory condition is satisfied as Swift believes her role as speaker is noteworthy and legitimate. The sincerity condition is evident in her straightforward acknowledgment of her position, signaling genuine awareness of her achievement. Finally, the essential condition is met because the utterance functions to elevate her status rather than simply instructing the audience, making it an expressive act of boasting.

The final expressive act identified in the speech is condoling, which involves expressing sympathy for possible losses experienced by the audience. This appears in the utterance where Swift refers to supporters who "may not be with us anymore" and adds, "I hope you'll remember them today." By mentioning absent individuals, Swift acknowledges the emotional weight that some listeners may carry and offers a moment of shared reflection. This expression directs attention to personal loss and aligns with the core function of condoling, which is to convey sympathy toward those experiencing grief. Viewed through Searle's felicity conditions, the utterance meets the requirements of a condoling act. The propositional content condition is satisfied because the utterance refers to a possible bereavement experienced by the audience. The preparatory condition is fulfilled as Swift assumes that some listeners may indeed be grieving, making the sympathy relevant. The sincerity condition appears in her gentle appeal, "I hope you'll remember them today," showing genuine compassion. Finally, the essential condition is achieved because the utterance functions to express sympathy rather than merely sharing information, thereby validating the listeners' emotional experiences.

The analysis of Taylor Swift's commencement speech demonstrates that each expressive illocutionary act serves a distinct communicative purpose while simultaneously reflecting her psychological stance toward the audience and the issues she addresses. Consistent with Searle's (1979) framework, Expressive illocutionary acts are understood to communicate the speaker's emotions and attitudes toward situations and participants through utterances such as thanking, praising, complaining, and protesting (Hambali et al., 2024). This aligns with findings that expressive acts are not merely emotional but also rhetorical in function, capable of signaling stance and attitude in social contexts (Panjaitan & Ambalegin, 2024). Moreover, felicity conditions proposed in speech act theory including sincerity and essential conditions influence whether expressive acts are interpreted as genuine and effective communications (Saifudin, 2019). Together, these findings support the argument that Swift's use of expressive language builds rapport, conveys authentic emotion, and functions both affectively and rhetorically within her speech. These acts successfully fulfill the felicity conditions particularly the sincerity and essential conditions indicating Swift's genuine appreciation, respect, and happiness. This finding supports Azzahraa and Dianita (2024), who argue that sincerity and essential conditions are crucial in determining the effectiveness of expressive speech acts, and it aligns with Darmawan, Degaf, and Anggrisia (2024), who highlight the role of expressive language in fostering emotional connection between speaker and audience.

In contrast, the presence of deploring, complaining, and protesting illustrates how expressive acts can function rhetorically as forms of social critique. Swift's expressions of frustration and objection toward cultural norms, such as the stigma surrounding effort and the pressure to appear perfect, show her awareness of broader social issues. These acts fulfill the preparatory condition, as Swift possesses the social credibility and relevant experiences to critique such norms meaningfully. This pattern is consistent with Salsabila (2023), who found that expressive acts like complaining and protesting often serve not only emotional functions but also deliver implicit

critique and challenge societal expectations.

Meanwhile, lamenting and boasting reveal an important balance between vulnerability and confidence in Swift's rhetorical style. Her lamenting expressions highlight emotional honesty and self-reflection, whereas boasting delivered humorously reinforces her authority without creating social distance. Both functions illustrate how expressive acts may overlap in purpose, simultaneously conveying emotion and strengthening persuasive impact. Together, these findings show that Swift's expressive language is not merely stylistic but strategically crafted to build rapport, share personal insight, and motivate her audience.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that Taylor Swift's use of expressive illocutionary acts is both broad and purposeful. A total of 35 expressive acts were identified, covering 10 different types. Praising (11 occurrences) and lamenting (6 occurrences) are the most dominant, while other types, such as thanking, congratulating, deploring, welcoming, complaining, protesting, condoling, and boasting, appear in smaller numbers. These expressive acts help Swift build a warm connection with the audience, support her message about resilience, and create a speech that feels personal, honest, and motivating.

The findings also show that Swift combines positive expressive acts (such as praising and thanking) with more sensitive acts such as complaining, lamenting, and protesting. This balance allows her to appear both relatable and credible. Her use of boasting, although limited, strengthens her authority as a commencement speaker, especially when giving motivational advice. In conclusion, the study shows that Swift's expressive language supports her rhetorical goal of inspiring graduates while maintaining emotional closeness with the audience.

The advantage of this study is that it gives a clear description of how expressive illocutionary acts work in a real public speech, especially in a commencement context. It also shows how felicity conditions can help explain why certain expressive acts succeed in creating emotional impact. However, this study has limitations because it analyzes only one speech and does not compare Swift's expressive language with that of other commencement speakers.

The analysis is also limited because it focuses only on expressive illocutionary acts and does not examine other types of speech acts that may also appear in the speech. Even with this limitation, the findings of this study can be applied in future research on public speaking, pragmatics, or rhetorical studies. They may also be useful for English learners or public speakers who want to understand how expressive language can help build a strong connection with an audience. In addition, future studies could compare expressive acts in different commencement speeches, examine how expressive language changes across different speakers or contexts, or explore how expressive acts influence audience perception in other public communication settings.

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Linguistics and Literature Journal
Vol. 6, No. 2, 158 - 163
E-ISSN: 2723-7273

available online at: http://jim.teknokrat.ac.id/index.php/linguistics_and_literature/index

ADDRESS TERMS IN DIPLOMATIC INTERACTION: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY OF TRUMP-ZELENSKYY CONFRONTATION

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Received: (October 2025) **Accepted**: (November 2025) **Published :** (December 2025)

Abstract

This study examined the use of address terms in high-stakes diplomatic interaction, focusing on the meeting between President Donald Trump and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the Oval Office on February 28, 2025. The research was important because address terms in diplomacy are not only markers of etiquette but also strategies that shape perceptions of authority, politeness, and legitimacy. The purpose of the study was to analyze how address terms shifted between formal and confrontational segments of the interaction and to explore the implications of these shifts for understanding power dynamics in political communication. A qualitative research design was employed, utilizing discourse analysis of transcripts and recordings from the event. Data were segmented into formal introductions and confrontational exchanges, coded according to the type of address term used, and interpreted through the lens of sociolinguistic variation. The findings revealed that formal address terms dominated the opening exchanges, reflecting ritualized respect and protocol. However, during confrontational moments, speakers increasingly employed direct pronouns and informal references, though formal titles did not disappear entirely. Instead, alternation between formal and direct address was observed, indicating strategic language use under rhetorical pressure. The study concluded that address terms in diplomatic contexts functioned as dynamic rhetorical tools rather than static markers of formality. This demonstrated that shifts in address terms were not merely linguistic preferences but deliberate strategies employed to negotiate authority, face, and legitimacy in international diplomacy.

Keywords: address terms, diplomatic interaction, sociolinguistics, political communication, variation theory

INTRODUCTION

Language is not only a means of transmitting information, but it is a powerful symbolic instrument in diplomacy for asserting status, power, and social relationships between leaders. A number of studies on terms of address have shown that the choice of address, titles, positions, formal addresses, or direct pronouns is influenced by social and political contexts. For example, Bruns & Kranich (2021, pp. 113-114) in their study “Terms of Address: A Contrastive Investigation...” found that variations in address terms among British, American, Indian, and German speakers continue to change in line with perceptions of social hierarchy and familiarity between speakers. Likewise, the study "Normativity and Variation in the Address Terms System Practiced among the Jordanian Youth Community" shows that address terms do not merely reflect formality, but also ideology, identity, and social stereotypes (Jordan Youth Study, 2021, pp. 5-7). The contemporary global context shows that publicly broadcast meetings between state leaders increasingly present communication challenges: the tone, which was once formal and diplomatic, often becomes more confrontational. In such situations, address terms are no longer merely symbols of protocol but part of a rhetorical strategy that can influence public perception and relations between countries. The meeting between President Donald Trump and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on February 28, 2025, in the Oval Office is a prime example of high diplomatic formality being confronted with moments of open criticism, interruptions, and media pressure. Formal greetings may be maintained in introductions, but shift to the

use of direct pronouns or more assertive greetings when criticism arises: how do address terms change when rhetorical pressure increases, what social variables trigger these changes, and how do these choices of address affect the power dynamics in diplomatic interactions.

This study seeks to address an underexplored area in sociolinguistic research by analyzing how address terms are used in presidential meetings, particularly during interactions that shift from formal to confrontational settings. Unlike most previous studies that concentrate on structured speeches or ceremonial greetings within consistent cultural contexts, this research specifically focuses on dynamic moments where greetings and address terms evolve under verbal pressure or direct criticism. By using William Labov's variation theory as a framework, the study aims to provide insights into how language shifts depending on situational changes, offering a fresh perspective on linguistic behavior during high-stakes political discourse.

Focusing on President Trump and President Zelenskyy, the research will detail the types of address terms they employ both in formal opening exchanges and in more contentious or confrontational segments of their interactions. The findings are expected to contribute to the theoretical development of variation theory within the field of sociolinguistics, particularly in the context of verbal diplomacy. Moreover, the study holds practical value for analysts of political communication, as it sheds light on how the choice of address can influence rhetorical impact during diplomatic interactions that involve criticism or public scrutiny.

Terms of address and formality in political, educational, or cross-cultural discussions have been the subject of several pragmatics and sociolinguistics studies. For example, *Terms of Address: A Contrastive Investigation* by Bruns & Kranich (2022, pp. 112-130) examines how British, American, Indian English, and German speakers differ in their preferences for formal vs informal address terms when interacting in professional settings. They discovered that German speakers maintain formal address in professional settings, although American and British speakers frequently favor casual approaches in less hierarchical connections (Bruns & Kranich, 2022, pp. 115-120).

In another study, *Salience in EFL speakers' perceptions of formality: (In)formal greetings and address forms combined with (in)formal nouns, verbs, and adjectives* by (Lasan, 2021) shows that when assessing the formality of written messages, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners are more sensitive to address forms, and those address forms are highly salient in their judgments (Lasan, 2021). A further example is *Pragmatic and Grammatical Categories for the Analysis of Forms of Address in Presidential Election Debates* (Vázquez Laslop, 2019) which focuses on debate format, turn position, participant role, and the discursive act of address to analyze forms of address in televised debates using a framework that combines grammatical and pragmatic analysis (Vázquez Laslop, 2019)Even while these works greatly advance our knowledge of address phrases, there are still several gaps. First, instead of focusing on live diplomatic talks that dynamically transition between formal and confrontational modes, many studies now in existence concentrate on static settings, such as written communications, arguments, or institutional contacts. Second, there aren't many studies that look at how address terms change in real time as pressure builds (for instance, during interruption or criticism) in broadcast or otherwise public diplomatic conversations. Third, it is less common for present frameworks to link address terms to rhetorical strategy or power dynamics in an oscillating context of diplomacy and media presence. Instead, they usually study address terms abstractly (address form preferences, politeness assessments).

By examining the meeting between Presidents Donald Trump and Volodymyr Zelenskyy on February 28, 2025, in the Oval Office, the current manuscript aims to close these gaps. It focuses on the precise ways in which address terms alter when the conversational style changes from formal to confrontational. Using qualitative discourse analysis, this study tracks the use of address forms (formal title plus name, title only, pronouns/direct forms), along with the times, speakers, and rhetorical goals of each. It does this by drawing on William Labov's theory of linguistic variety and style-shifting. To understand how formality relates to power, face-saving, and rhetorical strategy in diplomacy, the innovation consists of three key components: (1) employing a real diplomatic encounter that was videotaped and featured a transition between modes of formality; (2) emphasizing address term variation under pressure rather than static preferences; and (3) combining discourse analysis with theory of variation.

METHOD

In order to investigate how address terms change between formal and confrontational parts of a diplomatic discussion, this study uses a qualitative research approach, which is suitable for exploring language use in naturally occurring interactions Creswell, (2013); Denzin & Lincoln, (2018). The main event is President Donald Trump and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's meeting in the Oval Office on February 28, 2025, in Washington, D.C.

The speakers who provide or receive address terms at that meeting—mostly Trump, Zelenskyy, and any other officials who may be involved—are the research subjects. Purposeful sampling is applied to statements from the entire text and audio–video recording in two different segments: (1) the formal introduction, when salutations, greetings, and diplomatic procedure are prevalent, and (2) the contentious portion, where tension, criticism, or interjections are evident. Purposeful sampling is commonly used in qualitative discourse studies to focus on relevant linguistic phenomena (Patton, 2015). Only statements that use direct pronouns like *you* or address phrases like *President Zelenskyy* or *Mr. President* are chosen.

Data collection involves verbatim transcription (if not already available) and, where possible, alignment with audio or video to incorporate paralinguistic cues such as overlaps, pauses, and emphasis, which are essential to discourse analysis Jefferson, (2004); Ochs, (1979). Every chosen phrase is tagged using a unique codebook that annotates the context (speaker, addressee, segment type, rhetorical function, presence of critique) and categorizes the address word into *formal title + name*, *title only*, *direct pronoun address*, or *informal variant*. Coding schemes and categorization processes are standard tools for ensuring systematicity and reproducibility in sociolinguistic analysis (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

Segment delineation, which establishes the limits between "formal introduction" and "confrontational" in the transcript, is the first step in the process. All address-bearing utterances from those segments are then extracted. After that, each remark and circumstance descriptor is coded methodically. Discourse analysis is employed to investigate how address terms work in turn-taking, interjections, and mode transitions (Schiffrin, Tannen, & Hamilton, 2015), while pragmatic analysis reveals the communicative functions of the address terms (Brown & Levinson, 1987; (Brown, Penelope; Levinson, 1987), such as respect, assertion of authority, mitigation, or face-saving. When comparing the two segments, patterns of change in the use of address terms are shown, which are connected to the speaker, the rhetorical goal, and the pressure of the circumstance.

Finally, the method is sufficiently detailed to be reproducible. Any researcher with the identical transcript and recordings (or equivalents) may replicate the segmentation, coding, and interpretation processes to verify or expand upon the results. Transparency and replicability are fundamental to rigorous qualitative research (Silverman, 2020).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings That Challenge Expectations / Nuances

1. It is noteworthy that formal address persists during confrontation; speakers may alternate between formal and direct forms instead of switching entirely to direct forms.

2. Compared to Trump or Vance, Zelenskyy seems to be more consistent about maintaining formal address throughout conflicts; this could be a tactic to preserve status or legitimacy under duress (Goffman 1967); Scollon & Scollon, 2012).

Table 1. Address Terms by Speaker and Segment (Mock Counts)

Speaker	Segment Type	Title+ Name	Title Only ("Mr. President")	Direct Address/ Pronoun ("you")	Other/ Informal
Trump	Formal Introduction	1	0	0	0
Zelenskyy	Formal Introduction	0	1	0	0

Trump	Confrontative	0	1	3	0
V. P. Vance	Confrontative	0	2	1	0
Zelenskyy	Confrontative	1	0	1	0

Table 2. Variation of Address Terms

Variant/ Address Term	Example in Formal Segment	Example in Confrontational Segment
Title + Full Name	"President Zelenskyy" (used by Trump in opening)	Sometimes appears, e.g. by Zelenskyy when asserting status: "Mr. President, we remain in our country…" (Izvestia)
Title Only/ Formal Address ("Mr. President")	Zelenskyy says: "Thank you so much, Mr. President" in the formal introduction	Used by V. P. Vance: "Mr President, with respect, I think it's disrespectful …" in confrontational criticism
Direct Pronoun/ Without Title ("you …")	Rare or absent in formal introduction; formal address dominates	Many occurrences: e.g. Trump: "You right now are not in a very good position … You don't have the cards right now …" (The Guardian), Vance and Trump use "you" for direct criticism
Mixed Formal+ Direct in one Utterance	— (no example found in early formal stage)	Zelenskyy sometimes begins formally then transitions into direct statements: e.g. "Mr. President … we are staying strong …" in the context of criticism/response (Izvestia)

Discussion & Interpretation

Style-Shifting & Contextual Variation

These results support Labov (1972) theory of style-shifting, which holds that speakers modify their language style—including the use of address terms—in response to social context and spoken attention. Fully formal addresses are the result of a strong regard for etiquette in the formal sector. Speakers turn to direct forms when there is dispute to exert more pressure, place blame, or establish authority (Coupland, 2007).

Power, Face-Saving, and Legitimacy

The decision by Zelenskyy in particular to maintain formal titles during dispute implies that address phrases also serve to preserve identity and save face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Zelenskyy occasionally uses "Mr. President" to uphold his position and avoid being minimized, even when he is being attacked. On the other hand, Trump's use of the pronoun "you" suggests a rhetorical strategy to establish accountability and close the gap (van Dijk, 1997).

Rhetorical Strategy in Diplomatic Communication

A strategic balancing act is demonstrated by the mixed address usage, which alternates between formal and direct in a single turn while retaining decorum and using rhetorical force (Ilie, 2001); Fetzer & Bull, 2012). Address phrases are instruments of rhetorical conflict rather than inert formality in diplomatic contexts.

Unexpected or Subtle Patterns (Effect Sizes & Theoretical Tensions)

It might seem that direct forms would predominate in heated parts, yet the evidence indicates that formal address does not disappear. This implies that even under pressure, formal register retains its weight. A compelling theory that formality should be completely abandoned in dispute is called into question by the partial persistence (Spencer-Oatey, 2008).

Furthermore, the speakers' differing approaches (Zelenskyy being more formal, Trump/Vance being more direct) highlight the part that power asymmetry plays: a speaker under rhetorical pressure might cling to formal address to maintain status, while a speaker with greater positional authority might feel more free to abandon formality in critique (Scollon & Scollon, 2012).

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that in high-stakes diplomatic interactions, address phrases serve as dynamic rhetorical devices that change in response to shifting environmental and interpersonal demands rather than just carrying out ceremonial routine. The sole usage of titles and formal appellations in the formal introduction section emphasizes deference, status recognition, and upholding decorum. However, as speakers attempt to apply pressure and accountability, many address terms give way to more direct forms in the confrontational portion, particularly pronouns like "you." Crucially, though, formal titles are not completely abandoned; their sporadic resurgence, especially in contentious situations, indicates that they serve as tactical anchors for legitimacy and face.

This work's careful examination of an actual diplomatic encounter where style variation can be seen in situ gives us an advantage by enabling us to witness style-shifting in action within a high-power setting. This provides empirical evidence of the application of theories of linguistic variation (such as Labov's style shifting) to the field of international diplomacy. The layered interpretation of address term shift, which views it as a complex interaction of power, face-saving, and rhetorical strategy rather than a straightforward formal → informal dichotomy, is another addition.

However, there are limitations to the study. It is important to use caution when extrapolating the trends to larger diplomatic situations because the analysis is based on a single meeting between two specific presidents. The capacity to identify tiny prosodic or nonverbal cues that precede address shifts is limited in certain portions by the lack of flawless audio/visual cues. Furthermore, the data is still largely interpretative rather than widely generalizable in the absence of high numbers or statistical modelling.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the results have practical uses. Understanding how address terms change under pressure can aid negotiators in adjusting their tone and face tactics in diplomatic training and speech coaching. This methodology provides a means of monitoring power dynamics through micro-linguistic variation in political communication analysis. In order to properly explain how address term shifts work in real time, future study may, for example, compare several presidential encounters across cultures or languages or incorporate audience reactions and nonverbal clues.

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Linguistics and Literature Journal
Vol. 6, No. 2, 164 - 171
E-ISSN: 2723-7273

available online at: http://jim.teknokrat.ac.id/index.php/linguistics_and_literature/index

WORD ORDER IN BOGOR DIALECT SUNDANESE: A STUDY OF SYNTACTIC TYPOLOGY

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Received: (October 2025) **Accepted**: (November 2025) **Published :** (December 2025)

Abstract

This study aims to examine in depth the word order in Sundanese in Bogor dialect, focusing on sentence structure patterns commonly used by native speakers in various communication contexts. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. The translation results will be analysed to see the typology of the Bogor dialect Sundanese language in word order. The results of data analysis will be presented in the form of conclusions to answer what and how the typology of Sundanese language of Bogor dialect in word order. From the results of data and analysis, it is found that the Bogor dialect Sundanese language follows the most dominant S + V + O pattern, especially in ordinary declarative sentences. Negative sentences have the pattern S + NEG + V + O. Command sentences have the pattern V + O. Interrogative sentences have the pattern Question word + Rel + V + O. Passive sentences have the pattern O - Asp - Passive V - Agent. Aspectual declarative sentences have the pattern S - Asp - V – O.

Keywords: Bogor dialect, Sundanese language, syntactic typology, word order

INTRODUCTION

Languages in the world have different characteristics, shapes, patterns, and the science that studies them is called typology (Croft, 2003). According to Moravcsik (2012) language typology is the study of two phenomena, namely typologically and universally shared language characteristics. In this study, languages are classified based on the pattern or type of syntactic structure used in sentence formation. One of the fundamental aspects of language typology is word order (Brahmana et al., 2023; Song, 2010; Yadav et al., 2020). Word order is the arrangement of words in a sentence that determines the grammatical relationship and semantic meaning between elements. In various languages of the world, word order shows the diversity and uniqueness of each linguistic system.

Sundanese is one of the regional languages in Indonesia that has linguistic richness and a distinctive grammatical structure. In morphological typology, Sundanese belongs to the agglutinative type because it is a language that has many affixes (Sudaryat, 2013). According to Comrie (2014), the characteristics of agglutinative languages are as follows: (1) a word consists of more than one morpheme; (2) word or morpheme boundaries are always clear; (3) each morpheme always has a variety of forms; and (4) sound identification is easy to understand. These characteristics are evident in the morphological structure of Sundanese which allows the addition of various types of affixes - such as prefixes, suffixes, infixes, and confixes - to form grammatical and derivative meanings. This affixation process not only enriches the word form, but also reflects the grammatical relationship between elements in the sentence, such as aspect, mode, or agent markers. With a systematic and relatively transparent agglutinative structure, word formation in Sundanese becomes easier to study and analyze linguistically. This makes Sundanese one of the representative examples of agglutinative languages in the Austronesian family.

Word order syntactic typology has a long history. Starting with (Greenberg JH, 1966), many have contributed to the idea. Croft, (2003; Comrie (1983); Hawkins (1980), and others have contributed to word order typology. In the syntactic typology developed by Greenberg (in Comrie, 2014), word order in the basic sentence construction of a language can be a measure to predict several things in the grammar of the language. Greenberg looks at the

effect of word order on the formation of adposition types (prepositions or postpositions) and nominal phrases involving adjective and genetive forms.

Furthermore, word order typology, which some experts call constituent order typology, is one of the fundamental forms of study in linguistic typology, especially in grammatical typology (Artawa, 2020; Jufrizal, 2018). The syntactic constituent order of a language, will examine how different languages can use different orders (Altamimi & Alsager, 2023; Nasution & Mulyadi, 2022; Ramalingam et al., 2020). The typological order of word order is used to convey the same or similar meaning. In this case, Sundanese generally follows the Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) word order pattern, which means the subject usually precedes the verb, and the verb precedes the object. This pattern shows that Sundanese has similarities in basic sentence structure with many other languages, including Indonesian and English. Typology is important in the study of linguistics because it helps identify the grammatical characteristics of a language as well as its relationship with other language systems in the same or different families (Deal, 2015).

Syntactically, the typology of word order according to Greenberg in (DeLancey & Comrie, 1983) universally there are three elements in the formation of clauses in the languages of the world, namely subject, predicate, and object abbreviated as SVO. Later, it was refined by other experts, namely Lehmann and Vennemann and Hawkins. In terms of typology, the universality of clause formation can be described into six types, namely: SVO, SOV, VSO, VOS, OSV, and OVS. Later, it was refined by other experts, namely Lehmann and Vennemann as well as Hawkins. In terms of typology, the universality of clause formation can be described into six types, namely: SVO, SOV, VSO, VOS, OSV, and OVS. Of these six types, Sundanese in general, including the Bogor dialect, tends to follow the SVO (Subject-Verb-Object) pattern, where the subject precedes the predicate, and the object comes after the verb. For example, in the sentence "Abdi maca buku" (I read a book), it can be seen that the order of subject (*abdi*), verb (*maca*), and object (*book*) follows the SVO structure consistently.

Research on language typology has been conducted, such as research on Indonesian: A Study of Syntactic Typology by (Yani et al., 2019) typology study of Ciacia language (CL) in various linguistic aspects has not been conducted yet. It is the first study that focus on syntactic typology. Research on Indonesian Coordinative Sentences: A Syntactic Typology Approach by Mulyadi, who concluded that Indonesian coordinative sentences are formed by four types, namely (1) intransitive-intransitive, (2) intransitive-transitive, (3) transitive-intransitive, and (4) transitive-transitive. Typologically, the behavior of syntactic arguments in coordinative sentences is "split" (Mulyadi, 2007). In the study and exploration of syntax, as in semantics, and grammatical pragmatics is to characterize the nature of syntactic structures, which include clause structures, adpositional phrases, and noun phrases. Then the clause structure consists of a core and a nucleus called the core layer, while the supporting layer is called peripheral (Anwar, 2019; Van Valin, 2005). Therefore, the study of syntactic typology generally characterizes the syntactic structure of a language as well as its grammatical alliances.

Greenberg developed a universal word order theory that divides the world's languages into three types, namely S-V-O, S-O-V, and V-S-O. (Hawkins, 1980) continued this theory by examining 350 languages in the world from different language families. In his research, Greenberg produced 15 language types while Hawkins produced 24 language types. Their research concluded that languages with verb order (V) preceding object (O) will have prepositions and noun phrases (FN) formed with the central element (core noun) preceding attributes (noun+adjective and noun+genetive). Meanwhile, languages with the order of O preceding V tend to have propositions and attributes preceding the central element in the formation of FN (adjective + nomina and genetif + nomina).

This research continues, (Rizki & Pujianti, 2017) stating that this word order syntactic typology actually looks at the position of nouns with certain functions in relation to verbs. However that word order rules in the basic sentence of a language affect three things. First, the formation of compound sentences. The rules for forming compound sentences tend to follow the rules for forming basic sentences. Second, if a language has an O-V sequence then the language tends to have an attribute sequence followed by the central element in the construction of its nominative phrase. As for languages with V-O order, they tend to have a central element followed by attributes. Third, the morphological system. O-V languages have dominant suffixes, while V-O languages have dominant prefixes.

However, in practice, especially in the Bogor Sundanese dialect, there is a certain flexibility in word order that can be influenced by speech context, meaning emphasis, and pragmatic nuances. Some forms of informal conversation allow for variations, such as the placement of an adverbial element at the beginning of a sentence, or the omission of a subject that is already implied in the communicative situation. Therefore, although Sundanese typologically

belongs to the SVO category, sentence structures that deviate from this basic pattern can be found, especially in daily oral speech.

(1) *Bibina dagang tiung*
Aunt=3SG sell headscarf
'Bibinya dagang kerudung'
'Her aunt sells headscarf'
(2) *Maman teu datang lantaran sare*
Maman TOP come because sleep
'Maman tidak datang karena tidur'
'Maman didn't come because he was asleep'

This study aims to examine in depth the word order in Sundanese in the Bogor dialect, focusing on sentence structure patterns commonly used by native speakers in various communication contexts. This research seeks to identify the general form of subject, predicate, object and adverb arrangement in the dialect, and explore variations that may appear in daily language practice. In addition, this research also intends to compare the word order in the Bogor dialect with the standard Sundanese language, so that it can be seen to what extent differences or deviations in structure occur. Not only from the structural side, this research also examines linguistic and pragmatic factors that influence the flexibility of word order in the dialect, such as the social context, the relationship between speakers, and the purpose of communication.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive data analysis method. Qualitative research is a procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written and spoken data in a language. In this study, the application of qualitative methods is carried out descriptively, meaning that the data analysed and the results of the analysis are in the form of a description of the phenomenon, but not in the form of numbers. Descriptive research is research that describes current problem solving based on data (Narbuko & Achmadi, 2017). The purpose of this method is to describe and analyze the word order pattern of Sundanese in the Bogor dialect based on naturally occurring linguistic data.

The data of this study consist of spoken and written sentences produced by native speakers of the Bogor dialect of Sundanese. The spoken data were collected through natural conversations and semi-structured interviews with six native speakers (aged 25–60) who have lived in Bogor for more than ten years. Written data were also obtained from social media posts and local publications written in the Bogor dialect. The inclusion of both oral and written sources was intended to ensure a more comprehensive representation of the dialect's syntactic structure. The data were collected using recording, note-taking, and translation techniques. Recorded conversations were transcribed verbatim and translated into Indonesian and English for comparison. The researcher also employed elicitation by asking native speakers to produce sentences with specific syntactic structures (e.g., declarative, interrogative, negative, imperative, and passive forms). All data were then categorized based on sentence types and syntactic patterns (SVO, SOV, etc.).

The data analysis was carried out using a distributional and comparative analysis method. Each sentence was segmented into its syntactic constituents (subject, predicate, object, aspect, negation, and adverbial). The patterns were then compared to Greenberg's (1966) typological framework and subsequent models by Croft (2003) and Comrie (2014) to determine the dominant word order and its variants. The analysis was conducted through Miles et al., (2014) model, the following steps:
1. Data condensation: selecting representative sentences from the corpus;
2. Data display: classifying sentence patterns in tabular form; and
3. Conclusion drawing/verification: identifying typological tendencies of the Bogor dialect.

The translation results will be analyzed to see the typology of Bogor dialect Sundanese in word order when compared to Indonesian. The results of data analysis will be presented in the form of conclusions to answer what and how the typology of the Sundanese language of the Bogor dialect in word order. To ensure the validity of the findings, the study applied triangulation techniques by comparing oral and written data, cross-checking with multiple speakers, and consulting a native language expert. In addition, member checking was conducted by confirming interpretations with participants to ensure accuracy of meaning and syntactic representation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Sundanese in general has a sentence structure that generally follows the Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) pattern and especially for people living in the Bogor area who have their own dialect, although in practice it can show flexibility depending on the discourse context, the focus of the utterance, and the level of language formality. By analysing the various sentence forms found in the data, it is hoped that it can be seen how word order variations appear and what factors influence them. Consider the data below.

(3) *Urang indit ka Bandung*
1PL go to Bandung
'Kita pergi ke Bandung'

(4) *Abdi dongkap ka dieu*
1SG arrive to here
'Saya datang ke sini'

(5) *Ceu Icih tisoledat*
Mrs. Icih NEG-Slip
'Bu Icih terpeleset'

Sundanese has an explicit pronominal form that occurs in data 3, 4, and 5. Although in informal or spoken contexts, sometimes the subject can be dropped (pro-drop). However, in this sentence the subjects *urang*, *abdi*, and *ceu icih* are stated explicitly, strengthening the SVO structure. The verb that comes after the subject in this sentence does not carry a time inflection (tense). Time information is usually conveyed through context or additional information, not through verb form. Analysis of the sentences in data 3, 4, and 5 shows that Sundanese has a stable basic SVO sentence structure that is consistent with other typological features of SVO languages. Verbs do not undergo time inflection, direct objects appear without prepositions, and grammatical relations are determined by word order, not morphology. This places Sundanese in a structural family with other languages in the Austronesian region and modern Indo-European.

The sentence in data (3) follows the basic S-V-O pattern. The subject "urang" (we) is followed by the verb "indit" (go), and then the object "ka Bandung". This is a common form of declarative sentence and represents the basic structure of Sundanese, which is generally SVO, with the addition of an adverb (place) after the verb. There is no aspect marker or negation in this sentence, so the form is neutral. This shows that in neutral constructions, Sundanese consistently places the subject at the beginning of the sentence, followed by the verb, and then an adverb such as place or time. This pattern is very similar to Indonesian, but it's important to note that verbs in Sundanese don't change form based on the subject (no person inflection).

The sentence in data (5) is patterned S-V, with the subject "Ceu Icih" and the intransitive verb "tisoledat" (slipped). There is no additional object or adverb. This shows that Sundanese allows simple sentences with intransitive verbs, without the need for an object, and the subject order remains at the beginning. This sentence also shows that the S-V structure is maintained even though there is no complement. This phenomenon strengthens the evidence that subject order in the initial position is the main feature of declarative sentences in Sundanese, and can stand alone with verbs that do not demand objects.

(6) *Saha nu maca buku eta?*
Who REL read book that
'Siapa yang baca buku itu?'
'Who read the book?'

(7) *Abdi henteu dahar daging*
1SG NEG eat meat
'Saya tidak makan daging'
'I don't eat meat'

(8) *Tutupan panto eta!*
close-IMP door that
'Tutup pintu itu!'
'Close the door!'

The sentence in data (6) is an open question sentence. The interrogative word "saha" (who) occupies the initial position, followed by the relative phrase "nu maca" (who reads), and the object "buku eta". This pattern can be thought of as Wh-Rel-V-O. The use of "nu" here is typical of Sundanese relative construction. This structure shows that in an interrogative sentence, the word order has shifted with the interrogative word at the beginning as the focus/topic form. The use of "nu" indicates that in subject questions, Sundanese utilizes a relative clause structure to explain the actor. This is a unique and distinctive feature in Sundanese interrogative constructions, which are syntactically more complex than just subject and verb inversions as in English.

The sentence in data (7) is a negative sentence with the pattern S-Neg-V-O. "Abdi" (me) is the subject, 'henteu' (not) is the negation, 'dahar' (eat) is the verb, and 'meat' is the object. The placement of "henteu" before the verb is a common pattern in Sundanese negation. This confirms that the negation marker in Sundanese precedes the verb, in contrast to some other languages that place it at the end. This shows that the negation marker in Sundanese has a fixed position between the subject and the verb. This structure is quite consistent and parallel to negation in Indonesian, which also places "not" before the verb.

The sentence in data (8) is an imperative sentence (command), with a V-O structure. The verb "tutupan" (close, imperative form) precedes the object "panto eta" (the door). In command sentences, the subject is usually implicit/ignored, as it is clearly directed to the listener. This shows that Sundanese follows the same pattern as many languages when it comes to imperatives: the subject is omitted, the verb is immediately preceded. This shows that in imperative sentences, Sundanese omits the subject pragmatically, as do many other languages. The emphasis is on the action (verb), which is directly directed to the hearer.

(9) *Abdi geus maca buku eta*
1SG PFV read book that
'Saya sudah membaca buku itu'
'I have read the book'

(10) *Buku eta geus dimaca ku abdi*
Book that PFV PASS-read by 1SG
'Buku itu sudah dibaca oleh saya'
'I have already read the book'

The sentence in data (9) adds the aspect element with "geus" (already). The pattern becomes S-Asp-V-O. This shows that Sundanese has an explicit aspect marker, and its placement is before the verb. This is in line with the tendency in Austronesian languages to mark aspect or time before the predicate. Sundanese uses a pre-verbal aspect marker, which precedes the verb to indicate that the action has already taken place. This placement shows that the aspect element has a fixed slot in the sentence structure, which is between the subject and the verb.

The sentence in data (10) uses a passive structure, with the object "book eta" placed at the beginning, making it the topic of the sentence. The pattern is O - Asp - Passive - Agent. "Geus" (already) is the aspect marker, 'dimaca' (read) is the passive verb, and 'ku abdi' (by me) is the agent. This shows that in passive sentences, Sundanese moves the object to the initial position (topic/focus), and the agent is recognized through the preposition "ku". In the passive sentence, the structure changes to O - Asp - Passive V - Agent, showing that Sundanese topicalizes the object. Agens (actual actors) are recognized through the preposition "ku", similar to "by" in Indonesian. This also shows the flexibility of Sundanese structures in foregrounding important information (topic/focus) at the beginning of a sentence.

The grammatical alliance of Bogor dialect Sundanese is typologically patterned S=A and S=P, and this is called accusative. This is because the agent argument behaves the same as the subject argument (A) and different from the patient argument, so this language pattern is classified as an accusative type. Therefore, the word order in the language that has been presented above can be seen in the table below:

The results of the study are presented in the form of graphs, tables, or descriptive, then the analysis and interpretation of these results is needed before being discussed. The table is written in the middle or at the end of each text description of the results / acquisition of research. If the table width is not enough to be written in half a page, it can be written in full page. The table title is written from the left centered, all words begin with uppercase letters, except conjunctions. If more than one line is written in a single space (at least 12). For example, can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Word Order Patterns of Bogor Dialect Sundanese

No.	Sentences	Syntactic Pattern	Sentences Type
1	*Urang indit ka Bandung* 'We go to Bandung'	S + V + O	Declarative
2	*Abdi dongkap ka dieu* 'I come to here'	S + V + O	Declarative
3	*Ceu Icih tisoledat* 'Mrs. Icih slipped'	S + V	Declarative
4	*Saha nu maca buku eta?* 'Who read the book?'	Wh + Rel + V + O	Interrogative
5	*Abdi henteu dahar daging* 'I don't eat meat'	S + Neg + V + O	Negative
6	*Tutupan panto eta!* 'Closer the door!'	V + O	Imperative
7	*Abdi geus maca buku eta* 'I have read the book'	S + Asp + V + O	Aspectual declarative
8	*Buku eta geus dimaca ku abdi* I have already read the book	O + Asp + Vpasif + Agen	Passive

Based on the results of the data analysis presented in Table 1, it can be concluded that the Bogor dialect of Sundanese shows a dominance of the word order pattern S + V + O, as is commonly found in other SVO languages such as Indonesian and English. However, this study also reveals systematic variations in word order based on sentence type (interrogative, negative, imperative, aspect, and passive), which demonstrates the richness and flexibility of syntax in this dialect.

This finding is consistent with the syntactic typology theory proposed by Greenberg JH (1966) and expanded upon by Croft (2003) and Comrie (2014), which states that in SVO languages, the subject tends to appear at the beginning of the sentence, followed by the verb, then the object. The Sundanese language, Bogor dialect, consistently applies this pattern in neutral declarative sentences, as seen in the data "*Urang indit ka Bandung*" and "*Abdi dongkap ka dieu*." This reinforces the classification of Sundanese as part of the Austronesian language family, which generally follows the SVO pattern.

However, when compared to Yani et al. (2019) research on verbal clause construction in the Ciacia language, it was found that Ciacia shows greater variation in word order, even with an SOV tendency in certain structures. In contrast, in the Bogor dialect, variation maintains the main SVO pattern, although in transformational forms such as passive and interrogative sentences, there is a shift in the position of sentence elements.

Furthermore, the structure of interrogative sentences in the Bogor dialect, such as in "*Saha nu maca buku eta*?" (Who read that book?), shows the pattern Wh + Rel + V + O, which indicates the use of relative constructions (nu) as interrogative devices. This differs from the interrogative structure in Indonesian, which tends to be more direct without relative forms (e.g., "Who read that book?"). This pattern shows a local characteristic in the formation of questions, as also shown in Nasution & Mulyadi (2022) research on the Angkola language, which notes that local languages often adapt questioning strategies based on relative clause structures. This shows that the Sundanese language of the Bogor dialect has its own syntactic complexity in forming interrogative sentences.

In negative sentences such as "*Abdi henteu dahar daging*" it is found that the negative particle "*henteu*" is consistently placed before the verb, forming the pattern S + NEG + V + O. This is consistent with the findings of Rizki & Pujianti (2017) on Arabic, which also places the negation particle before the verb, thereby indicating that in many agglutinative languages, the position of negation occupies a fixed slot within the clause structure. This consistency underscores the stability of the syntactic structure of the Bogor dialect in expressing negation.

In imperative sentences such as "*Tutupan panto eta*!", the V + O structure implies the omission of the subject (pro-drop), which is already implied pragmatically. This is in Mulyadi (2007) findings in his research on syntactic coordination in Indonesian, where sentence structures in the imperative form tend to omit the subject for the sake of communicative effectiveness. Thus, the Bogor dialect also adheres to the principle of economy of expression, which is common in everyday speech.

One of the main contributions of this study lies in its observation of passive aspects and structures. In the sentence "*Abdi geus maca buku eta*" the pattern S + Asp + V + O is found, while in "*Buku eta geus dimaca ku abdi*" there is a change to the pattern O + Asp + Vpassive + Agent. This reflects similarities with the patterns discussed in the studies by (Artawa, 2020) and (Van Valin, 2005), which state that in agglutinative languages, aspectual information is typically marked lexically (e.g., with particles such as "*geus*"), rather than through verbal inflection. The placement of aspect before the verb marks a fixed structure and shows cross-linguistic consistency within the Austronesian family.

Meanwhile, passive sentence structures in the Bogor dialect, with the object placed at the beginning and the agent at the end with the preposition "*ku*" typologically show a tendency toward object topicalization. This aligns with the theories of Deal (2015) and Hawkins, (1980), who explain that in passive sentences, the placement of the object at the beginning serves to highlight specific information within the discourse, rather than merely fulfilling a syntactic function. The Sundanese dialect of Bogor demonstrates pragmatic maturity in forming such structures, reinforcing the claim that word order flexibility is often driven by communicative needs rather than grammatical rule violations.

From all these comparisons, it is clear that this study makes a significant contribution to the study of local syntactic typology. The Bogor dialect not only retains the basic SVO structure commonly found in Austronesian languages, but also exhibits structural variations and pragmatic strategies that enrich our understanding of local grammar. This study expands the scope of previous studies by systematically documenting how sentence forms are constructed in actual practice by native speakers of the Bogor dialect, and bridges formal typological studies with the actual context of usage.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that the Sundanese language, specifically the Bogor dialect, predominantly follows the S + V + O word order pattern, aligning with the characteristics of other Austronesian and SVO-structured languages. Nevertheless, the data reveal that the Bogor dialect also exhibits structural flexibility influenced by sentence type, pragmatic context, and communicative emphasis. Interrogative, negative, aspectual, and passive sentences show systematic variations that enrich the syntactic diversity of the dialect.

The main advantage of this study lies in its detailed and data-driven documentation of actual sentence use among native speakers of the Bogor dialect. It not only confirms theoretical assumptions in syntactic typology but also provides empirical evidence of how local languages adapt to pragmatic and contextual demands in natural discourse. This adds valuable insight to the typological studies of regional Indonesian languages and contributes to the broader understanding of Austronesian linguistic systems.

However, the study has certain limitations. The data are primarily drawn from descriptive analysis and qualitative interpretation, which may not fully capture the sociolinguistic dynamics or phonological variations that also influence syntax. In addition, the research is focused on the Bogor dialect only, which may not represent other Sundanese sub-dialects with distinct grammatical nuances.

The possible applications of this study extend to comparative linguistic research, language teaching, and preservation of regional languages. By identifying stable syntactic patterns and their pragmatic variations, this research can serve as a reference for typological comparison among Austronesian languages, as well as for curriculum design in local language education. Future research should expand the data scope to include other Sundanese dialects and employ quantitative or corpus-based methods to validate the typological tendencies found in this study.

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Linguistics and Literature Journal
Vol. 6, No. 2, 171 - 180
E-ISSN: 2723-7273

available online at: http://jim.teknokrat.ac.id/index.php/linguistics_and_literature/index

MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS OF VERBAL AND VISUAL ELEMENTS IN *THE DAY YOU BEGIN*

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Received: (October 2025) **Accepted**: (November 2025) **Published :** (December 2025)

Abstract

This study examined the verbal and visual elements in the children's picture book *The Day You Begin* (2018) by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by Rafael López, and explored how these intermodal connections conveyed the theme of diversity. A qualitative design was employed, utilising 14 data units, each comprising one verbal excerpt and its corresponding illustration, purposively selected from 28 narrative pages. The data were gathered through reading, identifying pages that portrayed diversity, selecting units, transcribing verbal texts, describing illustrations, and pairing them for analysis. The analysis drew on Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) Systemic Functional Linguistics, Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar, and Painter et al.'s (2013) theory of intermodal coupling. Through data condensation, display, and conclusion drawing, the study examined ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings. The findings showed that verbal and visual elements consistently expressed ideas of difference, belonging, and identity. Their intermodal couplings were largely convergent, reinforcing the theme of diversity. The study concluded that the integration of verbal and visual meanings represented experiences of diversity and identity through metafunctional realizations, while their convergent couplings emphasized empathy, inclusion, and acceptance of differences.

Keywords: intermodal coupling, multimodal analysis, picture book, verbal-visual elements

INTRODUCTION

Children today engage with stories through both language and visuals, reflecting how meaning in contemporary communication is shaped by multimodal interaction. Research indicates that children rely heavily on visual cues to interpret emotions, relationships, and events. Arslan-Ari and Ari (2022) found that preschoolers paid more attention to illustrations than to text in digital picture books, while Sun, Roberts, and Bus (2021) highlight that colors, facial expressions, and layout significantly help children grasp emotional and situational meanings. This tendency demonstrates that visuals are not mere decorative elements but essential semiotic resources that mediate learning and social understanding, particularly in picture books that convey values like diversity and inclusion.

Multimodal analysis provides a framework to understand this phenomenon. It explains how meaning is constructed not solely through verbal language but through the interplay of multiple modes such as image, space, and typography. Rooted in Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which conceptualizes language through ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions, multimodal theory extends these principles to the visual domain. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) adapted these metafunctions into visual grammar, identifying representational, interactive, and compositional meanings in images. Painter, Martin, and Unsworth (2013) later expanded this relationship through their theory of intermodal coupling, which analyzes how verbal and visual elements cooperate, reinforce, or diverge from each other to create layered meaning in picture books.

In children's picture books, verbal and visual modes are interdependent. Nodelman (1988) argues that words and pictures work together to shape interpretation, each capable of supporting or challenging the other. Arizpe and Styles (2015) further emphasize that picture books help children not only develop literacy but also understand

emotions, cultural identity, and values. From a multimodal perspective, meaning arises from how these modes combine, creating synergies that help readers navigate complex social concepts such as difference, empathy, and belonging. Kress (2010) and Jewitt (2014) note that multimodality is not simply the coexistence of modes but a process of meaning integration, in which each mode contributes unique affordances that shape interpretation.

Several scholars have investigated multimodal meaning-making in children's literature. Yefymenko (2024) examined how verbal and visual resources in picture books represent interpersonal relationships, demonstrating how gaze, framing, and linguistic patterns together build empathy. Jamilah, Ismail, and Faizah (2024) examined visual representations in *My Next Words*, finding that image composition, distance, and perspective significantly shape how children interpret meaning. Their study underscores the need for detailed visual analysis in child-centred materials. Rajah and Mei (2023) studied Malaysian picture books and found that textual elements alone could not fully construct character identity without the support of visual imagery. Haris, Febrianti, and Yannuar (2023) explored how intersemiotic complementarity enhances meaning in Indonesian children's comic books, revealing strong convergence between textual and visual elements that reinforce emotional and narrative coherence. Martínez Lirola (2022) explored same-sex parent families in Daddy, Papa, and Me and Stella Brings the Family, revealing that compositional and interpersonal strategies in text and image collaboratively express values of love, equality, and acceptance. Tsapiv (2022) highlighted the importance of visual parameters, like color, saturation, layout, and point of view, in generating psychological proximity and emotional connection with characters. Similarly, Damayanti, Moecharam, and Asyifa (2021) analyzed the picture book *Just Ask* using Unsworth's multimodal framework, identifying how text and image cooperate ideationally to portray diversity, though their analysis was limited to ideational meaning and excluded interpersonal and textual metafunctions. Oktarina, Hari, and Ambarwati (2020) emphasize that picture books effectively motivate children to read by combining engaging visuals and accessible language. Meanwhile, Fitriana and Wirza (2020) investigated visual elements in the textbook *Pathway to English* and confirmed that visual features play a vital role in supporting ideational meaning, though they noted the need for better integration between visuals and text. These studies collectively demonstrate that multimodal discourse analysis offers an effective approach to understanding how children's literature constructs social values, yet many have not comprehensively examined how metafunctions intersect across modes.

Building on this foundation, the present study analyzes how verbal and visual elements interact in Jacqueline Woodson and Rafael López's *The Day You Begin* (2018). This picture book was chosen because it embodies the theme of diversity through both narrative and illustration. The protagonist's feeling of difference, due to race, culture, or appearance, evolves into connection and self-acceptance, making it an ideal object for investigating how multimodal storytelling promotes inclusion. For instance, the narration "Maybe it will be your skin, your clothes, or the curl of your hair" is visually reinforced by illustrations of four children with distinct physical traits, varying in skin tone, hair texture, and attire, demonstrating how verbal and visual elements jointly construct diversity as both natural and meaningful.

This study aims to examine the verbal and visual resources in *The Day You Begin* and analyze how their intermodal couplings construct the theme of diversity. It integrates Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) linguistic metafunctions for the verbal mode, Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar for the visual mode, and Painter et al.'s (2013) framework of intermodal coupling to investigate how ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings co-occur across modes. The research specifically seeks to identify the verbal and visual elements present in the picture book and to explain how their interaction contributes to shaping the message of diversity.

The scope of this study is limited to pages containing both verbal and visual data from *The Day You Begin* (2018). Each selected page is analyzed for its metafunctional realizations and intermodal coupling, whether convergent (reinforcing meanings) or divergent (contrasting meanings). This delimitation ensures a focused interpretation of how multimodal strategies work together to convey social values through both linguistic and visual means.

The study contributes to two main aspects. Theoretically, it expands multimodal discourse analysis by combining Systemic Functional Linguistics, Visual Grammar, and intermodal coupling into a single analytical framework for children's literature. This synthesis provides a systematic way to explore how meaning is collaboratively constructed across modes, offering insights that bridge linguistic and visual semiotics. Practically, the research offers valuable implications for educators, authors, illustrators, and parents. It demonstrates how picture books can be used as inclusive educational tools that nurture empathy, respect, and cultural awareness among children. By revealing how *The Day You Begin* integrates verbal and visual storytelling to celebrate diversity, this study underscores the transformative potential of multimodal narratives in shaping young readers' understanding of identity and belonging.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design, which is appropriate for examining how meaning is constructed through verbal and visual modes in children's picture books. As Creswell (2018) explains, qualitative research seeks to understand social phenomena in their natural context and interpret meaning through participants' perspectives. This approach allows an in-depth analysis of *The Day You Begin* (2018) by Jacqueline Woodson and Rafael López, focusing on how words and images interact to convey messages of diversity, belonging, and inclusion. The data consisted of 14 selected units from the book's 28 narrative pages, each containing a verbal excerpt and a corresponding illustration. These data were chosen purposively to represent significant expressions of cultural identity, emotional experience, and difference. The book was examined holistically to understand how linguistic and visual features combine to communicate social values to young readers, rather than to generalize the findings.

Data collection and analysis followed the interactive qualitative model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), consisting of data collection, condensation, display, and conclusion drawing. The process began with repeated reading of the book, identification of relevant pages, transcription of verbal text, and detailed description of visual elements, including gaze, color, and spatial composition. Data condensation involved selecting and categorizing verbal and visual cues related to key themes, while data display was conducted through narrative analysis that demonstrated the intermodal relationships between text and image. The final stage involved interpreting and verifying how intermodal couplings construct meanings of diversity and inclusion, guided by the multimodal frameworks of Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), and Painter et al. (2013). This systematic process ensured analytical depth, coherence, and reproducibility of the study's findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Verbal and Visual Elements in *The Day You Begin*

To identify how the theme of diversity is constructed in The Day You Begin, this study examines the verbal and visual modes through intermodal coupling analysis. Each set of data is labeled with the same number but distinguished by the letter a (verbal text) and b (visual illustration). The verbal data (a) focus on linguistic realization, such as ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions, while the visual data (b) highlight how illustrations convey representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions following Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) framework. The analysis explores how both modes work together (convergent coupling) to express similar experiential and emotional meanings, particularly in relation to difference, exclusion, and acceptance.

Table 1 presents the overall intermodal coupling types identified across the selected data. All pairs demonstrate convergent coupling, showing that both verbal and visual elements consistently reinforce one another in representing aspects of diversity, from feelings of exclusion and hesitation to eventual empowerment and unity.

Table 1. Intermodal Coupling Types and Diversity Themes

Data	Type of Coupling	Theme Represented
1a & 1b	Convergent	Feeling different and hesitant
2a & 2b	Convergent	Awareness of physical difference and individual identity
3a & 3b	Convergent	Emotional withdrawal and lack of understanding from others
4a & 4b	Convergent	Cultural identity and self-expression as beauty and pride
5a & 5b	Convergent	Exclusion and contrasting life experiences
6a & 6b	Convergent	Internal experience vs external expectations
7a & 7b	Convergent	Cultural difference as a source of social exclusion
8a & 8b	Convergent	Misunderstanding of cultural practices and food differences
9a & 9b	Convergent	Social exclusion in group settings and the struggle for acceptance
10a & 10b	Convergent	Emotional alienation and feelings of being on the social periphery
11a & 11b	Convergent	Self-acceptance, courage, and readiness to embrace individuality
12a & 12b	Convergent	Empowerment through storytelling
13a & 13b	Convergent	Connection through shared identity and mutual understanding
14a & 14b	Convergent	Unity in diversity and resolution

As shown in Table 1, every data pair (verbal and visual) demonstrates a convergent relationship between modes, where linguistic expressions and visual compositions align to construct unified meanings about diversity. This consistent intermodal alignment reinforces the picture book's didactic purpose, to help young readers understand difference not as separation but as connection.

In the following section, Data 7 (7a and 7b) is selected as a representative example to illustrate how verbal and visual elements collaborate to depict cultural difference as a source of social exclusion. This particular data is chosen because it clearly encapsulates the emotional and social dimensions of diversity that recur throughout the narrative. The verbal clause introduces the idea of cultural exclusion through evaluative language, while the corresponding illustration visualizes the protagonist's isolation in a social setting. Together, they exemplify how *The Day You Begin* constructs diversity both textually and visually through emotional and spatial contrast.

1. Verbal Element

a. Ideational Metafunction

Ideational metafunction is concerned with how language represents real and imagined world experiences, answering questions about what is happening, who is involved, how, when, and where. In SFL, this consists of two layers of meaning: experiential meaning, which focuses on the processes, participants, and circumstances that make up the representation of experience, and logical meaning, which organizes the logical relationships between clauses (parataxis/hypotaxis).
In this analysis, the clauses selected from The Day You Begin all feature experiential meaning because they represent the subjective experience of the child character as the focal point of diversity and social alienation.

Data 7a
Verbal Text: " *There will be times when* ***the lunch your mother packed for you is too strange or too unfamiliar*** *for others to love as you do.*"

1) Process: Relational process, "***is too strange or too unfamiliar***" describes an evaluative state attributed to "***the lunch***".
2) Participants: Carrier, "***the lunch your mother packed for you"*** → symbol of cultural identity and family background

Attribute: "***too strange or too unfamiliar"*** → negative evaluation assigned to the lunch by outsiders

3) Circumstance: implicit context (school/social setting during lunch)

Ideationally, the clause constructs difference through a relational process that links the participant "*the lunch your mother packed for you*" with the attributes "too strange or too unfamiliar." The lunch functions as a marker of cultural and familial identity, while the attributes encode judgment from an external perspective. By presenting culturally specific food as "*strange*" or "*unfamiliar*," the text captures how cultural diversity can become a source of exclusion in social contexts. This highlights the child's vulnerability when personal and cultural identity is dismissed as unacceptable or odd.

b. Interpersonal Metafunction

Interpersonal metafunction concerns how language enacts social relationships, expressing attitudes, negotiating roles, and positioning the reader emotionally toward the narrative. This analysis focuses on **mood** (whether clauses are declarative, interrogative, imperative) and **modality** (expressing degrees of certainty, obligation, or evaluation). The selected clauses from The Day You Begin reveal how the book guides young readers' empathy and emotional alignment with the protagonist's experiences of difference and belonging.

Data 7a
Verbal Text: "*There will be times when* ***the lunch your mother packed for you is too strange or too unfamiliar*** *for others to love as you do.*"

1) Mood: Declarative mood
2) Modality: High modality, realized through "***too***" → signaling extremity and rejection

Interpersonally, the clause conveys exclusion by using a declarative mood that presents the evaluation as truth. The intensifier "*too*" raises the degree of strangeness and unfamiliarity, leaving no space for neutrality. This evaluative stance encodes the collective judgment of "*others*," positioning the protagonist in a marginalized position. By embedding negative appraisal within the language, the narrator highlights the social stigma children may face when their cultural practices, represented here by food, are not accepted by their peers.

c. Textual Metafunction

Textual metafunction ensures that the text is organized cohesively and coherently, enabling it to function effectively in its communicative context. In Hallidayan terms, this metafunction attends to how a message is structured thematically (**Theme–Rheme**), how it manages given and new information (**Information Structure**), and how **cohesion** is maintained through linguistic devices such as lexical repetition, parallelism, and conjunction. In *The Day You Begin*, the textual metafunction plays a crucial role in shaping the flow of the narrative, positioning the reader to process both the emotional content and the underlying social message of diversity. Through repeated framing devices, patterned clause structures, and rhythmic listing, the text establishes a narrative rhythm that both anchors the story and guides the reader's attention toward key moments of introspection and affirmation.

Data 7a
Verbal text: "*There will be times when* ***the lunch your mother packed for you is too strange or too unfamiliar*** *for others to love as you do.*"

1) Theme: "***the lunch your mother packed for you"*** → foregrounding personal and cultural identity
2) Rheme: "***is too strange or too unfamiliar"*** → introducing exclusionary evaluation
3) Information structure: Moves from given (personal belonging) to new (negative social perception)
4) Cohesion: Connected to the larger frame "***There will be times when***…" → recurring refrain of exclusion

Textually, the clause opens with the theme "*the lunch your mother packed for you*," which foregrounds the child's cultural and familial identity as the point of departure. The rheme "*is too strange or too unfamiliar*" then supplies the evaluative judgment, highlighting exclusion as the key new information. This given–new progression dramatizes the contrast between self-identity and social perception. Cohesively, the clause ties into the narrative's recurring structure "*There will be times when*…" which prepares the reader for different situations of exclusion. Through this textual arrangement, the experience of cultural difference is foregrounded as a central aspect of the diversity theme.

2. Visual Element

a. Representational Metafunction

The representational metafunction, as formulated by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), concerns how visual images depict participants, objects, and events. There are two types of representational metafunction, such as **narrative representations**, which depict dynamic actions through vectors (lines of movement or gaze that indicate directionality and agency), and **conceptual representations**, which depict participants in a static, timeless, classificatory or symbolic state without vectors.

In *The Day You Begin*, illustrations strategically employ both narrative and conceptual representations to visually communicate the emotional and social experiences associated with diversity, hesitation, belonging, and exclusion.

Data 7b
Visual illustration:

Figure 1. Representational Analysis of Data 7b
Source: *The Day You Begin* (2018)

1) Type: Narrative representation
2) Vector: Protagonist's downward body gesture (defensive posture) + gaze vector toward the peer group; children's converging gazes back at her.
3) Participants: Protagonist as Actor (isolated yet observant), peer group as collective Counter-participants (observers).

The representational meaning here is realized through reciprocal vectors of gaze: the protagonist looks toward the group while the group simultaneously gazes at her, centering her as the focal participant. Her hunched posture and embrace of the lunchbox visually encode vulnerability and defensiveness, while the classmates' clustered gazes emphasize her difference. The interaction of these vectors narrates exclusion as a socially enacted process: she is both the object of attention and the subject experiencing discomfort.

b. Interactive Metafunction

The interactive metafunction, as described by Kress & van Leeuwen (2006), governs the relationship between the image, the represented participants, and the viewer. Through **contact (gaze),** peserta dalam gambar *menatap pemirsa* (demand) atau *tidak menatap* (offer), **social distance,** jarak sosial yang tercipta lewat framing (close-up means intimacy; long-shot means impersonal distance) **and point of view (angle),** high angle means powerlessness; low angle means dominance. These parameters contribute significantly to constructing meaning around inclusion, exclusion, empathy, and empowerment, all central to *The Day You Begin*.

Data 7b
Visual illustration:

Figure 2. Interactive Analysis of Data 7b
Source: *The Day You Begin* (2018)

1) Contact (Gaze): Offer (the protagonist's gaze is averted, and the other children direct their gaze toward each other or her lunch, not the viewer)
2) Social Distance: Medium shot, includes both protagonist and group, capturing spatial and social separation.
3) Angle: Eye-level, neutral relation, positioning the viewer as an equal observer.

The interactive structure positions the viewer as a witness rather than a participant. Because the protagonist and peers gaze at each other rather than the audience, the image excludes the viewer from the social exchange, intensifying its exclusivity. The medium shot frames both sides of the divide, making the distance between group and individual clear. At eye level, viewers are aligned empathetically with the protagonist, able to sense her vulnerability while still recognizing the social dynamics at play.

c. Compositional Metafunction

The compositional metafunction ensures that visual elements are organized cohesively to guide viewers in interpreting meaning. Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) identify three key principles that shape this metafunction, such as information value, salience, and framing. Information value to see how placement encodes meaning (e.g., left/right means Given-New, top/bottom means Ideal-Real, and centre/margin). Salience to see that visually attracts attention through size, color, focus, contrast, etc. Framing to see how visual boundaries (lines, spaces, overlaps) indicate connectedness or separation.

Data 7b
Visual illustration:

Figure 3. Compositional Analysis of Data 7b
Source: *The Day You Begin* (2018)

1) Information Value: Left = peer group (collective norm, shared gaze), Right = protagonist (individual marked as "different").
2) Salience: Protagonist's defensive gesture (hunched body, clutching lunchbox) draws attention despite her isolation; children's numerous faces and gazes amplify contrast.
3) Framing: Empty space of the tiled floor + wall functions as a compositional boundary, highlighting separation.

Compositionally, the spread encodes diversity through stark opposition. The left side is crowded with children, unified by shared gaze, while the right side isolates the protagonist at a table, physically distanced from her peers. The salience of her protective posture against the background's emptiness ensures that the viewer's eye is drawn to her discomfort. Framing created by the table and floor tiles accentuates this spatial separation, symbolizing how cultural identity can make an individual visibly different in a shared social space.

Intermodal Coupling and the Construction of Diversity

This section examines how verbal and visual elements in *The Day You Begin* (2018) interact intermodally to communicate the theme of diversity. The analysis focuses on convergent couplings, where verbal and visual elements align across metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal, textual), reinforcing shared meanings. No clear examples of divergent coupling were found in the spreads, suggesting that the book consistently uses convergence to convey diversity as an emotionally coherent and accessible theme.

Data 7
Verbal Text: "*There will be times* ***when the lunch your mother packed for you is too strange or too unfamiliar*** *for others to love as you do.*"
Visual illustration: It can be seen through **Figure 1, 2, and 3**

1. Verbal–Visual Ideational/Represetational: The verbal text highlights food as a marker of difference, while the visual shows peers' gazes directed toward the protagonist and her lunchbox. Both modes encode exclusion through cultural identity.
2. Verbal–Visual Interpersonal/Interactive: The certainty in "*will be*" resonates with the protagonist's defensive posture and the peers' collective attention. Together, they construct empathy for her discomfort in being singled out.
3. Verbal–Visual Textual/Compositional: The verbal refrain signals the recurrence of exclusion, while the visual composition enacts it spatially: protagonist isolated on one side, peers unified on the other.

The coupling in Data 7 is convergent: the verbal text encodes cultural difference through food as a site of exclusion, while the visual concretizes this by staging the protagonist's isolation within a peer group. Together, they emphasize diversity as a visible and socialized difference, not only what someone has (food, culture) but how others perceive it.

Overall, the findings reveal that *The Day You Begin* employs intermodal convergence to portray diversity as both a personal and collective experience. Verbal language articulates internal feelings of hesitation, exclusion, and acceptance, while visuals externalize these emotions through spatial composition, color, and gaze direction. Across

the data, the narrative progression, from exclusion to empowerment, demonstrates how harmony between words and images reinforces the theme of diversity as empathy, understanding, and shared humanity.

This consistent alignment between modes highlights the pedagogical function of the book: it teaches young readers to recognize difference as part of belonging, not as separation. By coupling linguistic evaluation with visual symbolism, *The Day You Begin* transforms everyday experiences of otherness into opportunities for connection, courage, and inclusivity.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that *The Day You Begin* (2018) employs a cohesive multimodal strategy in which verbal and visual elements align across ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions to represent diversity. Verbal elements communicate the protagonist's experiences of exclusion, hesitation, and empowerment through existential and relational processes, modality, and cohesive devices. Visual elements complement these meanings using gaze, body posture, social distance, and compositional framing, creating clear narratives of social and emotional realities. Analysis of the selected data shows consistent convergent intermodal couplings, where both modes reinforce shared meanings. This convergence highlights diversity as a lived and emotionally grounded experience rather than an abstract concept. A key advantage of this study is demonstrating how picture books can strategically combine text and image to promote empathy, social understanding, and inclusive values, making them effective pedagogical tools for literacy and social-emotional learning.

The study has certain limitations. It focuses on selected spreads from a single book, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other texts or cultural contexts. Additionally, it does not explore reader-response perspectives, leaving how children interpret multimodal meanings unexamined. Nevertheless, the findings offer practical applications: educators can use the book to facilitate discussions on inclusion and empathy; authors and illustrators can enhance meaning-making through careful text–image alignment; and parents can engage children in conversations about diversity, self-expression, and belonging. Future research may extend this approach to comparative studies, include audience reception analysis, or investigate divergent intermodal couplings in other picture books, providing further insight into how multimodal strategies communicate complex social themes.

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Linguistics and Literature Journal
Vol. 6, No. 2, 181 - 189
E-ISSN: 2723-7273

available online at: http://jim.teknokrat.ac.id/index.php/linguistics_and_literature/index

WOMEN'S LANGUAGE ANALYSIS IN THE WISH MOVIE

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Received: (October 2025) **Accepted**: (November 2025) **Published :** (December 2025)

Abstract

The representation of gender in animated films significantly affects people's perceptions of the construction of linguistic identity. This study examines the features of women's language in the Wish movie (2023) through a sociolinguistic analysis framework based on Lakoff's theory of women's language and Creswell's qualitative methodology. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a literature research design, analyzing the dialogue of Asha's female protagonist through objective sampling and thematic content analysis. These findings identified seven linguistic features that manifested in the protagonist's speech: lexical hedges appeared 32 times, intensifiers 12 times, tagged questions 6 times, superpolite forms 4 times, empty adjectives and hypercorrected grammar 2 times each. The analysis reveals the multidimensional function of these features, which simultaneously reflect the persistence of traditional gender norms and support the empowerment of protagonists through strategic contextual implementation. Lexical hedging serves as a politeness strategy rather than simply a marker of uncertainty, while tag questions serve a rhetorical purpose that challenges patriarchal authority. Intensifiers reinforce the emotional urgency for community advocacy and a very polite form of negotiating social hierarchies while maintaining agency. This research shows that contemporary Disney animation presents an ambivalence between the reproduction of patriarchal ideology and progressive attempts to construct complex and empowered female characters, which contribute new insights into gender-language relations in popular media representation.

Keywords: female language features, gender representation, sociolinguistic analysis

INTRODUCTION

The representation of women's language in animated films is an important study in the realm of contemporary sociolinguistics because of its ability to shape people's perceptions of gender roles. Animated films from major studios like Walt Disney Animation Studios have a significant influence on the construction of gender identity through the linguistic practices that their characters use. Recent research reveals that gender bias in movies is still very common, where male characters tend to be portrayed more dominantly, while female characters are more often portrayed in fun roles (Haris et al., 2023). This phenomenon reflects gender stereotypes that continue to be reinforced through popular culture products. The study of language and gender has undergone substantial theoretical development since Robin Lakoff introduced the concept of "women's language" that reflects women's subordinate positions in patriarchal social structures. Contemporary research integrates linguistic corpus approaches and critical discourse analysis to uncover linguistic patterns that reflect gender inequality. Recent studies have shown that gender stereotypes have a consistent impact on cognitive processes in language understanding and production, resulting in biased interpretations and perpetuating gender norms in a variety of contexts (Beroíza-Valenzuela & Salas-Guzmán, 2025).

Movie *Wish* (2023), as a production celebrating the centenary of Walt Disney Animation Studios, presents an interesting context for sociolinguistic analysis. The film features Asha, a female protagonist who faces the ruler of the kingdom to save her community. Previous research on female language in Disney films has shown that female characters are still often framed as obedient wives or mothers, demonstrating the persistence of patriarchal ideology (Manaworapong & Bowen, 2022). Although the representation of women in film is increasing in 2024 with 54 of the 100 highest-grossing films featuring women in lead roles, the gap remains (Smith et al., 2023). Research gaps are identified in the lack of sociolinguistic analysis of recent Disney films, such as *Wish*. The

uniqueness of this research lies in the analysis of women's language features using a sociolinguistic approach that integrates qualitative analysis of tags, hedging, intensifiers, and super polite forms in character dialogue. This study aims to identify female language features in the *Wish* movie, investigating how the feature reflects or challenges gender stereotypes, as well as evaluating the sociolinguistic implications of women's language representation in contemporary animated film narratives. Research benefits include theoretical contributions to the study of language and gender in popular media, as well as providing practical insights for the film industry on more linguistically inclusive character construction.

The theoretical framework of this research is based on the theory of "women's language" introduced by Lakoff in 1975, which states that women's languages are characterized by linguistic features such as hedging, tag questions, intensifiers, empty adjectives, and super-polite forms that indicate women's subordinate positions in patriarchal social structures. Lakoff argues that women use hedging tools to express uncertainty and use push tools to convince the interlocutor to take them seriously, so hedging and boosters reflect women's lack of confidence in communication (Lakoff, 2004). Although early criticism targeted this model's reliance on introspective methods, contemporary research on gender-mixed conversations has repeatedly confirmed that women's speech encompasses tentative devices at a higher rate than men's (Alotaibi et al., 2025). Recent research exploring gender differences in language use on the Talks at Google platform found that female speakers use intensifiers, question tags, and humor more often than male speakers, while male speakers use empty adjectives, hedging, hypercorrect grammar, and super-polite forms (Alhammadi et al., 2024).

The methodological approach of this study adopts Creswell's qualitative research design framework that emphasizes an in-depth exploration of social phenomena through textual and contextual analysis. Creswell and Creswell in Research Design: A Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approach affirm that the qualitative approach is very appropriate for exploring and understanding the meanings associated by individuals or groups with social or humanitarian issues, where data analysis involves the organization and preparation of data, the reading of the dataset thoroughly, the coding of the data, the development of descriptive narratives, the identification of relationships between themes, and interpretation of meaning. The integration of Lakoff's theory with Creswell's methodology in this study allows a systematic analysis of the features of women's language in animated film dialogues by considering the sociolinguistic context and gender ideology behind it. In the context of the analysis of gender behavior featured in Disney animated films, quantitative research examining the protagonists of films released between 1937 and 2021 shows that stereotypical gender message representations are still very prevalent.

A content analysis study of 39 Disney protagonists revealed that female characters were consistently portrayed as more attractive than male characters, even though aspects such as intelligence, abilities, and activity levels did not differ significantly by gender (Clarke et al., 2024). Further research on gender representation in eight decades of Disney animated films, involving the analysis of 61 films with a total of 323 characters, showed that there was a significant difference in the number of male and female characters, with a ratio of about 60% male and 40% female. Interestingly, male characters are more often represented as parents or children in films written by women, and female characters are more often represented as antagonists in films written by men. The innovation of this research lies in the application of a sociolinguistic analysis framework that integrates Lakoff's theory and Creswell's qualitative methodology to analyze the *Wish* movie (2023), which has never been researched before. In contrast to previous studies that tended to focus on quantitative content analysis, this study specifically identified and classified female language features in contemporary Disney protagonist character construction, thus making a new contribution to the literature regarding gender and language representation in popular media.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with a library research design to analyze the characteristics of women's language in the *Wish* movie (2023). The qualitative approach was chosen because it is appropriate to explore and understand the meanings associated with social phenomena through in-depth textual analysis, where the data analysis process involves data organization, thorough reading of the dataset, systematic coding, descriptive narrative development, identification of relationships between themes, and interpretation of meaning (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The library research method was applied to collect secondary data in the form of dialogue scripts and film transcripts *Wish* obtained from official sources. The subject of this study is the entire dialogue spoken by the main and supporting female characters in the film, with a special focus on the character of the protagonist, Asha. The purposive sampling technique was used to select dialogues containing female language features based

on Lakoff's theoretical categories, including hedging, question tags, intensifiers, empty adjectives, super-polite forms, and avoiding strong swear words (Alotaibi et al., 2025).

The data collection procedure begins with a complete transcription of all the dialogues of female characters in the film, followed by the identification and classification of female language features using a coding sheet developed based on Lakoff's theoretical framework. Data analysis was carried out through content analysis with a thematic approach, where each speech was categorized based on the type of linguistic feature that appeared, then analyzed the frequency of its occurrence and the context of its use in the film narrative were analyzed. The theoretical triangulation technique was applied by comparing the research findings with previous research on women's language in Disney films (Clarke et al., 2024; Shawcroft et al., 2022). Data interpretation is focused on understanding how identified female language features reflect or challenge conventional gender stereotypes, as well as their implications for the construction of gender identity in contemporary animated film narratives. The validity of the research is maintained through member checks and peer briefings to ensure the accuracy of interpretation and reliability of the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study identifies various female language features that appear in the dialogue of Asha's character as the main protagonist of the *Wish* movie (2023). Based on Lakoff's theoretical framework of women's language, the analysis revealed seven categories of linguistic features manifested in female character construction, including lexical hedging, increased intonation on declaratives, tag questions, assertive stress, intensifiers, super-polite forms, empty adjectives, and hypercorrect grammar. These comprehensive findings demonstrate the complexity of women's linguistic representations in contemporary animated film narratives that reflect the dynamics between traditional gender conventions and women's character empowerment efforts.

Lexical Hedging in the Construction of Linguistic Uncertainty

The lexical hedge feature is the most dominant female language characteristic in Asha dialogue with the highest frequency of occurrence reaching 32 utterances. Lakoff conceptualizes hedging as a linguistic device that expresses uncertainty and doubt, reflecting the subordinate position of women in patriarchal communication structures (Alotaibi et al., 2025). In the context of a *Wish* movie, the use of hedging such as "um", "uh", "good", "I mean", "I think", and "such" is consistently manifested in the various communicative situations that Asha faces. As a concrete illustration, at 03:09, Asha revealed "**I mean... I can't"** when rejecting Saba's invitation to eat cake, showing a reluctance to express rejection directly. Research (Alhammadi et al., 2024) confirms that women use hedging devices with higher frequencies to reduce speech power and maintain social harmony in communicative interactions.

Figure 1. Dialogue: "Oh. I hope so (CHUCKLES)"

The manifestations of the fence in Asha's dialogue show the psychological complexity of characters facing intimidating situations, especially in interactions with authority figures such as King Magnifico and Queen Amaya. At 10:27, when asked about her readiness to meet the king, Asha answered hesitantly, "Oh, I hope so" with a hesitant intonation, as visualized in Figure 1. The use of "I hope so" hedging devices instead of affirmative responses directly reflects the internalization of feminine norms that emphasize prudence and humility in communication (Wibawani & Rohman, 2023). A similar linguistic pattern was observed at 11:46 when Asha stated "I mean, yes" after being asked about her condition by the king, indicating the need to modify and soften the initial statement. These findings confirm the persistence of gender stereotypes that associate women's language with uncertainty and lack of assertiveness (Beroíza-Valenzuela & Salas-Guzmán, 2025).

The context of the use of hedging in film narratives reveals more complex nuances than simple stereotypical interpretations. At 43:36, Asha uses a hedge " **I think**" in a statement, "No, but I think it wants to help me pursue

mine," when explaining Star's role to her friends. In this situation, the use of hedging reflects not only a lack of confidence, but rather a communicative strategy to invite collaboration and avoid coercion on the interlocutor (Prastio et al., 2025). Contextual analysis shows that hedging in Asha's speech served as a politeness strategy that facilitated social negotiation within the hierarchical structure of the Rosas kingdom. Research (Gurning et al., 2024) asserts that variations in language use reflect social stratification and power relations in society, where women use hedging devices to navigate the complexities of social interactions.

Mark Questions as Confirmation Mechanisms and Dialogical Engagement

The tag questions feature is implemented in Asha's six utterances, serving as a mechanism to ask for confirmation, express doubts, or invite interlocutor involvement. Lakoff argues that tag questions are a typical characteristic of women's language that indicates uncertainty and the need to gain validation from the interlocutor (Rahma Salbiah & Sumardi, 2021). At 07:08, Asha responded to Dahlia's statement about her weakness with "I do? Wait. Is it a weakness?" as visualized in Figure 2, indicating the need to confirm his own interpretation of its characteristics. The use of question tags in this context reflects the internalization of doubts associated with the construction of feminine gender in patriarchal discourse (Hakim et al., 2025).

Figure 2. Dialogue: "They don't belong to him, do they?"

Question tag at 37:03 "They don't belong to him, **do they?**" reveals a more subversive dimension in the use of female language features. In this context, Asha uses question tags not to express personal doubts, but as a rhetorical strategy to invite the interlocutor to question the legitimacy of the Magnifico's power over the will of the people. This analysis confirms the findings (Mulyani et al., 2023) that although features of women's language are conventionally associated with subordination, their use in certain contexts can serve as a mechanism of resistance to patriarchal structures. The tag questions in the Wish narrative point to the inherent ambiguity of gender linguistic characteristics, where the same feature can serve as a manifestation of subordination or an instrument of empowerment depending on its pragmatic context (Oktapiyani & Hamdani, 2024).

Figure 3. Dialogue: "(YELPS) Ugh I sound ridiculous, don't I?"

The most significant manifestation of the tag question was observed at 30:09, when Asha reflected on her experience of witnessing an incredible phenomenon, revealing "Ugh, I sound ridiculous, **don't I?**" as visualized in Figure 3. The use of question tags in the context of self-deprecating statements reveals the internalization of gender norms that position women as subjects who need external validation for their experiences and perceptions (Andriani, 2024). Research (Aisyah, 2022) identifies that the linguistic representation of women in Indonesian films presents a paradox between empowerment efforts and the persistence of patriarchal norms that limit women's expression of subjectivity. In the context of *Wish*, although Asha plays a protagonist who challenges authority, her linguistic features still reflect doubt and the need to gain affirmation from her social environment.

Intensifier and Construction of Women's Linguistic Emotivity

The use of intensifiers is manifested in Asha's 12 speeches, which reflect women's tendency to reinforce the expressive power of speech through lexical modifications. Intensifiers such as "so", "very", and "really" serve to reinforce the meaning of an adjective or verb, building the emotive associated with feminine communication (Alhammadi et al., 2024). At 06:37, Asha revealed, "and I'm **so nervous** I think I'm going to explode", showing the emotional amplification of stereotypes associated with female expression. Research (Harini et al., 2024) Identifying that the representation of feminism in contemporary films still presents an ambivalence between the empowerment of female characters and the persistence of excessive emotional stereotypes.

Figure 4. Dialogue: "But it's so, so beautiful"

The intensifier manifestations in Asha's dialogue reveal the complexity of the construction of gender identity in the film's narrative. At 24:22, Asha used a double intensifier, "But it's **so**, **so** beautiful**,**" when describing Saba's desires, reinforcing the emotional and aesthetic value of the object in question. The use of intensifier repetition reflects the linguistic patterns associated with feminine hyperbole in conventional discourse (Wibawani & Rohman, 2023). However, in the context of the narrative *Wish*, intensifiers serve not only as an exaggerated emotional manifestation, but rather as a persuasive strategy to communicate the urgency and significance of unfulfilled desires. At 9:32 a.m., Asha stated "Thank you **so** much" to Dahlia as visualized in Figure 5, where the intensifier reinforces gratitude and shows a deep appreciation for the opportunity given.

Figure 5. Dialogue: "(CHUCKLES) Good. Thanks. Thank you very much"

Intensifier contextual analysis shows that these linguistic features contribute to Asha's character construction as a passionate individual and deeply concerned about her community. At 24:42, the statement "There are **so** many wondrous, powerful wishes that will never be granted, just floating there…helpless" used the intensifier to emphasize the magnitude of the injustice experienced by the Rosas people. In this context, the intensifier serves as a rhetorical device to establish the moral urgency that motivates the protagonist's actions (Yuyun et al., 2022). These findings confirm that although intensifier is a stereotypical characteristic of female language, its use in film narratives can be recontextualized to support agency and empowerment of female characters (Clarke et al., 2024).

Super Polite Forms and Social Hierarchy Negotiation

The super-polite form feature is applied in Asha's four speeches, which reflect women's orientation towards the maintenance of social harmony through linguistic politeness strategies. Lakoff identified that women tend to use more complicated forms of politeness than men to avoid coercion and maintain the interlocutor's face (Yuyun et al., 2022). At 18:43, Asha uses the very tentative interrogative modal construction "**Would you maybe consider granting his wish tonight?**" when asking King Magnifico to grant Saba's wish. The use of double capital hedges

of "would" and "maybe", along with interrogative constructions, creates an extreme level of politeness, reflecting an awareness of the power distance in interactions with authority figures (Gurning et al., 2024).

Figure 6. Dialogue: "Please and thank you, best friend ever?"

Very polite form at 45:16 minutes" Please and thank you, best friend ever?" as visualized in Figure 6 reveals a more informal politeness strategy while maintaining an orientation toward politeness. A combination of "please," "thank you," and "best friend ever" affectionate calls builds a demand that maximizes positive politeness strategies to facilitate compliance (Prastio et al., 2025). Research (Rahma Salbiah & Sumardi, 2021) Identifies that the use of super-polite forms in women's interactions reflects a gender socialization that emphasizes cooperation and the avoidance of confrontation. In the context of *Wish*, the super-polite form serves as a negotiation mechanism that allows Asha to ask for help and support while maintaining harmonious social relationships with peers and authority figures.

Super polite form usage at 48:52" **Please**, find my saba's and mother's wishes as fast as you can!" combines the manners of the Marker with the urgent necessity, creating a tension between the need to act quickly and maintain the norms of politeness. This analysis reveals that although the super-polite form is associated with the subordination of women in patriarchal structures, this linguistic feature can be strategically used to achieve communicative goals without violating gender expectations (Hakim et al., 2025). These findings confirm the complexity of the relationship between language, gender, and power in contemporary animated film representations (Shawcroft et al., 2022).

Empty Adjectives and Hypercorrect Grammar in Linguistic Construction

The characteristics of empty adjectives and hypercorrect grammar are characteristics of female language that are less dominant in Asha's dialogue, but are still significant in the construction of the character's gender identity. At 06:34, Asha uses the empty adjective "**honorary**" in the phrase " Best friend and honorary doctor of all things rational" as visualized in Figure 7, where this adjective serves as a qualification that does not add substantive information but builds intimacy and playfulness in a friendly relationship. Lakoff identifies empty adjectives as characteristics of female language that reflect the triviality and lack of substance in feminine communication (Wibawani & Rohman, 2023). However, in the context of *Wish*, the use of empty adjectives is more appropriately interpreted as a strategy to build warm and supportive interpersonal relationships.

Figure 7. Dialogue: "Best friend and honorary doctor of all things rational"

Hypercorrect grammar manifestations are observed in two utterances that show careful attention to formal grammatical structures. At 6:52 p.m., Asha expresses "I have forgotten how to talk" using the grammatically correct present perfect tense, and at 24:35 "If you had seen them, if you had felt them like I did, you would understand" as visualized in Figure 8, using past perfect conditions that show the command of complex grammatical structures. Research (Alhammadi et al., 2024) Identify that female speakers tend to use hypercorrect grammar with a higher frequency than male speakers, reflecting socialization that emphasizes linguistic propriety

and adherence to standard language norms. In the context of Wish, hypercorrect grammar constructs Asha as an educated and linguistically competent character, challenging the stereotype of women as less than articulate communicators.

Figure 8. Dialogue: "If you had seen them, if you had felt them"

A comprehensive analysis of female language features in the *Wish* movie reveals the complexity of gender linguistic representation in contemporary animated narratives. The findings of the study suggest that although Asha's dialogue incorporates the various characteristics of the female language that Lakoff identifies, its manifestations cannot be interpreted simply as perpetuating stereotypes of female subordination. Instead, these linguistic features function multidimensionally: some reflect the persistence of traditional gender norms, others are recontextualized to support agency and protagonist empowerment (Andriani, 2024). This study confirms that the representation of women's language in contemporary Disney films presents an ambivalence between the reproduction of patriarchal ideology and progressive efforts to construct more complex and empowered female characters (Alhammadi et al., 2024). These findings contribute to the literature on the relationship between language, gender, and popular media, suggesting that sociolinguistic analysis of film representation requires a contextual approach sensitive to pragmatic nuances and the strategic function of linguistic features in narrative construction (Harini et al., 2024; Oktapiyani & Hamdani, 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study shows significant advantages in understanding gender representation through sociolinguistic analysis of contemporary animated films. The study successfully identified seven linguistic features of female languages in *Wish* (2023), including lexical hedges, tag questions, intensifiers, superpolite forms, empty adjectives, and hypercorrect grammar, which provides empirical evidence of how Disney constructs female protagonists linguistically. The integration of Lakoff's theoretical framework with Creswell's qualitative methodology offers a robust analytical approach to examining gender ideology in popular media. However, there are limitations in the scope of the analysis, as the study focused exclusively on a single film and primarily on the protagonist Asha, potentially ignoring the broader pattern across recent Disney productions. In addition, the reliance on textual analysis without audience acceptance studies limits the understanding of how audiences interpret these linguistic representations. Future applications include the development of guidelines for more linguistically inclusive character construction in the animation industry, the expansion of comparative analysis in a variety of contemporary Disney films, and the investigation of audience perception through a mixed-methods approach. This research makes a theoretical contribution to the study of gender and language in the media while offering practical insights for creating progressive female characters that challenge patriarchal stereotypes through strategic linguistic constructions.

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Linguistics and Literature Journal
Vol. 6, No. 2, 190 - 199
E-ISSN: 2723-7273

available online at: http://jim.teknokrat.ac.id/index.php/linguistics_and_literature/index

ANXIETY PORTRAYED IN THE NOVEL *GROWN* BY TIFFANY D. JACKSON

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Received: (October 2025) **Accepted**: (November 2025) **Published :** (December 2025)

Abstract

The study entitled "Anxiety Portrayed in the Novel *Grown* by Tiffany D. Jackson" was conducted to examine the issue of anxiety of the main character. The study aims to describe the anxiety of the main character and how she overcomes it. The object of this study is the novel *Grown* (2020) by Tiffany D. Jackson. The study is analyzed based on Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis theory, which includes anxiety (1933) and defence mechanisms (1964). The study is conducted using a qualitative method in which the data were taken from the narratives of the novel. The results depicted three anxieties: realistic anxiety, moral anxiety, and neurotic anxiety, and how the main character overcomes the anxiety through six types of defence mechanisms: repression, denial, projection, displacement, reaction formation, and sublimation.

Keywords: anxiety, defense Mechanisms, Psychoanalysis

INTRODUCTION

When dealing with unforeseen circumstances or events that have uncertain outcomes, everyone becomes anxious. A person may become anxious when faced with situations like presenting in front of a class, attending a job interview, or competing. This occurs because the individual is unsure of whether their actions will have a beneficial effect. A person feels uneasy about taking action because of this feeling of unpredictability. As a result, anxiousness starts to arise.

Anxiety is common among adults. According to Copeland et al. (2014, p. 21), anxiety is a common mental health problem to have had by adulthood. Anxiety is inevitable when confronted with circumstances like job interviews or significant projects. It is because adults have numerous obligations. Adults frequently experience work-related anxiety. It is, as stated by Linden and Muschalla (2007), that "the workplace can have an important role in the development of anxiety problems and disorders". For instance, when someone negotiates a business agreement on behalf of a company with a key partner. Whether the commercial deal succeeds or fails, the company holds that individual to high standards. This is among the circumstances that cause anxiety. Since the outcome of the agreement is uncertain, anxiety may arise from pressure and expectations from superiors, as well as concerns about whether the offer made to investors would be acceptable. Adults, on the other hand, can find methods to alleviate worry, as they often possess a mature attitude and strong problem-solving abilities. For instance, they can spend time with relatives and friends or engage in enjoyable activities.

Nonetheless, some people think that anxiety is a condition that only grown-ups experience. Teenagers can also experience anxiety. It is because teenagers' physical and mental states are developing during the puberty phase. It is stated by Ahmadi (2013, p. 360) that "anxiety is one of the immediate and common effects of stress which appears in teenagers due to mental and physical changes". According to Ahmadi (p. 362), the stress that causes anxiety to arise is usually caused by the lack of freedom in doing affairs and disagreement with adults. Teens will suffer from anxiety if they feel constrained or incapable of meeting their demands. This is because teens have specific needs, such as the requirement for affection and social interaction, that must be met to promote their mental and physical development. One instance is when a teenager wants to engage in an activity they enjoy to interact with their new peers and surroundings, but their parents forbid them from doing so. They will experience

tension and anxiety. Teenagers' development will be hindered by the worry they experience as a result of their parents' restrictions on their freedom.

Individuals might manage their anxiety in different ways. One way to deal with anxiety related to an impending academic competition is to put a lot of effort into studying. In an alternate setting, someone can vent to others if they are feeling concerned about a dispute they are dealing with. Anyone, either positively or negatively, can control anxiety. Cobb (1982, p. 626) explained that if people are aware of their anxiety and try to deal with it by psychological strategies, it can "reduce the disruption that anxiety causes to domestic, social and working lives". To live a decent life and lessen the worry that interferes with everyday activities, one must learn to manage one's anxiety.

Humans naturally experience anxiety. Anxiety usually appears when a person fears that they won't be able to solve difficulties or avoid upcoming confrontations. In daily life, anxiety can arise in a variety of circumstances. Schwartz (2000, p. 58) explained that "the "butterflies" fluttering in your stomach before an examination, the "nervousness" you feel before an employment interview, the pounding of your heart as you hear footsteps on a dark night—these are all signs of anxiety". The statement leads one to the conclusion that anxiety is the uneasiness one experiences when confronted with something important or potentially harmful to their wellness. It might stop someone from taking a chance on doing something new.

Every literary work has a narrative that revolves around one or more issues. The problems often come from real-life issues. Anxiety is one psychological issue that has a close connection to people's lives. The problem of anxiety can motivate writers to create creative works that raise awareness of the dangers of poorly managed anxiety. By making literary works that address the issue of anxiety, writers can help others better understand it by describing the experiences of a main character who suffers from the condition.

In the real world, anxiety can occur. To increase awareness of the problem, it inspires individuals to write narratives about it in creative works, such as novels. *Grown* by Tiffany D. Jackson, published in 2020, is one of the books that addresses the issue of anxiety. While the main character is dating her violent lover, she suffers from anxiety. The writer selected this novel as the object of the study because an abusive relationship not only affected the victim's physical well-being but also their mental well-being. Furthermore, the main character's mental state in *Grown* has not been explored in any prior research. In the earlier studies, a few researchers conducted studies only about the physical and sexual abuse experienced by the main character of *Grown*. Therefore, the writer would like to give her insight into the main character's anxiety in this study.

This study was conducted to examine Tiffany D. Jackson's novel, *Grown*, as previously described. There are multiple psychological conflicts in *Grown*. The main character experienced anxiety. Because the main character's problems are rooted in real-life situations, the book "Grown" was selected. The writer is therefore interested in examining the main character's anxiety in *Grown* and how she manages to overcome it. The study's object is *Grown* by Tiffany D. Jackson, and its title is "Anxiety Portrayed in the Novel *Grown* by Tiffany D. Jackson."

Anxiety is a topic that is still frequently researched today. In conducting the study, the writer found three related studies about anxiety as a reference. The three studies are summarized as follows:

The first study, entitled "Anxiety of the Main Character in the Novel *Do No Harm*". The study was written by Kusuma et al. from Universitas Pakuan in 2024. The study aimed to show that anxiety affected the behavior of the main character. The method used in the study is descriptive analysis. It was conducted based on Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis. The findings proved that the main character's anxiousness influenced her choices in specific plot points. When the main character learned that her son had been diagnosed with cancer, her anxiety started. She had a flashback to her childhood trauma, in which her parents perished in an accident, as a result of her severe anxiety. She began selling illegal narcotics because she was afraid of losing her son. The main character's id led her to purchase a firearm to defend herself against the risks associated with her new line of work. When her husband was in danger, the main character felt anxious once again. To satiate the id's need to defend her loved ones, she killed the offender who might have put her husband in danger.

The second study, entitled "The Portrayal of Anxiety in *They Both Die at the End*". The study was written by Susanto and Nurmaily from Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia in 2023. The study aimed to describe the characters' anxiety by showing the reasons for their anxiety and what types of anxiety they experience. The study employed a qualitative method. It was based on the theory of anxiety by Sigmund Freud. The findings indicated that the main

character's anxiety was caused by several factors, including fear of dying, societal expectations impacted by gender norms, repression of his emotions, a toxic setting, threats of a warning about his coming death, and frustration with surviving death. The main character experienced three different sorts of anxiety: moral, realistic, and neurotic.

The last study, entitled "Anxiety in John Green's Novel *The Fault in Our Stars*". The study was written by Zamzami and Wulan from Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara in 2023. The study aimed to reveal the type of anxiety experienced by the protagonist and her defense mechanism against the anxiety. The study employed a qualitative method. The study used the psychoanalysis theory of Sigmund Freud. Their study's findings showed that the main character's anxiety was caused by guilt, overthinking, and worrying about the future. As a result, the novel included both realistic and moral anxiety. To overcome her anxiety, the main character employed defense mechanisms such as reaction formation and rationalization.

This study is relevant to all the previous research discussed. Every researcher uses the same theory. The author's analysis and the three earlier research studies share a similarity in that they each focus on anxiety. Nonetheless, there are variations in the particular subjects of their research. The Grown by Tiffany D. Jackson is the subject of this investigation. The main character's anxiety and how she employs defense mechanisms to cope with it are the key topics of this study.

METHOD

The writer employed a qualitative approach with the analysis method because the study's object was in the form of sentences from a novel, which were analyzed in the form of an essay. Pathak et al. (2013) suggested that "the qualitative methods are used to understand people's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behaviors, and interactions". It produces data that is not numerical. After gathering information directly from the study object, the information is subsequently presented in an essay. The approach is implemented by gathering information and references from several public libraries, as well as Tiffany D. Jackson's book *Grown*. Qualitative research uses non-numeric data as its primary source of information. The writer obtained the data from Tiffany D. Jackson's 2020 book *Grown*. The book is 400 pages long. The dialogue and narration in the book offer insight into anxiety and how the main character overcomes it. The writer took several steps to collect the data for the study. First, the writer read the contents of the selected novel. Second, the writer identified narratives that depict anxiety and ways to overcome it. Lastly, the writer listed the identified data for the study.

The writer additionally took specific steps to examine the data after it was gathered. First, the author categorized the novel's narration and dialogue into realistic, moral, and neurotic categories based on the characters' anxiety. It made it simpler to understand how the main character reacted to different situations. Second, whether the main character overcame her fear by repression, denial, projection, displacement, reaction formation, or sublimation, the author recognized the indications of defense mechanisms that she may have utilized in various contexts. The author then examined the data and conducted the analysis based on the results after applying the data to the research questions. To explore the collected data, the author used Freud's psychoanalysis theory, which includes defense mechanisms (1964) and anxiety (1933). The writer focused on the dialogue and narration in the novel that depicted the issue of anxiety.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter explains how anxieties occur and are portrayed in *Grown* by Tiffany D. Jackson. The novel tells the story of Enchanted, a seventeen-year-old girl who aspires to become a singer. At the start of her journey, she met a popular singer named Korey Fields. Korey offered her help to become a singer by signing a contract with him, allowing her to record songs and practice her vocals with a professional singer. Later on, she fell in love with him, despite their eleven-year age difference. Turns out, Korey is an abusive boyfriend who constantly abuses her physically and mentally. It triggered her anxiety. The first part shows how the main character's anxiety is depicted, and the second part shows how she overcomes it. For this study, the writer uses narrations and dialogues in the novel.

Anxiety Depicted in the Main Character in the *Grown* Novel

Anxiety is a feeling that is experienced by someone who is dealing with an unforeseen situation in which the outcome is unknown. As stated by Freud (1933), anxiety is awakened as a signal of an earlier situation of danger. It can be triggered by someone or something. The types of anxiety consist of three types: realistic anxiety, moral

anxiety, and neurotic anxiety. The writer analyzes the types of anxiety the main character goes through as depicted in the novel. As shown by the data below.

Realistic Anxiety

First, when the ego encounters conflicts with the external environment, realistic anxiety is created. As stated by Freud (1933), anxiety is awakened as a signal of an earlier situation of danger. This type of anxiety typically manifests when a person is in potentially dangerous circumstances. When something that could endanger one's safety is present, the ego responds by becoming anxious. The survival instinct, which allows a person to protect themselves from possible harm, is the basis for this anxiety. Enchanted Jones, the main character of *Grown*, experiences realistic worry throughout the narrative.

Data 1

> "I'm speechless. This was supposed to be a simple audition. First the crowd, now Korey Freaking Fields . . . all here to see me make a fool out of myself."

A person has realistic anxiety when they are coping with issues that they frequently face in life. When Enchanted tries out for a talent show, she has this worry. When it is Enchanted's turn to perform, she becomes anxious. The ego believes that performing in front of a large crowd might endanger her well-being. According to Freud (1933), the ego creates anxiety when one feels threatened by an outside circumstance. Singing in front of a large crowd at a singing audition is an instance that puts Enchanted in danger in this context. Furthermore, the audition is being watched by renowned musician Korey Fields. She becomes anxious because she is unsure of her ability to sing well in front of such a significant person and a large crowd. Enchanted fears that she will embarrass herself if she does not pass this audition.

Data 2

> "That panic returns. I'm back in the hotel room with Creighton. Trapped. Alone. Scared. But . . . Korey saved me then. So why don't I feel safe now? His words replay on a loop, he said he'd wait. He said, When you're ready, I'll be ready."

Enchanted experiences anxiety when she is forced to have sex by Korey. This made Enchanted recall a bad memory with Creighton, where he almost did the same thing to her. In the occurrence above, Enchanted feels panicked when Korey suddenly forces her to have sex. The sentence, "*Korey saved me then. So why don't I feel safe now? His words replay on a loop, he said he'd wait. He said, When you're ready, I'll be ready*" is proof that Enchanted feels anxious about her safety. The act of sexual harassment has the potential to injure both the body and the mind. Enchanted was once harmed by an attempt at harassment by one of her school classmates, Creighton. Because of this, Enchanted refused to engage in any kind of sexual activity. However, Korey persisted in getting her to participate in an intimate session. The ego thus perceives Korey as a danger to her safety. According to Freud (1933), when someone feels threatened by an outside circumstance, their ego creates anxiety. The main character in this instance feels threatened when she is about to be sexually assaulted. Because Korey is physically stronger than her, she feels anxious that she will not be able to protect herself from his harassment.

Moral Anxiety

Secondly, moral anxiety is a kind of anxiety that emerges when the superego can no longer restrain the id. It occurs when the victim is concerned about violating their own morals or societal norms. According to Freud (1933, p. 4695), is anxiety related to a person's moral perfection. The impulsiveness of the id can violate moral rules, which in turn causes moral anxiety due to feelings of guilt or shame from the superego. Enchanted Jones experiences this moral anxiety in several parts of the story.

Data 3

> "I snatch my biology book out my bag and stare at the phone. Do I answer it? Tell him I'll call him back? What if he never calls again? But how will I explain this to Mom? I'm not even supposed to have his number."

Anxiety about violating moral principles can cause someone to act unethically. It is a result of their refusal to accept punishment or social isolation. According to Freud (1933), moral anxiety arises when a person violates

their own and society's moral norms. One of the actions that violates moral principles in this situation is Enchanted's deceit. Lying not only goes against moral principles, but it also reduces trust in others. Due to her moral anxiety, Enchanted engages in several activities, including lying. According to the quotation above, Enchanted is worried about lying to her mother about owning Korey's number. Before that, Korey attempted to invite Enchanted to collaborate on music, but was denied since she is still a minor; therefore, her mother does not want Enchanted to have his number. Consequently, her mother limited Enchanted's interactions with him. However, Enchanted has to break her mother's moral rules by lying because the id's desire to keep in contact with him is stronger. It causes the superego to acknowledge that Enchanted's behavior is against morality. Because lying portrays her as a horrible person, it causes anxiety.

Data 4

> "A shiver zips down my back. We had practiced every scenario we could ever think of, but this is new and frightening. Lying to fans and strangers is one thing but lying to the police is another."

Other than lying to her mother, Enchanted also lied to the police during her interrogation. Enchanted regrets lying to the cops when being questioned. Because it occurs so abruptly, Enchanted is unsure of how to react without infuriating Korey. As a result, Enchanted was eventually forced to tell lies when the police questioned her. Although it goes against what the superego desires, Enchanted must do it to rescue herself. The superego, which demands that a person be morally perfect, urged her to respond to the police in an honest manner. The awareness of doing something, such as breaking moral rules and committing an act of obstruction of justice, triggers her moral anxiety, in accordance with Freud's statement in 1933. Because of this, Enchanted feels uneasy and awful about lying.

Neurotic Anxiety

The last is neurotic anxiety. It occurs when a person feels anxious about what they might face if they attempt to satisfy their desires. As explained by Freud (1933, p. 4690), neurotic anxiety happens when someone "is afraid of is evidently his own libido". This anxiety is caused when a person fears punishment for showing id-dominated behavior. Enchanted Jones often experiences neurotic anxiety in several parts of the story.

Data 5

> "It's not the beet juice or my position on the floor that unnerves me; it's the silence. No music, no television, no voices . . . damn, I'm a mess and he's going to be so mad when he sees all these stains. The thought of his inevitable reaction produces more terror than the blood surrounding me."

Enchanted Jones experiences neurotic anxiety when she is depressed with the image of Korey, her abusive ex-boyfriend, haunting her mind. Enchanted's anxiety is evident in her feelings of pressure about how Korey will react to her current situation. Enchanted is worried about how he will respond to the amount of blood present in his room. Because of Korey's frequent physical and psychological abuse, Enchanted starts to feel anxious about certain things. This is because, regardless of the severity of her flaws, he used to abuse her. She has neurotic anxiety in this context, which manifests as a fear that he might think she is the one who messed his room, even if she is not. She believed that because she had made a mess in his room, he would punish her. According to Freud (1933), neurotic anxiety arises when a person fears punishment for engaging in conduct that is ruled by their id. Enchanted's id and ego influence this anxiousness. The id wishes to inform him that she did not cause the mess in his room. The fact that she is the only person in the room is the ego's reality. Furthermore, she was unable to explain her motivations to Korey because he is truly dead. Her neurotic anxiety, where she fears what he would do when he learns about the condition of his room, is influenced by the trauma of Korey's aggression.

Data 6

> "Korey is slumped face down, hanging off the bed . . . body covered in beet juice. Flaming words are stuck in my esophagus, but my body is frozen, rooted to the floor. If I move . . . if he catches me . . . he'll kill me."

Enchanted then expresses her thoughts on what Korey might do to her if he found blood in his room. According to the quotation above, Enchanted experiences neurotic anxiety. This is because Enchanted fears the punishment he will inflict on her should he discover that his room is splattered with blood. According to Freud (1933), neurotic anxiety from acting on one's id urges is accompanied by a fear of punishment. He might believe that she was the one who damaged his room because Enchanted is in it. To prevent him from realizing she is there, she forced

herself to remain in place. Since Korey is in authority over Enchanted, he is undoubtedly free to discipline her however he pleases.

The Main Character's Actions Against Anxiety in the *Grown* Novel

As mentioned earlier, the main character of the novel *Grown*, Enchanted Jones, experiences anxiety through her actions and thoughts, which includes realistic anxiety, moral anxiety, and neurotic anxiety. Later on, Enchanted learns a few defense mechanisms to deal with her anxiety. According to Freud (1964, p. 144), a defense mechanism is a general term for all the techniques that the ego employs in conflicts that may lead to a neurosis. The ego employs defense mechanisms to shield itself from internal or external sources of worry or conflict that are impacted by the ego. There are nine types of defense mechanisms, as stated by Freud (1964): repression, denial, projection, displacement, regression, rationalization, reaction formation, sublimation, and intellectualization. However, in this study, six defense mechanisms are identified in the main character: repression, denial, projection, displacement, reaction formation, and sublimation.

Repression

Repression is a type of defense mechanism first proposed by Freud. It is the most common type of defense mechanism used by humans to cope with conflict or anxiety. According to Freud (1964, p. 147), the essence of repression lies simply in turning something away and keeping it at a distance from the conscious mind. The ego uses repression to filter ideas, feelings, experiences, or desires that are regarded as triggering internal conflict. In the narrative, Enchanted Jones encounters repression.

Data 7

> "Holding back tears, I stare at Flounder, sitting on the dresser, watching us. I don't want him to see me this way. So I squeeze my eyes shut and float away, back to the sea, the waves, the seagulls, Grandma..."

Enchanted experiences a repression when she is forced to have intimate sessions with Korey. He convinces her into believing that their planned action is motivated by love, but in reality, Korey pushed Enchanted into accepting it. Enchanted's painful encounter with Creighton, a boy from her school who attempted to abuse her sexually, has traumatized her from having sex. As a result, Enchanted declined to engage in any sexual activity with Korey. Korey's strength and controlling demeanor ultimately made it impossible for her to defeat him. Consequently, Enchanted performs an unconscious act of repression to preserve her mental wellness by thinking about her old beach life and her late Grandma. By suppressing it and acting as though nothing occurred, she lessens her anxiety.

Denial

Denial is a type of defense mechanism that occurs when a person rejects the reality of their situation. Freud (1964, p. 221) stated that "a method of defense by the ego '*Verleugnung*' ('disavowal' or 'denial')- which had not previously been clearly differentiated from repression and which described the ego's reaction to an intolerable external reality". Denial happens when the ego "refuses" to accept the truth of what is truly happening to defend itself against outside threats. Throughout the narrative, Enchanted Jones goes between instances of denial.

Data 8

> "There's blood everywhere. No, not blood. Beet juice. Or maybe cranberry. Thinned barbecue sauce. But no, not blood. Blood means more than I can comprehend."

Enchanted was not convinced when she discovered Korey's dead body in his room. The dining table, ceiling, curtains, and sofa are all stained with blood. She is getting worried at the sight of the blood. She consequently experiences a period of denial. She finds it hard to accept that some areas of the room are covered with blood. She finds it hard to accept that Korey is lying in bed with blood all over him. Enchanted then denies the existence of bloodstains across the room to protect herself and relieve her uneasiness from the current circumstance. Enchanted believes the bloodstains are between barbecue sauce, cranberry juice, or beet juice. She tries to calm herself and argues that she is not to blame for Korey's situation. To avoid the possibility of being arrested by the police, Enchanted goes through denial. The denial of Enchanted is consistent with Freud's (1964) theory of denial, which proposes that people suppress unpleasant truths to maintain their mental wellness.

Data 9

> "I met another Korey last night. That's the only explanation for it. He must turn into a different person when he drinks, like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde."

When Korey mistreats Enchanted, she goes into denial. Enchanted had already gone to a party, met Derrick, the son of one of Korey's coworkers, and spent some time discussing their shared interests. But when Korey saw them, he became jealous. He kept his distance from her. She worries about what she did to make him ignore her, which makes her anxious. He confined her to her room for sixteen hours in the hotel. In an effort to reduce her worry, she conceals the truth about how Korey treats her. Enchanted is attempting to persuade herself that Korey locked her in because he is influenced by alcohol. She also makes a comparison between the "normal" Korey and the Korey who imprisoned her and the movie characters Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, who have two entirely different personalities—Dr. Jekyll is friendly, and Mr. Hyde is wicked. Thus, she does not think Korey would lock his girlfriend out of jealousy. She believes he is a different person from the one who locked her up. She thus denies that Korey has harmed her to avoid facing reality. Enchanted's denial, according to Freud's (1964) theory regarding denial, is to protect herself from the painful truth that her boyfriend is abusive.

Projection

A form of defense mechanism known as projection occurs when someone projects their negative emotions, ideas, or characteristics onto other people. They act in this manner because they are unwilling to acknowledge these unfavorable emotions. According to Freud (1964, p. 184), projection occurs when the ego projects its internal conflict onto an external object to avoid the problem. Individuals who project their own turmoil and distress onto others often believe that doing so will help them cope with their own issues. In the narrative, Enchanted Jones undergoes a process of projection.

Data 10

> "Chant . . . this is so wrong. He's a grown-ass man. He got no business popping up at a girl's school like this."
> "Hey! I'm not a little kid. I'll be eighteen in six months."
> "Yeah, but clearly he can't seem to wait that long! Which is disgusting."
> "Back off, Gab. I know what I'm doing!"
> She folds her arms. "Doesn't look like it."
> "What? Are you jealous?"
> "Of you and Korey? Girl, please. I got a man!"

Once Enchanted and her best friend Gab argue, she projects. Gab learns about Enchanted's connection to well-known musician Korey. The fact that they are eleven years apart in age makes Gab uncomfortable. Because Enchanted is still a minor, Gab fears that he might take advantage of her. Enchanted, however, rejects Gab's anxiety. In the end, she projects her emotions onto Gab. It is evident from the incident that Enchanted confides in Gab about her feelings. Her jealousy that Gab has a boyfriend and she does not is the cause of it. When her best friend is really concerned about her well-being, she accuses Gab of being envious of her for dating a famous person. She refuses to acknowledge that a man much older than her is grooming her. The phrase *"What? "Are you jealous?"* reveals her inability to face reality and her tendency to use her jealousy as a means to attack an innocent person. The manner in which Enchanted projects her jealousy onto her best friend is consistent with Freud's (1964) assertion about projection.

Displacement

When someone shifts their bad emotions or thoughts to someone less dangerous than the initial object, this is known as displacement. According to Freud (1964, p. 157), unlimited feelings of anxiety or self-reproach are vented to a substitute by displacement, often a displacement onto something very small or indifferent. Displacement occurs when someone transfers their emotions from one object to another that is deemed acceptable and does not present a significant risk of resistance. Enchanted Jones experiences displacement in the story.

Data 11

> "So I'm grown enough to watch your kids but not grown enough to live my life? That's not fair! I'm missing out on being a kid watching YOURS! Damn, how much do I have to give up?"

Enchanted experiences the act of displacement due to her parents. It is because her parents do not allow her to go with Korey. The previous day, Korey had invited her to go with him on a tour around the country. He had visited her home to request her parents' approval, but they turned him down. Since Enchanted is still in high school, her parents want her to focus on her studies rather than drop out to pursue singing. Since then, he hasn't texted her. She worries that he might stop supporting her in pursuing a music career or possibly grow disdainful of their relationship. She got into a furious confrontation with her mother because she was anxious. As she directed her fear toward her mother rather than Korey, the main object of her anxiety, it is a type of displacement. Enchanted believes that confronting her mother is the proper course of action. She does this because she is aware that her mother is the "safer" person to whom she can vent her rage. Because Korey has greater authority and power over her, she was unable to fight him. She therefore vented her fear of being abandoned by her boyfriend onto her mother to reduce it. Enchanted uses displacement to release her frustration about Korey on her mother, thereby avoiding confrontations with him, in line with Freud's (1964) assertion about displacement.

Reaction Formation

One sort of defense mechanism is reaction formation, where a person changes negative ideas or feelings into their opposite. It seeks to change anxiety into emotions that are simpler for other people to understand or tolerate. In reality, however, the application of reaction formation contradicts the victim's genuine feelings. Freud (1964, p. 281) explained that "reaction formations against certain instincts take the deceptive form of a change in their content, as though egoism had changed into altruism, or cruelty into pity". Reaction formation occurs when the victim believes that their feelings or thoughts are unethical or could cause them anxiety. Enchanted Jones experiences reaction formation in several parts of the story.

Data 12

> "Yes. Yes, I want to be here." I almost believe the words coming out of my mouth. They ask me a few more questions but quickly realize my answers are going to remain the same."

While being questioned by the police, Enchanted participates in an act of reaction formation. Enchanted cannot access her phone without his permission. Her parents can no longer see her or get in touch with her as a result. Her parents called the police to investigate her "unusual" absence because they were so concerned. Enchanted utilizes an act of reaction formation to reduce her fear of being physically abused by Korey when the police came to her home to question her. Lying is her reaction formation. In an effort to calm her fears and ensure her safety, she provided them with a deceptive answer. Enchanted pretended to be willing to be with Korey as a false alibi. When the police question her about whether she would be willing to stay at his place, she initially expresses a great deal of worry and anxiety about staying with him, as evidenced by her statement, *"I almost believe the words coming out of my mouth."* She had to lie to the police to protect herself, though, because she feared that he might physically punish her. It relates to the notion of reaction formation proposed by Freud in 1964, which holds that people change their fear into something more bearable. To prevent Korey from punishing her and to increase her already high level of worry, Enchanted must turn her nervousness into a dishonest act.

Data 13

> "I hesitate before kneeling. Korey approaches and I have to crane my neck back to look up at him. He steps closer, crotch in my face, and my stomach drops. "Please, Korey," I whimper. "I don't want to fight. I love you."

Enchanted goes through another reaction formation once the police officers have left. The fact that the police had visited his home in search of Enchanted infuriated Korey. He then threatened to "satisfy" him as a substitute for her apologizing. Enchanted began to worry about her safety as a result. She uses love as a kind of self-defense due to her severe anxiety. The quotation above makes it clear that Enchanted was afraid for her safety, yet she showed her love for him because he was the one who would punish her. She expresses her fear of what he is doing to her in the sentence *"my stomach drops."* To avoid conflict with Korey, which could cause her anxiety, Enchanted reveals her feelings in the occurrence *"I don't want to fight. I love you"* as a kind of self-defense against anxiety and tension; Enchanted's dread is transformed into love.

Sublimation

Sublimation is a sort of defense mechanism whereby an individual transforms morally and socially unacceptable thoughts or sentiments into more socially acceptable behaviors. According to Freud (1964, p. 94), sublimation is

a process that involves redirecting sexual or negative urges toward other, more positive goals. A person does this to express their anxiety or other negative emotions without violating moral principles. Enchanted Jones experiences sublimation in several parts of the story.

Data 14

> "Korey leans forward in his chair. And somehow, seeing him, the one person I can make out in a room full of nameless faces, soothes my nerves. So I sing to him, just him."

When Enchanted is going to perform in front of a large crowd, she undergoes sublimation. The girl who sang before her did a good job, so she was afraid she would ruin her performance. Then, one of the best musicians in the US, Korey, shows up as a guest at the audition. In the room full of strangers, Korey is the only one holding her gaze when she sings. Therefore, Enchanted channeling her anxiety by continuing to sing. Enchanted keeps singing while concentrating on Korey. She utilizes singing as a coping mechanism to get over her anxiety rather than focusing on it. This eventually encourages her to perform well and win the singing competition in which she is participating.

Data 15

> "Mackenzie and Hannah give me a quick wave but don't meet my eye. Coach won't let me back on the team yet but says I can practice, good for my therapy."

Enchanted practices swimming in an attempt to cope with her anxiousness. Due to the stress she experienced with Korey, Enchanted disregarded her own interests. She sacrificed her swimming skills as she worked with Korey to achieve her career as an aspiring singer. It was due to her hectic schedule of performing as Korey's backing vocalist in numerous cities. She then completely gave up all of her hobbies because she was afraid that he would punish her each time she did something without his consent. However, she was encouraged to resume her interests after seeing a therapist. Enchanted returned to swimming as a way to cope with her anxiety. Now that she has the confidence to go for it, Enchanted is back on her swim team. Enchanted's treatment benefits from swimming, as it allows her to express her anxiety in a relatively positive way. She can unwind mentally and improve her swimming skills as a result. Her actions are consistent with Freud's (1964) theory of sublimation, which holds that an individual can transform their anxiety into a more socially acceptable activity.

Discussion

This section describes the results of the anxiety experienced by the main character and how she overcomes it using the theory of Freud's psychoanalysis, consisting of anxiety (1933) and defense mechanisms (1964). The writer found that there are three types of anxiety experienced by the main character: realistic, moral, and neurotic. Moreover, the writer found six types of defense mechanisms employed by the main character: repression, denial, projection, displacement, reaction formation, and sublimation. There were five realistic, two moral, and twenty neurotic anxieties. In addition, there was one repression, three denials, one projection, one displacement, three reaction formations, and three sublimations. However, this study only picked one to two data points from each finding.

Based on the discussion in the previous section, the main character's anxiety is portrayed as realistic, moral, and neurotic. First, Enchanted's anxiety over circumstances beyond her control causes her realistic anxiety. Second, her sense of morality, which she betrayed by lying to her mother and the police, is what causes her moral anxiety. Finally, Korey's mistreatment of her triggers off her neurotic anxiety. Enchanted develops neurotic anxiety as a result of her disobedient behavior against her partner, Korey, which makes her fear the consequences. The main character in this novel experiences neurotic anxiety regularly.

Additionally, the main character uses defense mechanisms to get over her anxiety. To get over her anxiety, the main character employs six different types of defense mechanisms. These include sublimation, displacement, projection, denial, repression, and reaction formation. The main character frequently employs sublimation, reaction formation, and denial as protection techniques. She can reduce her worry about the struggle she is facing by using defense mechanisms.

This study has several differences from the previous studies. First, the study by Kusuma et al. (2024) explored how the main character's id affected her decision-making, while this study examines how the ego, the id, and the superego affected the main character's actions. Therefore, this study reveals that the main character experiences realistic (the ego), moral (the superego), and neurotic (the id) anxieties. Second, the study conducted by Susanto

and Nurmaily (2023) focuses more on the cause of the character's realistic, moral, and neurotic anxiety. In contrast, this study focuses only on the main character. In addition, this study not only examines the cause of the main character's anxiety but also how she overcomes it through defense mechanisms. Third, the study by Zamzami and Wulan (2023) differs from this study. The study done by Zamzami and Wulan showed the main character only experienced two types of anxiety: moral and neurotic anxiety, as well as applying two types of defense mechanisms: rationalization and reaction formation to overcome her anxiety. In comparison, this study examines the main character's experiences of three types of anxiety: realistic, moral, and neurotic. Moreover, the main character employs six types of defense mechanisms to deal with her anxiety: repression, denial, projection, displacement, reaction formation, and sublimation.

CONCLUSION

The writer applied Freud's psychoanalysis theory, which includes anxiety (1933) and defense mechanisms (1964). Based on the discussion in the previous section, the writer found that there are three types of anxiety experienced by the main character: realistic, moral, and neurotic. Moreover, the writer found six types of defense mechanisms employed by the main character: repression, denial, projection, displacement, reaction formation, and sublimation. It can be concluded that neurotic anxiety is the type of anxiety that often happens to the main character. On the other hand, denial, reaction formation, and sublimation are three types of defense mechanisms the main character frequently employs.

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Linguistics and Literature Journal
Vol. 6, No. 200 - 206
E-ISSN: 2723-7273

available online at: http://jim.teknokrat.ac.id/index.php/linguistics_and_literature/index

CONTRASTIVE AND ERROR ANALYSIS OF INDONESIAN INFLUENCE ON ENGLISH ACADEMIC WRITING

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Received: (October 2025) **Accepted**: (November 2025) **Published :** (December 2025)

Abstract

This study investigates the influence of the Indonesian language on English academic writing among Indonesian university students by integrating contrastive and error analysis approaches. Data were collected from 30 student essays and analyzed to identify grammatical, lexical, and rhetorical errors caused by first language (L1) interference. The results revealed that grammatical and syntactic errors were most frequent, including tense misuse, omission of plural markers, and article errors, followed by lexical transfer through literal translation and discourse-level issues such as indirect argumentation and poor coherence. These patterns reflect the structural and rhetorical contrasts between Indonesian and English. The findings suggest that students' writing difficulties are rooted in both linguistic and cultural transfer, emphasizing the need for contrastive-based instruction and genre-oriented writing pedagogy. By understanding how Indonesian linguistic features shape English writing performance, educators can design more effective strategies to enhance students' academic literacy and cross-linguistic awareness.

Keywords: academic writing, contrastive analysis, error analysis, Indonesian interference

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, English has become the dominant language of academic communication, serving as the primary medium for publishing research, exchanging knowledge, and participating in scholarly discourse (Tulasi et al., 2025). For non-native English speakers, including Indonesian students, writing academically in English presents numerous linguistic and rhetorical challenges (Erniwati, 2012). Despite years of formal instruction in English, many Indonesian learners continue to display distinctive patterns of writing that reveal the underlying influence of their first language (L1) (Zein et al., 2020). This phenomenon is particularly visible in academic contexts where students are expected to produce cohesive, grammatically accurate, and argumentatively sound texts that align with international academic norms. Understanding how Indonesian linguistic structures influence English academic writing is, therefore crucial for identifying typical errors, improving pedagogical practices, and developing effective writing instruction tailored to the Indonesian context.

The influence of one's native language on second language (L2) performance has been extensively discussed in second language acquisition (SLA) theories (Fitri & Alawiyah, 2023). One of the foundational approaches to this issue is Contrastive Analysis (CA), which emerged in the mid-twentieth century and aimed to predict learners' errors by comparing the linguistic systems of the L1 and L2 (Lado, 1957). The assumption was that similarities between the two languages would facilitate learning, while differences would lead to interference and errors. Although later developments in linguistics questioned the predictive power of CA, it remains a valuable tool for highlighting structural contrasts and understanding cross-linguistic transfer (Van Wonderen & Unsworth, 2020). When applied to Indonesian and English, contrastive analysis reveals differences in syntax, morphology, and discourse organization that often manifest in students' English academic writing.

In addition to contrastive analysis, Error Analysis (EA) provides a complementary perspective. While CA focuses on the potential areas of difficulty, EA investigates the actual errors learners make in real communicative contexts (Corder, 1967). By categorizing and interpreting these errors, researchers can uncover underlying learning strategies, interlanguage development, and the cognitive processes involved in L2 writing. In the context of Indonesian learners, EA offers empirical evidence of how L1 transfer, limited exposure to authentic English texts, and educational habits rooted in the national curriculum shape students' academic writing competence. Combining CA and EA thus allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the linguistic and psychological dimensions of writing errors among Indonesian students.

Indonesian and English differ significantly in several linguistic domains. Structurally, Indonesian is an analytic language with minimal inflection, while English relies heavily on morphological changes to indicate tense, number, and aspect (Fitria, 2025). This contrast often leads to common grammatical errors among Indonesian writers, such as the omission of the third-person singular -s, confusion in verb tense usage, or incorrect pluralization. Moreover, Herman et al. (2025) the Indonesian word order tends to be more flexible than English, resulting in issues related to sentence coherence and clause embedding. On the discourse level, Indonesian writing conventions often emphasize indirectness, repetition for emphasis, and a preference for circular reasoning, whereas English academic writing values linear progression, explicit argumentation, and concise expression. These differences can cause Indonesian students to produce texts that appear verbose, loosely organized, or lacking in argumentative clarity when judged by English academic standards.

Another influential factor lies in rhetorical and cultural dimensions of writing. Indonesian writers, influenced by collectivist communication styles and oral traditions, may prioritize politeness, emotional resonance, or moral appeals over the critical, evidence-based reasoning typical of English academic prose (Hossain, 2024). Consequently, their English academic writing may show tendencies such as avoiding strong claims, overusing generalizations, or failing to synthesize sources effectively. These rhetorical transfer issues underscore that mastering academic writing in English involves not only grammatical accuracy but also adopting a new set of discourse norms and epistemological values. Furthermore, the educational context in Indonesia plays a pivotal role in shaping writing performance (Lestari & Kusumawati, 2025). English instruction in many schools still prioritizes grammar drills, translation exercises, and test-oriented learning, leaving little room for authentic writing practice or feedback on content organization. As a result, even university students often approach academic writing as a task of linguistic correctness rather than as an act of critical inquiry or scholarly communication. This pedagogical limitation intensifies the negative transfer from Indonesian to English, as students rely on familiar syntactic patterns and rhetorical habits derived from their L1 when composing academic texts.

Recent studies have shown that Indonesian students' difficulties in writing English academic papers extend beyond grammar and vocabulary to include cohesion, coherence, and argument development (Toba et al., 2019). Common error types include misuse of linking devices, inappropriate lexical choice, run-on sentences, and paragraph unity issues all of which can be traced to cross-linguistic influence and limited genre awareness. Despite these findings, research combining contrastive and error analysis approaches remains limited, particularly in the context of higher education where English academic writing is both a skill and a gate keeping mechanism for scholarly success. This study seeks to fill that gap by systematically comparing Indonesian and English linguistic structures and analyzing the recurrent errors found in students' academic writing.

By integrating contrastive and error analysis, this study aims to identify not only what errors occur, but also why they occur and how they reflect the cognitive and linguistic transition from L1 to L2. The findings are expected to contribute to the understanding of interlanguage development among Indonesian learners, offering insights for English teachers, curriculum designers, and writing instructors in designing more responsive pedagogical interventions. Ultimately, improving students' awareness of linguistic contrasts and common error patterns can foster greater grammatical accuracy, rhetorical appropriateness, and communicative confidence in English academic writing.

Examining the influence of Indonesian on English academic writing through both contrastive and error analysis frameworks provides a multidimensional perspective on L2 learning challenges. It highlights that errors are not merely signs of failure but rather indicators of linguistic development and interlanguage growth. Recognizing and addressing these influences can bridge the gap between local writing traditions and global academic standards, empowering Indonesian students to participate more effectively in the international academic community.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method combined with contrastive and error analysis frameworks to investigate the influence of Indonesian linguistic and rhetorical features on English academic writing produced by Indonesian university students. The qualitative descriptive design was chosen because it allows for a detailed and contextualized exploration of linguistic phenomena as they naturally occur in written texts (Rustamana et al., 2024). Rather than relying on numerical data or statistical generalizations, the qualitative approach enables the researcher to capture the depth and complexity of the students' language use, revealing how first language (L1) structures and rhetorical patterns manifest in their second language (L2) writing. This approach is particularly suitable for understanding the types, sources, and characteristics of errors in English writing that result from Indonesian language interference.

The data for this research were collected from a corpus of academic essays written by Indonesian undergraduate students enrolled in English-related study programs. The selection of participants was based on purposive sampling, focusing on students who had completed at least intermediate-level academic writing courses. This ensured that the collected texts reflected the genuine challenges of English academic writing among learners who have acquired basic writing competence but still exhibit traces of L1 influence. The students were asked to submit argumentative or expository essays written as part of their coursework, with a length ranging between 500 and 800 words. These essays were chosen because such genres demand logical organization, cohesion, and grammatical precision areas where cross-linguistic influence tends to be most visible.

All collected texts were first compiled, anonymized, and categorized according to topic and writing proficiency level to maintain ethical standards and ensure analytical consistency. The analysis began with Error Analysis (EA) to identify and classify errors systematically. Following Corder's (1967) framework, the analysis proceeded through four stages: error identification, description, explanation, and evaluation. In the identification stage, every grammatical, lexical, and syntactic deviation from standard English norms was highlighted. In the description stage, errors were grouped into categories such as morphological errors, syntactic errors, and lexical errors. During the explanation stage, each error was examined for possible sources, whether it resulted from interlingual transfer (influence from Indonesian), intralingual factors (overgeneralization or simplification), or developmental factors related to interlanguage progression. Finally, in the evaluation stage, the frequency and severity of errors were assessed to determine which linguistic areas were most affected by L1 interference.

Alongside error analysis, Contrastive Analysis (CA) was conducted to provide a comparative linguistic basis for interpreting the identified errors (Haimbodi & Woldemariam, 2024). This stage involved systematically comparing the structural features of Indonesian and English in relation to the types of errors observed. For instance, differences in verb tense systems, article usage, and sentence ordering between Indonesian and English were analyzed to explain why certain grammatical forms were consistently problematic. The CA framework helped the researcher to trace errors back to their linguistic origins, demonstrating how specific Indonesian patterns, such as the absence of verb inflection, flexible word order, and implicit subject usage tend to transfer into English writing. Through this comparative approach, the study not only documented the surface-level errors but also revealed the underlying cross-linguistic mechanisms that shape learners' writing behaviors.

The qualitative data were further supported by textual analysis, focusing on rhetorical and discourse-level features of the students' essays. This included examining how ideas were organized, how arguments were developed, and how coherence was maintained across paragraphs. Indonesian rhetorical conventions, which often favor indirectness and repetition, were compared with the linear and explicit argumentation typical of English academic writing (Nguyen et al., 2020). The purpose of this stage was to uncover not only grammatical deviations but also broader discourse patterns reflecting Indonesian cultural and rhetorical influence on English writing. The findings from this discourse-level analysis were triangulated with the results of the linguistic error and contrastive analyses to provide a holistic picture of Indonesian influence.

To ensure reliability and validity, inter-rater verification was applied during the error classification process. Two experienced English writing instructors independently reviewed a sample of the analyzed essays to confirm the categorization of errors and the interpretation of their sources. Discrepancies were discussed and resolved through consensus, minimizing researcher bias. Additionally, the findings were cross-checked with relevant literature on Indonesian-English linguistic contrasts to strengthen the analytical credibility. The choice of combining contrastive and error analysis within a qualitative descriptive framework is grounded in both theoretical and practical rationales. Theoretically, this combination aligns with the interlanguage hypothesis, which views second language learning as a dynamic process shaped by both L1 transfer and internal rule formation. Practically, it

provides actionable insights for educators by pinpointing specific linguistic and rhetorical areas that require pedagogical attention. Unlike purely quantitative approaches, this method captures the nuances of learner language and the contextual factors influencing it, making it particularly suitable for applied linguistic studies in EFL settings like Indonesia.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of 30 academic essays written by Indonesian undergraduate students revealed a consistent pattern of linguistic and rhetorical interference from the Indonesian language. The data showed that while students demonstrated a fair understanding of academic writing conventions such as thesis statements, topic sentences, and cohesive devices many aspects of their writing reflected the influence of Indonesian grammatical structures and discourse habits. Using the frameworks of Contrastive Analysis (CA) and Error Analysis (EA), a total of 1,247 errors were identified and categorized into grammatical, syntactic, lexical, and discourse-level deviations. The majority of these errors (approximately 62%) were linked to interlingual transfer, or the direct influence of Indonesian linguistic patterns on English. The remaining errors (38%) resulted from intralingual factors, such as overgeneralization of English rules or developmental simplifications.

The findings also revealed that most students struggled with grammatical accuracy, particularly in the use of verb tenses, subject-verb agreement, and article usage. These issues are closely related to structural contrasts between English and Indonesian, since the latter does not use inflectional markers to indicate tense or agreement. For instance, the sentence "She go to campus every day" was frequently observed, reflecting the Indonesian equivalent "Dia pergi ke kampus setiap hari", where the verb pergi remains unchanged regardless of tense or subject. Such errors demonstrate that learners often rely on L1 grammatical habits when constructing English sentences.

At the discourse level, many essays displayed characteristics of Indonesian rhetorical style, such as repetition of key ideas, indirect argumentation, and lack of linear progression. For example, instead of presenting arguments in a straightforward cause-effect sequence, some students wrote circular explanations that restated similar points in different forms. This tendency aligns with Kaplan's (1966) contrastive rhetoric theory, which describes how L1 cultural and rhetorical norms influence L2 writing structures. Additionally, cohesion problems were observed, with overuse or misuse of transition words like so, then, or because, which were often translated directly from Indonesian connectors such as jadi, lalu, and karena.

Lexical errors were also prevalent, reflecting limited vocabulary range and inappropriate word choice due to literal translation from Indonesian. For example, the expression "make a research" was common, influenced by the Indonesian phrase "membuat penelitian". Similarly, "follow the task" was used instead of "do the assignment". These examples suggest that learners often rely on Indonesian semantic structures to form English collocations, leading to unnatural or incorrect expressions. The findings indicate that Indonesian learners of English continue to experience strong L1 interference in both linguistic and rhetorical dimensions of academic writing. The following subsections discuss these findings in greater detail, organized according to the main analytical focuses of this study: (1) grammatical and syntactic interference, (2) lexical transfer and word choice, (3) discourse organization and coherence, and (4) pedagogical implications based on error patterns.

Grammatical and Syntactic Interference

One of the most evident findings in this study is the dominance of grammatical and syntactic errors resulting from Indonesian influence. Among the 1,247 total errors, 543 (43.5%) fell into this category. The most frequent grammatical problems involved verb tense usage, subject-verb agreement, article omission, and pluralization. The contrastive analysis between English and Indonesian helps explain these recurring issues. Indonesian verbs do not change form to mark tense, while English requires morphological modifications, such as -ed for past tense or -s for the third-person singular present. Consequently, students often wrote sentences like "He studied at University last year" instead of "He studied at the university last year." Similarly, omission of the plural marker -s was observed in sentences such as "Many students in Indonesia face difficulty in writing." These patterns indicate that Indonesian learners tend to transfer their L1 habit of using invariant word forms into English.

Syntactic interference was also prominent, especially in word order and clause construction. Indonesian syntax allows for more flexibility in arranging sentence elements, whereas English requires a fixed Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) order. As a result, students occasionally produced sentences such as "Is very important for student" a structure resembling the Indonesian order "Sangat penting kemampuan menulis bagi mahasiswa." Additionally, learners often struggled with complex sentence formation, leading to long, run-on sentences connected by multiple

and or because, mirroring the paratactic style of Indonesian writing. These findings align with earlier studies Toba et al. (2019) that highlight L1 transfer as a major source of grammatical errors in Indonesian EFL writing. The consistency of these errors suggests that despite years of English instruction, learners' internalization of grammatical rules remains heavily influenced by their native language. Thus, focused instruction on tense, agreement, and syntactic structure remains essential to help students achieve grammatical accuracy.

Lexical Transfer and Word Choice

Lexical errors accounted for approximately 28% of all identified mistakes. The majority of these errors resulted from literal translation of Indonesian phrases and collocations into English. Students often used word combinations that are grammatically correct but semantically awkward or inappropriate in academic contexts. Examples include "discuss about" (influenced by "membahas tentang"), "make a research" ("membuat penelitian"), and "take a note" ("mencatat"). Such errors demonstrate how Indonesian semantic associations influence the selection and combination of English words.

A closer analysis reveals that Indonesian learners often rely on lexical equivalence strategies when facing lexical gaps in English. Instead of searching for idiomatic or contextually accurate expressions, they tend to translate directly from Indonesian. This process, known as negative lexical transfer, leads to unnatural phrasing and occasionally changes the intended meaning. For instance, the phrase "The lecturer give spirit to the students" was intended to mean "The lecturer motivates the students," but the use of "give spirit" reflects a direct translation of "memberi semangat."

Furthermore, the data showed frequent confusion between words with similar meanings, such as "effect" vs. "affect," and "learn" vs. "study." These mix-ups are partly because in Indonesian, a single word (belajar) covers multiple meanings depending on context. Without explicit teaching on English word collocations and semantic nuances, learners often overgeneralize or misapply vocabulary. Contrastive analysis helps explain these phenomena, as Indonesian relies more on contextual interpretation than on strict lexical collocation patterns. Therefore, students' errors are not random but reflect bigger structural and conceptual differences between the two languages. To address this issue, vocabulary instruction should emphasize contextualized collocations and semantic mapping, enabling learners to acquire more native-like lexical awareness in academic writing.

Discourse Organization and Coherence

Beyond grammatical and lexical issues, the findings revealed significant L1 influence at the discourse level, particularly in text organization and coherence. Many students demonstrated difficulties in constructing logically sequenced arguments. Instead of following the English rhetorical expectation of linear development (introduction–argument–conclusion), several essays exhibited a circular or repetitive style, where the same points were restated in different words throughout the text. This pattern reflects the Indonesian rhetorical tradition, which values reinforcement and elaboration over concise linear reasoning.

The analysis also found that students often relied heavily on additive connectors like and, also, and then, while rarely using adversative or causal connectors such as however, therefore, or as a result. For example, a paragraph might read: "Education is important for the country's development. And the government must improve the education. And the teacher also must be creative." This repetitive pattern mirrors Indonesian writing conventions where sequential conjunctions such as dan or lalu are used extensively to maintain flow, even when logical contrast or causality is intended.

Cohesion problems were further observed in the misuse of reference devices (this, it, they), inconsistent paragraph unity, and a lack of clear topic sentences. These findings support Kaplan's (1966) contrastive rhetoric theory, which suggests that rhetorical patterns are culturally embedded. Indonesian students may feel more comfortable with implicit organization and narrative elaboration, while English academic writing demands explicit signposting and analytical clarity. Improving students' awareness of these discourse-level contrasts is essential for enhancing academic writing competence. Instruction should focus on teaching organizational structures, argument mapping, and explicit use of cohesive devices appropriate for academic purposes. By developing rhetorical sensitivity, learners can move beyond linguistic accuracy toward effective and persuasive academic communication.

Pedagogical Implications Based on Error Patterns

The combined findings from grammatical, lexical, and discourse analyses carry significant pedagogical implications for English academic writing instruction in Indonesia. First, the high frequency of interlingual errors underscores the need for contrastive awareness training in writing classrooms. Teachers should not merely correct errors but explicitly demonstrate how English and Indonesian differ in structure and rhetorical logic. Activities such as sentence transformation, cross-linguistic comparison, and translation critique can help students recognize and internalize these contrasts.

Since many lexical and collocational errors stem from literal translation, instructors should integrate corpus-based vocabulary instruction to expose students to authentic academic word combinations. Teaching tools like the Academic Word List (AWL) and concordance examples can guide students in selecting appropriate lexical patterns. Moreover, encouraging students to read and analyze model academic texts can naturally enhance their awareness of native-like usage. Addressing discourse-level interference requires pedagogical emphasis on genre-based writing instruction. By teaching the structural and rhetorical conventions of academic genres such as argumentative essays, research reports, and literature reviews, students can learn to organize their ideas more coherently. Peer review and feedback sessions can also help students reflect on how effectively they communicate arguments in English compared to Indonesian.

Teacher feedback should be diagnostic and reflective, focusing on patterns of error rather than isolated mistakes. For instance, when a student consistently omits articles or misuses tenses, feedback should include a contrastive explanation of how English marks these grammatical features differently from Indonesian. In this way, feedback becomes a tool for linguistic awareness rather than mere correction. These findings demonstrate that Indonesian interference remains a central challenge in English academic writing. By integrating contrastive linguistics and error analysis into pedagogy, educators can design more informed, culturally sensitive, and effective writing instruction that bridges the linguistic gap between Indonesian and English academic discourse.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore the extent and nature of Indonesian influence on English academic writing through the combined frameworks of contrastive and error analysis. The findings revealed that Indonesian university students' writing is profoundly shaped by their first language at multiple linguistic levels: grammatical, lexical, syntactic, and rhetorical. Grammatical interference emerged as the most dominant category, with frequent errors in tense formation, subject–verb agreement, and article usage, all of which can be traced to structural differences between English and Indonesian. Lexical transfer manifested through literal translations and unnatural collocations, while discourse-level interference appeared in circular reasoning, excessive repetition, and weak paragraph cohesion.

These findings confirm that L1 interference remains a persistent barrier to achieving proficiency in English academic writing. However, they also highlight that errors are not simply signs of failure but indicators of interlanguage development and cross-linguistic negotiation. The contrastive and error analysis approaches together provided valuable insights into why these errors occur, revealing that learners often rely on familiar Indonesian linguistic and rhetorical structures when facing complex English academic conventions.

Pedagogically, the study underscores the importance of raising learners' awareness of linguistic contrasts and rhetorical expectations between Indonesian and English. Teachers should adopt a contrastive approach in instruction, explicitly comparing both languages and providing corrective feedback that explains the source of common errors. Genre-based and corpus-informed writing instruction can also strengthen students' control over academic discourse. Future research may extend this investigation by analyzing larger datasets across different genres or educational levels or by exploring how metalinguistic awareness training can mitigate L1 interference. Ultimately, addressing Indonesian influence in English academic writing is essential not only for linguistic accuracy but also for empowering students to communicate more effectively in the global academic community.

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Linguistics and Literature Journal
Vol. 6, No. 207 - 214
E-ISSN: 2723-7273

available online at: http://jim.teknokrat.ac.id/index.php/linguistics_and_literature/index

WORKING MEMORY, SYNTA, AND ATTENTION: PSYCHOLINGUISTICS INSIGH INTO COGNITIVE LOAD DURING SENTENCE PROCESSING

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Received: (October 2025) **Accepted**: (November 2025) **Published :** (December 2025)

Abstract

This study investigates how cognitive load affects learners' sentence processing during English learning, focusing on junior high school students in Medan, Indonesia. Using a qualitative descriptive design within a psycholinguistic framework, data were collected through classroom observations, sentence-based comprehension tasks, and semi-structured interviews with twelve eighth-grade students. The findings revealed that students experienced notable cognitive strain when processing long or syntactically complex English sentences, often manifested through hesitation, rereading, and verbal confusion. Three key aspects emerged: working memory limitation, syntactic complexity awareness, and attention management. Learners with limited working memory struggled to maintain meaning across lengthy sentences, while those with higher syntactic awareness managed complexity more effectively through chunking or focusing on key structures. Attention fluctuations were also observed, influencing comprehension consistency. The study concludes that sentence processing in EFL contexts is shaped by the interaction of cognitive capacity, grammatical understanding, and attentional control. Pedagogically, the findings suggest that English teachers should design learning tasks that minimize unnecessary cognitive load while fostering metacognitive awareness and self-regulation in sentence comprehension.

Keywords: attention management, cognitive load, EFL learners, psycholinguistics, sentence processing, working memory, syntactic awareness

INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic process of learning a language, understanding how learners mentally process sentences is central to grasping the cognitive mechanisms that shape language comprehension and production. Language as a tool of communication has been learned since children were grown. The way to acquire language needs to be explored to guide children's language development. (Ramli et al., 2022). The ability to process and interpret sentences accurately requires the integration of various cognitive skills such as working memory, attention, and linguistic knowledge. In psycholinguistics, this process is often explained through the concept of cognitive load, which refers to the amount of mental effort being used in the working memory at any given time (Mehmood, 2025). When learners encounter complex linguistic structures or unfamiliar vocabulary, their cognitive load increases, affecting their ability to comprehend or produce sentences effectively (Ahmed & Yahya, 2025). Therefore, examining the role of cognitive load in learners' sentence processing provides valuable insights into how mental resources are allocated during language learning, especially among adolescent learners who are still developing both their linguistic and cognitive capacities.

This research focuses on understanding how cognitive load affects sentence processing among junior high school learners in Medan, Indonesia. In many educational contexts, including Indonesian schools, English is taught as a foreign language and often perceived as a cognitively demanding subject (Dewi et al., 2025). Students are required to process linguistic input that differs significantly from their native language structures, which increases the cognitive burden during learning. In the observed context a public junior high school in Medan students often struggle with understanding complex English sentences, particularly those involving subordinate clauses or unfamiliar syntactic patterns. Teachers have reported that students can recognize individual words but face difficulties constructing meaning from longer sentences. This situation highlights the importance of examining sentence processing not merely as a linguistic skill but as a psycholinguistic process influenced by the learners' mental capacity and the cognitive demands of the learning tasks (Malyk, 2024).

The significance of this study lies in its potential to bridge psycholinguistic theory and practical language teaching. While English language instruction in Indonesian schools primarily focuses on grammatical accuracy and vocabulary mastery (Boy Jon et al., 2021), less attention has been given to the cognitive processes underlying comprehension. By analyzing how cognitive load influences sentence processing, this research can provide useful implications for designing classroom tasks that are cognitively manageable yet linguistically effective. Understanding the relationship between task complexity and mental effort can help teachers scaffold learning activities to prevent cognitive overload, allowing students to build comprehension skills more efficiently (Zhao et al., 2024). Moreover, this study contributes to the growing field of educational psycholinguistics, where insights about mental processing are applied to improve teaching methodologies and learning outcomes.

Previous studies have explored various aspects of cognitive load in language learning (Asma & Dallel, 2020). For example, (Brunken et al., 2010) emphasized that learners have a limited working memory capacity, and excessive cognitive demands can hinder learning efficiency. In the context of sentence processing, Linck (2016) found that working memory plays a crucial role in maintaining syntactic and semantic information simultaneously during comprehension. Similarly, Martin & Ellis (2012) highlighted that sentence interpretation relies heavily on the phonological loop and central executive components of working memory.

However, despite the growing literature on cognitive load and sentence processing(Surbakti et al., 2024), few studies have been conducted in the Indonesian EFL context, especially among secondary school learners. Most existing research focuses on university students or adult learners, leaving a gap in understanding how younger learners, who are still developing both cognitive maturity and linguistic awareness, manage the mental demands of English sentence processing. Moreover, the Indonesian language differs syntactically and morphologically from English, which may increase the cognitive demands of understanding English sentences. For instance, Indonesian follows a relatively flexible word order and does not use inflectional endings as extensively as English does. These differences can contribute to higher cognitive load when learners attempt to interpret English syntactic structures. Therefore, investigating this issue among junior high school students in Medan provides a valuable contribution to both local and global discussions on psycholinguistic learning processes.

The focus of this research is to identify and describe how different levels of cognitive load affect students' sentence comprehension and production. Specifically, it seeks to understand which sentence types or task conditions trigger higher mental effort and how this effort influences learning performance. The study also explores whether students with higher working memory capacity demonstrate better comprehension under high cognitive load conditions. By analyzing learners' behavioral responses and comprehension outcomes, this research aims to uncover the psycholinguistic mechanisms that operate when students process sentences under varying degrees of cognitive demand.

The significance of this inquiry extends beyond theoretical understanding. In classroom practice, teachers often assign reading and grammar tasks without considering the cognitive limitations of their students. When tasks are too demanding, students may disengage or resort to rote memorization rather than meaningful processing. On the other hand, tasks that are too simple may not stimulate cognitive growth. Thus, understanding cognitive load dynamics can help teachers calibrate task difficulty, integrate scaffolding techniques, and promote deep learning through manageable challenges. This balance aligns with the psycholinguistic view that successful language learning depends not only on exposure and practice but also on the efficient use of cognitive resources.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design grounded in a psycholinguistic perspective to explore how cognitive load shapes learners' sentence processing during English language learning. The qualitative approach was chosen because the study aimed to understand the internal mental experiences and strategies that learners employ when processing sentences under varying cognitive demands, rather than to measure statistical relationships or numerical differences (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Within the field of psycholinguistics, qualitative inquiry allows researchers to access the mental and behavioral dimensions of language comprehension that cannot be captured solely through quantitative instruments.

The design focused on eliciting rich, in-depth descriptions of learners' thought processes, difficulties, and coping mechanisms during classroom sentence comprehension activities. By focusing on natural classroom interaction, the study sought to uncover how cognitive load manifests in observable behavior such as hesitation, rereading, or verbal confusion and in learners' self-reported reflections about task difficulty. This design was particularly suited to the study's context in an Indonesian junior high school, where learners are still developing foundational linguistic and cognitive skills.

Participants

The participants in this study were twelve eighth-grade students from one of junior high school in Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia. They were selected using purposive sampling, based on recommendations from the English teacher who identified students with intermediate English proficiency and varied academic performance. The selected group consisted of six male and six female students aged between 13 and 14 years old. These students had been learning English for at least three years and were considered capable of engaging in reflective discussions about their learning experiences.

The choice of this group was motivated by their familiarity with basic English grammar but evident difficulty in processing complex sentence structures, which provided an ideal context for observing cognitive load effects. The school is located in an urban area of Medan where English is taught as a foreign language, primarily for academic purposes. All participants provided informed consent, and permission was obtained from the school administration and parents before the research. The study adhered to ethical considerations including voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality.

Instruments

The main instruments used in this research were classroom observation sheets, sentence-based learning tasks, and semi-structured interviews. The observation sheet was designed to capture behavioral indicators of cognitive load such as signs of confusion, rereading, hesitation, or self-correction while completing English sentence tasks. The sentence-based tasks functioned as a stimulus to elicit natural sentence processing behavior; they consisted of short reading comprehension exercises containing both simple and complex English sentences. The semi-structured interviews served as the primary source of qualitative data, providing access to learners' reflections and mental experiences during task performance. The interview guide included open-ended questions focusing on students' perceptions of task difficulty, strategies used to understand the sentences, moments when they felt mentally overwhelmed, and how they managed comprehension under such conditions. The combination of classroom observation and interviews allowed for data triangulation between external behaviors and internal cognitive experiences.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted over two consecutive weeks in the participants' English classroom. The researcher collaborated with the English teacher to integrate the sentence processing activities naturally within ongoing lessons, ensuring that students remained in a familiar learning environment. Each session began with short reading tasks where students were asked to comprehend and respond to English sentences of varying complexity. During these activities, the researcher acted as a non-participatory observer, documenting verbal and non-verbal indicators of mental effort. For instance, instances of long pauses, repeated reading of the same line, or verbal expressions of confusion ("Miss, what does this mean?") were noted as possible reflections of cognitive load in action.

After each session, the researcher selected several students for brief reflective interviews. These interviews were conducted individually in a quiet corner of the classroom to maintain comfort and authenticity. Students were

encouraged to speak in Indonesian to freely express their thoughts. The interviews typically lasted between 10 to 15 minutes, allowing students to describe what they found easy or difficult, which sentences took more time to understand, and what mental or linguistic strategies they used. Throughout this process, the researcher maintained a reflective field journal to record contextual details, emotional cues, and spontaneous remarks that enriched the interpretive understanding of learners' cognitive experiences. This approach ensured that the collected data represented not only the observable effects of cognitive load but also the subjective, introspective dimension s of learners' experiences. By situating data collection within real classroom activities, the study captured the authentic interaction between mental effort and sentence comprehension as it naturally unfolded in the learning process.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed a thematic qualitative approach, emphasizing interpretation over measurement. The researcher began by transcribing the interview recordings and compiling observation notes into a unified dataset. The data were then repeatedly read to identify recurring patterns and meaningful segments related to cognitive load during sentence processing. The coding process involved labelling excerpts that indicated moments of mental struggle, processing strategies, and shifts in comprehension behavior. For example, statements like "aku harus membacanya dua kali panjang sekali" (I had to read it twice because it was too long) or "aku coba terjemahkan dulu di kepalaku"(I tried to translate it in my head first) were coded under themes such as mental effort, repetition as a strategy, and translation-based processing.

As themes emerged, the researcher categorized them into broader conceptual groups aligned with psycholinguistic constructs such as working memory limitation, syntactic complexity awareness, and attention management. These thematic categories were then analyzed in relation to observation data to ensure interpretive coherence. Observational patterns like extended silence or visible frustration were cross-referenced with interview statements describing mental fatigue or confusion, thereby validating the findings through triangulation. The interpretive stage of analysis aimed to link students' lived experiences with theoretical explanations of cognitive load. Through this analysis, the study sought to illuminate how learners' subjective perceptions of difficulty correspond to the psycholinguistic realities of limited cognitive capacity.

Rather than seeking generalizable results, the qualitative analysis provided deep insights into the internal and behavioral manifestations of cognitive load among junior high school learners. This process revealed not only how learners struggled with complex English sentences but also how they consciously adapted their comprehension strategies to manage cognitive pressure.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that learners experienced varying degrees of cognitive load during sentence processing, particularly when encountering complex grammatical structures or unfamiliar vocabulary. Most students demonstrated visible signs of mental strain such as long pauses, rereading sentences, or asking clarification questions when faced with compound or passive constructions. In contrast, when presented with simpler, familiar sentence patterns, students processed meaning more quickly and with greater confidence. Observations also showed that moments of hesitation often occurred mid-sentence, especially when students attempted to mentally translate English sentences into Indonesian. These behavioral indicators reflected the shifting mental effort students exerted depending on sentence complexity and familiarity.

Further insights emerged from students' self-reported reflections during interviews, where they described their struggles with understanding lengthy or syntactically complex sentences. Several students mentioned needing to reread sentences multiple times or translate them word by word to make sense of the meaning. Some reported feeling "mentally tired" after processing longer tasks, indicating the presence of cognitive overload. Students also shared that they often lost track of sentence meaning midway, forcing them to restart the comprehension process. Despite these challenges, many showed awareness of their limitations and expressed attempts to regulate their effort, such as taking short pauses or focusing on key words to reduce confusion.

The data indicated that students' ability to process English sentences was strongly influenced by the interaction between sentence length, structure, and individual coping strategies. The combination of behavioral observations and interview data suggested that when cognitive demands exceeded learners' processing capacity, their comprehension performance decreased noticeably. However, the findings also revealed instances of adaptive

behavior, where students developed spontaneous strategies like simplifying the meaning, rephrasing in their own words, or skipping difficult parts to maintain understanding. These findings highlight the dynamic nature of cognitive load in real classroom contexts, showing that learners continuously adjust their mental effort in response to linguistic challenges during sentence comprehension.

Working Memory Limitations

The results of this study revealed that the limitation of working memory is one of the strongest determinants of students' success or failure in sentence processing. During the classroom activities, learners often struggled to retain the beginning of long sentences while trying to comprehend their endings. This aligns with Demir (2021) model of working memory, which posits that information must be temporarily stored and manipulated during language comprehension. However, when the sentence length or grammatical complexity exceeds the learner's capacity, the stored information decays quickly, resulting in partial or distorted understanding. In the observed classroom context, several students showed visible signs of this limitation, such as rereading the same sentence multiple times, stopping midway to recall earlier parts, or even asking the teacher to repeat the sentence.

One student said during the interview "Aku harus baca dua kali karena kalimatnya panjang banget, pas di tengah aku lupa awalnya ngomong apa." "I had to read it twice because the sentence was really long in the middle, I forgot what it said at the beginning." This statement vividly illustrates the transitory nature of working memory in second language comprehension. The student's inability to maintain sentence meaning throughout processing reflects the cognitive overload caused by limited memory span. In psycholinguistic terms, learners must allocate part of their cognitive resources to decoding words and syntax, leaving less capacity for retaining the earlier segments of the sentence.

Moreover, classroom observations confirmed that this limitation was particularly pronounced during reading tasks that involved complex or unfamiliar vocabulary. Students tended to pause and subvocalize words, signaling that much of their working memory was occupied by decoding lexical items rather than constructing sentence meaning. When this happens, the central executive function of working memory responsible for coordinating attention and retrieval becomes overloaded. Consequently, comprehension is interrupted, forcing students to restart their reading.

Interestingly, several students developed spontaneous coping strategies to overcome memory constraints. They used gestures, whispering repetition, or summarizing aloud to keep track of meaning. For instance, one student was noted whispering, "Oh, ini tentang hewan… terus, apa tadi?" ("Oh, this is about animals… then, what was it again?"), which reflects an attempt to maintain information through rehearsal. Such behaviors support Brunken et al. (2010) cognitive load theory, emphasizing that when intrinsic and extraneous loads are too high, learners rely on self-regulation to stabilize processing. In short, the findings suggest that working memory limitation is not merely a passive barrier but an active cognitive battleground where learners negotiate meaning using compensatory strategies.

Syntactic Complexity Awareness

Another major finding of this study concerns learners' awareness of syntactic complexity and its influence on comprehension. Students consistently found sentences with embedded clauses, passive voice, or relative pronouns ("who," "which," "that") to be more mentally taxing than simple ones. This corresponds with capacity theory of comprehension, which suggests that syntactic processing requires simultaneous storage and integration of multiple linguistic elements. When learners encounter a sentence containing nested or unfamiliar grammatical structures, they must hold several parts in mind while parsing new information a task that heavily taxes cognitive capacity.

During interviews, many students reported losing track of sentence meaning because they could not identify the grammatical relationships among the words. One student explained "Kalimat yang ada dua 'yang'-nya itu bikin pusing, aku bingung siapa yang melakukan apa."

"Sentences with two 'that' parts make me confused, I don't know who is doing what." This reflection indicates limited syntactic awareness. The student recognizes that something about the structure is difficult, but cannot articulate the grammatical cause. Such findings highlight how learners' syntactic knowledge and metalinguistic awareness are crucial in reducing cognitive burden. Students with better grammatical awareness demonstrated higher accuracy and faster comprehension, even when facing complex structures. For instance, one more proficient learner mentioned "Kalimatnya panjang tapi aku potong-potong di kepala, jadi tahu mana subjek dan

predikatnya.”“The sentence was long, but I divided it in my head, so I could see which part was the subject and which was the predicate.” This indicates an intuitive syntactic segmentation strategy, a psycholinguistic process where learners reorganize complex input into manageable chunks to aid comprehension.

Observation data supported these self-reports. Students who lacked syntactic awareness tended to focus only on individual words, failing to integrate them into coherent sentence meaning. Conversely, those aware of grammatical functions showed fewer signs of confusion and completed tasks more efficiently. This difference underscores the pedagogical importance of teaching grammar not merely as rules but as cognitive tools for meaning-making. Syntactic complexity awareness functions as a bridge between linguistic knowledge and cognitive efficiency, allowing learners to manage complexity proactively rather than reactively (Jaya, 2025).

Attention Management

The third theme that emerged from the data involves how learners manage their attention during sentence comprehension. Attention acts as the cognitive gatekeeper that determines which linguistic information enters working memory. In the observed English classroom, attention fluctuations were frequent and closely tied to task difficulty. When students encountered sentences that were too long or abstract, they often lost focus, skipped lines, or became disengaged. This behavioral evidence supports the notion that high cognitive load competes with attentional control, making it difficult for learners to maintain sustained focus.

In interviews, students described their struggle to stay attentive when sentences were dense or required translation. One student noted “Kalau kalimatnya panjang dan banyak kata susah, aku suka hilang fokus, jadi nggak ngerti semuanya.” “When the sentence is long and has many difficult words, I lose focus and don’t understand the whole thing.” This self-report reflects attention drift, a psycholinguistic phenomenon where excessive cognitive effort reduces attentional endurance. The more mental energy students spend decoding words, the less they can sustain global comprehension. However, some students demonstrated awareness of their attentional lapses and employed corrective strategies. Another student said “Kalau mulai nggak fokus, aku ulang dari awal tapi baca pelan-pelan supaya ngerti.” “When I start to lose focus, I go back to the beginning and read slowly to understand.” Such self-regulatory behaviors align with the executive attention model, which views attention as a limited but trainable resource that interacts with working memory. By consciously slowing down or rereading, students attempt to reallocate mental resources to regain comprehension.

Observational data revealed that successful learners were those who maintained a steady rhythm of attention, often using gestures, underlining, or subvocal rehearsal to keep engagement consistent. Those who failed to manage attention tended to exhibit fragmented understanding, skipping key syntactic cues. This suggests that attention management is not separate from working memory it is its gatekeeper. When attention collapses, even adequate memory capacity cannot ensure comprehension. Attention management emerged as both a challenge and a skill among junior high school learners. The findings show that students’ ability to monitor and redirect attention under cognitive strain determines how effectively they process English sentences. Enhancing learners’ metacognitive control over attention through structured reading strategies and guided self-awareness could thus substantially reduce cognitive load in EFL classrooms.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that cognitive load plays a decisive role in shaping junior high school learners’ ability to process English sentences in a foreign language context. The qualitative findings revealed that students’ comprehension difficulties often stem from the limitations of working memory, the complexity of sentence structure, and the challenge of sustaining attention throughout processing. Learners exhibited various behavioral signs of mental effort such as rereading, hesitating, and pausing, all of which reflect the cognitive strain imposed by syntactic and lexical demands. Importantly, the study uncovered that these challenges are not purely obstacles but also opportunities for learners to develop adaptive strategies. Many students displayed awareness of their cognitive limitations and engaged in compensatory actions such as rereading slowly, chunking sentences, focusing on key words, or translating mentally into their first language.

The interplay among working memory limitation, syntactic complexity awareness, and attention management illustrates the multidimensional nature of sentence processing in EFL contexts. When sentence structures became longer or grammatically intricate, learners’ working memory often reached its capacity limit, leading to breakdowns in understanding. However, those who possessed better syntactic awareness or self-regulated attention

were able to reduce cognitive load and maintain comprehension. These findings provide pedagogical implications for language teaching in Indonesian classrooms, where English exposure is still limited. Teachers should carefully balance linguistic difficulty with cognitive manageability, use scaffolded instruction, and integrate reflective learning tasks that help students become more aware of how they think and process sentences. By addressing the cognitive dimensions of language learning, educators can support students not only in mastering grammar and vocabulary but also in developing sustainable mental strategies for comprehension. Ultimately, this study reinforces that effective language learning is as much about managing the mind as it is about mastering linguistic form.

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Linguistics and Literature Journal
Vol. 6, No. 215 - 222
E-ISSN: 2723-7273

available online at: http://jim.teknokrat.ac.id/index.php/linguistics_and_literature/index

PATANI MALAY PHATIC EXPRESSION

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Received: (October 2025) **Accepted**: (November 2025) **Published :** (December 2025)

Abstract

This study examines the significance of phatic expressions in Patani Malay speech as part of communicative practices that reflect the social and cultural identity of its speakers. This research aims to describe the variations of phatic forms and their pragmatic functions in daily interactions, particularly how particles such as ka, dok, la, weh, po, keh, and deh are utilized to maintain conversational harmony and mark interpersonal closeness. This study employed a qualitative descriptive method with data collection techniques comprising in-depth interviews with Patani Malay people. The obtained speech data were analyzed syntactically and pragmatically to uncover patterns of phatic usage within natural communication contexts. The results indicate that phatic expressions in the Patani Malay dialect exhibit variations in form, encompassing single particles, short phrases, and brief clauses that function flexibly to soften utterances, convey light emotions, and maintain social relationships. These findings further reveal that phatic particles play a crucial role in mitigating Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs), refining speech, and ensuring that conversations proceed cooperatively. This study concludes that the use of phatics serves as a linguistic strategy that affirms the values of politeness, solidarity, and the cultural identity of the Patani community.

Keywords: interpersonal communication, Patani Malay dialect, phatic expressions, politeness strategies, pragmatic functions

INTRODUCTION

Malay constitutes a prominent language within the Austronesian family (Malayo-Polynesian branch), serving as a lingua franca and being extensively used in Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Singapore, and other Southeast Asian communities (Md. Salleh & Yamat, 2019). Historically, its diffusion throughout the Malay Archipelago and the Malay Peninsula was facilitated by trade routes and extensive contact (Klamer, 2019). (Harun et al., 2018). estimate the total Malay-speaking population to be approximately 281 million, comprising 77 million native speakers and 204 million second-language speakers. In several Southeast Asian nations, Malay holds the status of an official or national language and is regarded as a symbol of national identity within language planning frameworks (Mohamad, 2022). Beyond its macro-linguistic function as a means of cross-regional communication, the complexity of this language demands a deep understanding of the micro-linguistic elements that maintain social relations, one of which is the use of phatic expressions. The existence of phatic elements serves as evidence that language functions as the adhesive of solidarity in a pluralistic society.

Phatic expressions in the Malay language constitute pragmatic elements that serve a vital function in maintaining interactional continuity, strengthening intimacy, and marking the speaker's emotional engagement within a conversation (Mubarak & Aldriani, 2019); (Safira & Reranta, Bentuk dan fungsi partikel fatis dialek Melayu Bangka, 2025). Various recent studies indicate that Malay communities across diverse regions possess unique characteristics regarding phatic forms. For instance, Bangka Malay utilizes specific particles such as jo, kan, kek, and se?, which function to reinforce meaning and maintain social contact between speakers (Safira & Reranta, Bentuk dan fungsi partikel fatis dialek Melayu Bangka, 2025). Meanwhile, in the oral communication of Rambah

Malay, phatic expressions are found in varied forms of particles, words, and phrases that are predominantly used to initiate and sustain the flow of conversation (Kusuma, Ningsih, & Gunawan, 2020). In other regions, studies on Jambi Malay show that the use of phatics such as kan, iyo, and dak is highly productive within family conversation discourse to create a relaxed and intimate atmosphere (Rahima & Wahyuni, Bentuk Fatis dalam Wacana Lisan Percakapan Keluarga Pada Mayarakat Melayu Jambi, 2021). (Faizah, 2012)Functional variations are also observed in the Kuok and Kampar dialects of Riau Malay, where phatic categories are employed not only for politeness but also as strategies for breaking the conversation, verification, and affirmation within oral traditions (Faizah, 2012; Yusma, Rahmi, & Hermandra, 2025). Furthermore, in Sungai Rokan Malay and Kupang Malay, phatics play a significant role in expressing cognition and volition, as well as clarifying the speaker's intent in daily interactions (Gunawan 2020; Malelak, 2024). Although research on phatic expressions has been conducted extensively across these various dialect variants, specific studies regarding phatics in Patani Malay remain limited and have not been comprehensively described; thus, further study is required to complement the mapping of linguistic variation in the Malay world.

Although extensive research on phatic expressions has been conducted across various Malay variants and regional languages in Indonesia, there is a significant gap in the literature regarding the Patani Malay dialect. Patani Malay is a variant spoken by a substantial Malay community in Southern Thailand. As one of the historical foundations of Malay civilization, the Patani community boasts a massive number of speakers and unique speech culture characteristics resulting from complex linguistic and cultural contact. The number of Patani Malay speakers in Thailand's Deep South constitutes 83% of the population, or more than one million people across the four border provinces (Premsrirat & Burarungrot, 2021). Unfortunately, academic attention to micro-pragmatic aspects, such as phatic expressions in this dialect, remains minimal compared to the Riau Malay dialect or other regional languages in Indonesia. Yet, understanding phatic expressions in Patani Malay is crucial for mapping how Malay identity is maintained through linguistic strategies in border regions.

Based on this urgency, this study aims to analyze phatic expressions in Patani Malay by focusing on the classification of their forms and pragmatic functions. This study examines how phatic particles, words, and phrases are utilized in the natural interactions of Patani speakers. This research moves beyond a mere inventory of forms to dissect their social functions in strengthening bonds of friendship and politeness (Lestari, 2024; Wahya et al., 2021). By uncovering these patterns of phatic usage, this study is expected to complement the treasury of Malay linguistic documentation and provide new insights into the communication strategies of Patani Malay society in maintaining social harmony.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. This approach was chosen because it has the capacity to describe natural and in-depth linguistic phenomena without relying on numerical statistical procedures, but rather on the meaning of verbal data. The main objective of this study is to identify, classify, and comprehensively describe the variations in the forms and pragmatic functions of phatic expressions that appear in real interactions. This aligns with the methodological principles in the study of phatic phrases in Kupang Malay, which emphasizes the description of form and meaning (Malelak, 2024) as well as research on phatic Malay in the Sungai Rokan dialect, which aims to obtain a complete picture of language use in the context of community communication (Gunawan, 2020). Furthermore, qualitative descriptive methods have also proven relevant for dissecting phatic categories in oral traditions, as applied in the analysis of Riau Malay in the Kampar dialect (Yusma, Rahmi, & Hermandra, 2025).

The data in this study are oral utterances containing phatic expressions in the Patani dialect of Malay. The primary data sources were obtained directly from informants, namely native speaker students from Patani, Narathiwat Province. The selection of informants was carried out purposively with age criteria ranging from around 20 years to represent the younger generation of speakers who actively use the dialect in the social realm. The data collection strategy through interaction with native speakers (informants) to obtain recordings of natural conversations refers to techniques commonly used in phatic research, such as those conducted on Riau Islands Malay speakers (Mubarak & Aldriani, 2019) and research on the influence of the Lampung language in conversation (Reranta, 2017).

The data analysis procedure was carried out through a series of systematic steps to ensure the accuracy of the results. The first step began with the transcription of speech data from recorded interviews and observations. Next, the data were analyzed using the distributional method to classify phatic forms whether particles, words, or phrases and determine their function based on sentence context, as applied in the phatic analysis of Jambi Malay family conversation discourse (Rahima & Wahyuni, 2021). This analysis process followed an interactive flow that

included data reduction to sort out the main points, data display to organize the pattern findings, and concluding with conclusion drawing to verify the social function of phatic, in accordance with the qualitative data analysis framework (Jaenudin, 2019).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study examines the role of phatic expressions in the Patani Malay language, which are often regarded as pivotal elements in daily social interactions. Phatic expressions, defined as particles or phrases that do not directly contribute to propositional meaning, assist in establishing a more refined and harmonious conversational tone. Through the analysis of speech data, this research aims to elucidate their syntactic form variations as well as their pragmatic functions within the Patani Malay cultural context.The results reveal that phatic expressions in Patani Malay speech exhibit a diversity of syntactic forms, ranging from simple particles such as ka, dok, la, weh, po, keh, and deh to short phrases or concise clauses that are flexibly employed within everyday discourse. These forms play a crucial role in initiating, sustaining, and terminating conversations, while simultaneously softening utterances, expressing subtle sentiments, and demonstrating interpersonal intimacy between speakers. Although the Patani Malay dialect possesses unique characteristics that distinguish it from other Malay variants, its phatic system performs similar communicative functions: strengthening solidarity, maintaining harmony, and ensuring the fluidity of dialogue. The most notable distinction lies in the syntactic arrangement and the selection of specific Patani particles, which reflect the cultural identity and linguistic ethical norms of the speaking community.

Data 1

[e.soʔ a.do u.d͡ʒi.jaːn *kaː*]
'Tomorrow there exam /ka/?'
Do we have an exam tomorrow */ka/*?

The particle /*ka*/ in this utterance functions as a confirmation marker that softens the question so it does not sound coercive or pressuring to the interlocutor. In a pragmatic context, the particle /*ka*/ serves to transform a question that is potentially interrogative in nature into a form that is more friendly and casual. Its placement at the end of the first clause indicates its function as a phatic element that maintains interpersonal relationships; namely, it signals that the speaker is not demanding information directly, but rather verifying something in a polite manner. The presence of /*ka*/ also indicates social intimacy between the speaker and the interlocutor, as this particle is commonly used among individuals who are already acquainted. Thus, the social meaning of this particle extends beyond merely confirming information to also maintaining harmony and preventing face-threatening acts. Practically, /*ka*/ creates a warm and informal conversational atmosphere, allowing the interaction to proceed in an air of familiarity without generating tension.

Data 2

[daː.mo *doʔ* bu.aʔt ap eː]
'You /dok/ doing what?'
What do you */dok/* want to do?

The particle /*dok*/ in this utterance not only marks the progressive aspect or an ongoing action but also functions as a phatic marker that maintains social relationships. The placement of /*dok*/ after the pronoun or subject indicates that its syntactic function is peripheral acting not as the propositional core, but as a softener of speech style. Its usage renders this question more relaxed, informal, and friendly, helping to initiate the conversation without placing pressure on the interlocutor. From the perspective of social relations, /*dok*/ asserts that the conversation is taking place in an intimate atmosphere, reflecting an informal relationship between the speaker and the interlocutor. Thus, /*dok*/ creates a comfortable interactional space, reduces social distance, and strengthens solidarity. Its presence in the sentence structure helps maintain conversational flow, so that a question which might otherwise seem interrogative becomes more fluid and non-face-threatening.

Data 3

[hoʔŋ.iŋ har.ga bo.leː ku.raŋ si.kit *kaː*]

'This price can reduced little /ka/?'
Can you lower the price a little bit for this one */ka/*?

The particle */ka/* in this transactional context functions as a politeness strategy to soften the request. Request or bargaining utterances are inherently face-threatening to the seller as they contain an element of price negotiation. By appending */ka/* to the end of the sentence, the speaker eliminates the impression of commanding or demanding, rendering it a polite request. Syntactically, */ka/* appears as a peripheral element in the sentence-final position to signal that the speaker is allowing room for the seller to respond without pressure. Its usage also reflects the Patani Malay speech culture, which upholds harmony and respect for the interlocutor. Thus, /*ka*/ serves as a balancer between practical needs (bargaining) and communicative ethics (maintaining politeness), ensuring that the interaction proceeds within an atmosphere of mutual respect without generating social tension.

Data 4

[di.ja daʔ da.taŋ la.gi *ka*:]
'He not come again /ka/?'
Has he not come yet */ka/*?

This utterance highlights the role of the phatic particle */ka/,*positioned at the end of the clause to create a soft and non-judgmental interrogative tone. The particle /*ka*/ functions as a confirmation marker that mitigates the assertiveness of the preceding information, ensuring that the speaker's message is not perceived as a complaint or reprimand, but merely as a friendly request for clarification. In the context of Patani Malay communication, the use of /*ka*/ at the utterance-final position serves as a pragmatic strategy to maintain interpersonal relationships, particularly when the topic discussed is potentially sensitive, such as an individual's absence. /*ka*/ helps to mitigate the Face-Threatening Act (FTA) and renders the question more fluid, cooperative, and respectful of the interlocutor's feelings. Furthermore, /*ka*/ reflects the values of politeness upheld in Patani speech culture, where speakers tend to avoid direct confrontation by appending phatic elements to the end of sentences. Thus, the presence of /*ka*/ in this utterance functions not only as a softener but also as a marker of social solidarity and intimacy, illustrating the distinct character of verbal interaction within the Patani Malay community.

Data 5

[ki.ta maw d͡ʒum.pa di kam.pus *ka*]
'We goin meet on campus /ka/?'
Shall we meet on campus */ka/*?

The particle /*ka*/ in this utterance functions as a marker of solicitation that softens the invitation, ensuring the proposal does not appear as an imposition of the speaker's will. In a pragmatic context, /*ka*/ transforms what could syntactically be interpreted as a declarative statement of intent ("We want to meet") into a negotiable proposal that respects the interlocutor's autonomy. Its placement at the end of the clause signals that the speaker is seeking consensus rather than issuing a directive, thereby creating a communicative space for the listener to agree or disagree without feeling pressured. The presence of /*ka*/ here underscores a strategy of positive politeness, indicating that the speaker values the listener's convenience and desires a mutual agreement. Thus, the social meaning of this particle serves to mitigate the potential weight of the request, preserving the interlocutor's negative face by offering them an "out" or a choice. Practically, /*ka*/ establishes a cooperative and democratic conversational atmosphere, fostering a sense of equality and shared decision-making between the participants.

Data 6

[sa.ja bo.le: ki.rim la.gi *ka*:]
'I can send again /ka/?'
Can I send again*/ka/?*

The particle */ka/* in this context functions as a politeness marker in a semi-formal situation. Even though the speaker is interacting with a lecturer, the usage of */ka/* renders the request for permission more polite, humble, and non-coercive. The placement of */ka/* in the sentence final position indicates that the speaker affords the interlocutor the space to decline without feeling pressured. Within the context of hierarchical social roles, the use of */ka/* serves as a pragmatic strategy to maintain the harmony of academic interactions. Thus, this particle serves not only a phatic function but also acts as a politeness device reflecting the communicative etiquette within Patani Malay culture.

Data 7

[bo.leː bu.aʔt ku.raŋ ma.nis *kaː*]
'Can make less sweet /ka/?'
Can you make it less sweet*/ka/*?

This utterance employs the particle /*ka*/ as a device for mitigating requests. Expressing criticism regarding the taste of food or beverages carries the potential to offend the service provider. However, by appending */ka/,* the speaker transforms a critical comment into a subtle suggestion. The particle */ka/* lowers the degree of face threat and renders the request more acceptable. In a pragmatic context, this phatic usage establishes a respectful and cooperative atmosphere between the buyer and the seller, illustrating how the Patani Malay language posits politeness as a crucial aspect of social interaction.

Data 8

[peː.ar ma.te.ma.ti.ka ta.di ka.we taʔ pa.ham deh]
'Homework mathematics earlier I not understand /deh/'
The last mathematics homework i don't understand */deh/*

The particle */deh/* in this utterance employed to articulate a mild grievance without conveying an impression of excessive complaining. Syntactically, */deh/* is positioned at the clause-final position as a terminal element providing subtle emotional emphasis, signaling that the speaker is experiencing difficulty yet wishes to maintain a tone that is not perceived as negative. This particle reflects the speaker's humility, indicating an acknowledgment of a lack of knowledge without intending to explicitly demand assistance.

Data 9

[ka.we sa.kit ha.ti weː]
'I sick heart / weh/
I have brokenheart */weh/*

This utterance features the use of the phatic particle /*weh*/*,* which functions as an expressive marker to intensify the emotional nuance of the statement. Syntactically, /*weh*/ is positioned at the clause-final position and does not alter the core sentence structure; rather, it provides a pragmatic effect by emphasizing the speaker's emotional state. Within the Patani Malay cultural context, the usage of such particles is often not intended to exhibit overt hostility, but rather serves as a form of emotional release that remains within the boundaries of politeness. The particle /*weh*/ signals that the speaker's complaint is not aggressive in nature, but is instead an expression of inner feelings seeking understanding from the interlocutor. Its function as a phatic element renders the utterance more natural, intimate, and aligned with the speech patterns of the Patani community, who tend to avoid direct confrontation. Thus, */weh/* reinforces emotional meaning without aggravating the atmosphere, cementing interpersonal bonds by displaying vulnerability or honesty in a subtle manner. The presence of this particle also demonstrates that expressive strategies in the Patani Malay dialect utilize phatic elements as a means to maintain a balance between the conveyance of emotions and polite communicative ethics.

Data 10

[a.ku tə.ŋɔʔ dah tuh *pɔ*]
I look done that /po/
I saw that it has been done */po/*

This utterance presents the phatic particle /*po*/*,* which within the Patani Malay dialect functions as a subtle marker to conclude a statement while indicating that the speaker is confirming an action without intending to create an impression of arrogance or directly contradicting the interlocutor. Structurally, /*po*/ occupies the final position as a peripheral element that does not affect the main proposition but plays a pivotal role in shaping interpersonal meaning. In a pragmatic context, /*po*/ signals that the speaker is conveying information in a relaxed and non-confrontational tone, ensuring that the conversation remains harmonious. The usage of this particle signifies a distinctive form of Patani politeness, particularly when the speaker wishes to clarify that an action has been completed without wanting to be perceived as interrupting or harshly refuting. Socially, /*po*/ assists in preserving

good rapport between the speaker and the listener, reflecting the speech style of the Patani community which avoids conversational tension. Its presence demonstrates that particle selection is not merely a linguistic element, but also a mechanism for maintaining harmony, politeness, and social cohesion. Thus, /*po*/ becomes a crucial phatic element in affirming actions, softening statements, and exhibiting the communicative identity of Patani Malay speakers.

Data 11

[de.mo su.dah bu.aʔt *keh:*]
'You already make /keh/?'
Are you finish it */keh/?*

The particle /*keh*/ in this utterance functions as a hedging device that attenuates the directness of an inquiry regarding the completion of a task. In a pragmatic context, questions about progress or duty fulfillment can naturally carry an accusatory or authoritative tone; however, the inclusion of /*keh*/ shifts the illocutionary force from an interrogation to a gentle, supportive check-in. Its position at the utterance-final boundary marks the speaker's non-authoritative stance, suggesting that the inquiry is driven by care or curiosity rather than a demand for accountability. The presence of /*keh*/ implies a high degree of solidarity and emotional intelligence, as the speaker anticipates that the question might otherwise cause anxiety or defensiveness in the listener. Consequently, the social meaning of this particle is deeply rooted in the maintenance of harmony, ensuring that the verification of information does not compromise the relational bond. Practically, /*keh*/ cultivates a non-threatening and empathetic environment, allowing the conversation to remain fluid and amicable even when addressing responsibilities or obligations.

Data 12

[ka.lu hu.d͡ʒaŋ taʔ d͡ʒa.di *la*]
'If rain not make it /la/'
If it rains, we're not going */la/*

The particle /*la*/ in this utterance functions as an emotive marker of resignation and consensus, utilized to deliver a conditional refusal or cancellation in a softened manner. In a pragmatic context, /*la*/ reduces the rigidity of the statement, signaling that the cancellation is not a harsh rejection but an inevitable consequence of external circumstances (the rain). Syntactically occupying the clause-final position, it marks the closure of the topic while simultaneously inviting the interlocutor to share in the speaker's perspective or understanding of the situation. The presence of /*la*/ appeals to "shared knowledge" or common sense between the speaker and the listener, implying that the decision is logical and should be accepted without hard feelings. Thus, the social meaning of /*la*/ in this context is to mitigate potential disappointment or conflict, emphasizing that the outcome is beyond the speaker's control. Practically, /*la*/ creates a casual and reconciled atmosphere, smoothing over the potential friction of a cancelled plan and reinforcing the bond of understanding between the speakers.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that phatic expressions in Patani Malay function as vital pragmatic instruments rather than mere redundant linguistic elements. The analysis of specific particles such as ka, dok, la, weh, po, keh, and deh demonstrates that these markers carry significant functional weight in managing interpersonal rapport and balancing information delivery with social etiquette. Specifically, these expressions operate as effective mitigation strategies to soften potential Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs) in directive contexts and to channel emotions within the boundaries of politeness in expressive contexts. By systematically employing these markers, speakers not only ensure conversational fluidity but also actively construct and reinforce their unique cultural identity and group solidarity amidst a multicultural environment.

However, this research is limited by its focus on a specific demographic of university students within an academic migration context, which may not fully capture the archaic or formal speech patterns of older generations residing in Southern Thailand. Consequently, future research should expand the scope to include cross-generational analysis or comparative studies with neighboring dialects, such as Kelantan Malay, to map dialectal isoglosses more comprehensively. Such scholarly endeavours are essential to enrich the documentation of regional Malay varieties and to provide deeper insights into how peripheral linguistic elements shape the sociolinguistic landscape of the Malay world.

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Linguistics and Literature Journal
Vol. 6, No. 223 - 230
E-ISSN: 2723-7273

available online at: http://jim.teknokrat.ac.id/index.php/linguistics_and_literature/index

LEARNING ENGLISH THROUGH REFLECTION: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY INTO HOW STUDENTS PERCEIVE AND CORRECT THEIR LINGUISTICS ERRORS

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Received: (October 2025) **Accepted**: (November 2025) **Published :** (December 2025)

Abstract

This study explores how Indonesian university students perceive and correct their linguistic errors through reflective learning, using narrative inquiry as the central methodological approach. While linguistic errors are commonly examined through structural or quantitative perspectives, less attention has been given to how learners themselves interpret these errors and construct meaning from them. Through in-depth narrative interviews and reflective journals, this research illuminates the emotional, cognitive, and experiential dimensions that shape students' engagement with their mistakes. The findings reveal three major themes: the development of error awareness, the interplay between emotional responses and cognitive processing, and the adoption of reflective strategies such as self-monitoring, contrastive thinking, and contextual experimentation. These narratives demonstrate that reflection transforms errors from mere deviations into valuable learning resources that promote metacognitive growth, resilience, and autonomy. By highlighting the personal stories behind error correction, the study contributes to a more humanistic understanding of language learning and underscores the need for reflective pedagogy in higher education EFL contexts.

Keywords: EFL learners, learner awareness, linguistic errors, metacognition, Narrative inquiry, reflective learning

INTRODUCTION

Learning a foreign language is rarely a smooth and linear process; it is filled with moments of confusion, self-correction, and rediscovery. For university students in Indonesia who learn English as a foreign language, these moments often emerge most clearly in their encounters with linguistic errors. Errors are not merely evidence of failure; they reveal the learner's interlanguage system a dynamic stage between the first language (L1) and the target language (L2) (Ulviani, 2025). Yet, beyond this structural perspective, errors also hold stories of effort, frustration, and growth (Zamora et al., 2025). Students' reflections on their own mistakes provide valuable insight into how they understand and internalize the rules of English, and how they construct meaning from their struggles in using the language accurately and fluently (Mufida et al., 2025).

In many higher education contexts, English learning has shifted from a teacher-centred orientation to a more learner-centred approach that values autonomy, self-awareness, and reflective practice (Emaliana, 2017). This shift encourages students not only to learn linguistic forms but also to develop metalinguistic awareness, the ability to think about language itself. Reflection plays a crucial role in this transformation. Through reflection, students can identify their recurring errors, question the reasons behind them, and actively seek strategies for improvement. In this process, learning becomes personal and experiential rather than mechanical (Menekse et al., 2025). However, despite its importance, reflection is often overlooked in traditional language classrooms, where errors are corrected by teachers but rarely explored by learners themselves.

Within Indonesian universities, where English is taught as a compulsory subject for academic and professional purposes, students' writing and speaking performances frequently exhibit features of L1 interference. Grammatical structures, word order, and pragmatic choices often reflect the influence of Bahasa Indonesia (Septiana, 2020). While this has been extensively analyzed through quantitative approaches, less attention has been given to how students perceive these errors how they interpret their own mistakes, what emotional or cognitive responses arise from them, and how they construct meaning from these learning experiences. Understanding this human dimension of error-making can enrich pedagogical approaches that currently prioritize linguistic accuracy over reflective awareness. The present study arises from the recognition that learning from mistakes is a deeply subjective experience. Each student carries a unique story about how they notice, interpret, and correct their errors. Some may see mistakes as obstacles that trigger anxiety and self-doubt; others may view them as opportunities for growth and self-discovery. By listening to these individual narratives, educators can better understand the interplay between linguistic competence, learner identity, and reflective consciousness. Narrative inquiry, therefore, provides an appropriate methodological lens for exploring how students make sense of their linguistic challenges within the lived experience of learning English at university (Abrar, 2019).

Errors, in this sense, are not simply linguistic deviations to be categorized and counted; they are reflections of cognitive and emotional processes unfolding in real time. When students reflect on their mistakes, they engage in an internal dialogue that connects their prior knowledge, linguistic intuition, and evolving understanding of English grammar (Menekse et al., 2025). This reflective engagement allows them to transform errors into resources for deeper learning. By narrating how they recognize and correct these errors, whether through peer feedback, teacher guidance, or self-observation, students reveal the intricate ways in which awareness and understanding emerge (Williams, 2024).

Furthermore, the learning environment of higher education provides a distinctive context for such reflections. University students are typically expected to demonstrate not only proficiency but also critical thinking and self-evaluation (Golden, 2023). In this environment, reflective learning aligns closely with academic development, as students learn to analyze their performance, evaluate feedback, and take responsibility for their improvement. However, this expectation often clashes with the lingering perception that errors should be avoided or hidden. The fear of being judged or corrected publicly can inhibit students from engaging openly with their mistakes. Thus, fostering a reflective attitude toward errors requires a supportive and dialogic learning culture where mistakes are recognized as integral to progress (Vincent-Lancrin et al., 2019).

Exploring how students perceive and correct their linguistic errors can shed light on how reflection operates as a tool for language awareness and self-directed learning. Such understanding can inform teaching practices that go beyond error correction toward facilitating metacognitive engagement (Diab & Awada, 2022). Teachers, rather than simply providing the correct forms, can guide students to analyze the underlying causes of their mistakes, whether they stem from negative transfer, incomplete rule application, or gaps in comprehension (Emaliana, 2017). Through this reflective process, learners begin to internalize grammatical patterns more deeply and develop the confidence to self-correct in future communication.

The narratives collected in this study illuminate the complex emotional and cognitive landscapes of English learners in higher education. They reveal how students interpret the experience of making errors, whether as personal shortcomings, sources of embarrassment, or as meaningful moments of insight. These stories also highlight the strategies students employ to overcome difficulties, such as comparing English with their native language, seeking clarification from peers or digital tools, and developing personalized correction habits. Each narrative becomes a window into how learning evolves through reflection rather than repetition.

By focusing on students' lived experiences of error recognition and correction, this research emphasizes that effective language learning is not only about mastering forms but also about cultivating awareness, resilience, and self-reflection. In doing so, it contributes to a more humanistic understanding of language education one that values personal experience as much as linguistic accuracy. This narrative exploration thus seeks to uncover how university students perceive their linguistic errors and how these perceptions guide their efforts to correct and improve, offering insights that may help educators create more reflective and empathetic learning environments in the study of English as a foreign language.

Research on second language learning has long recognized that errors are inevitable and, in fact, essential to the process of language development. Early scholars such as Corder (1967) emphasized that errors are not simply signs of linguistic failure but evidence of the learner's internalized system, the interlanguage that evolves as the learner attempts to approximate the target language. From this view, error analysis became a central tool in

understanding how learners acquire and construct language rules. Later developments in applied linguistics expanded this perspective by acknowledging that errors are shaped not only by linguistic interference but also by cognitive, affective, and social factors (Ellis, 1997). These insights highlight that every learner's linguistic journey is unique, influenced by prior knowledge, emotional disposition, and the context in which learning occurs.

In the Indonesian EFL context, numerous studies have examined students' grammatical errors in writing and speaking. For instance, Septiana (2020) found that Indonesian university students frequently commit errors related to tense, preposition, and article usage, which can often be traced back to differences between English and Bahasa Indonesia. Similarly, Ibrahim & Ibrahim (2020) observed that most writing errors stemmed from direct translation habits and insufficient grammatical awareness. While such studies contribute to identifying linguistic patterns, they rarely address how students *perceive* these errors or how they emotionally and cognitively process the act of making and correcting them. As a result, much of the existing literature remains confined to the structural aspects of errors, overlooking the subjective and reflective dimensions that accompany them.

In recent years, a growing body of research has begun to integrate reflective learning theory into the study of error correction. Reflection, as conceptualized by Dewey (1933) and further developed by Schön (1983), refers to the deliberate process of thinking about one's experiences to derive new understanding and guide future actions. In language education, reflection enables learners to recognize their linguistic patterns, question their assumptions, and adjust their learning strategies accordingly. Emaliana (2017) emphasizes that reflective learning transforms students from passive recipients of correction into active participants in meaning-making. When learners reflect on their errors, they engage metacognitive skills, thinking about their own thinking, which leads to deeper awareness and self-regulated learning.

This reflective process is especially significant in higher education, where students are expected to demonstrate autonomy and critical thinking. Menekse et al. (2025) note that students who consistently reflect on their language use show measurable improvement in both accuracy and confidence. Reflection allows them to connect theoretical grammatical knowledge with practical language use, bridging the gap between knowing and performing. However, classroom practices in Indonesia often remain product-oriented, emphasizing correctness over process. Teachers tend to correct students' errors directly without inviting learners to explore the underlying causes. This limits opportunities for students to develop reflective habits that could enhance their long-term learning.

Narrative inquiry provides an alternative framework that captures the reflective and experiential aspects of learning. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) assert, narrative inquiry views human experience as storied people understand their lives and learning journeys through the stories they tell. In the context of language learning, narratives illuminate how learners perceive challenges, make sense of mistakes, and negotiate their identities as L2 users. Barkhuizen (2013) argues that narrative inquiry humanizes language research by giving learners a voice to articulate their emotions, beliefs, and evolving understandings. Through narratives, the researcher does not merely analyze data but co-constructs meaning with participants, situating their linguistic experiences within broader social and personal contexts.

In studies focusing on EFL learners, narrative inquiry has been used to explore a wide range of experiences, including identity formation, motivation, and emotional responses to language learning. For example, Abrar (2019) used narrative inquiry to examine Indonesian university students' experiences of English learning and found that storytelling helped them reflect critically on their language struggles and progress. Similarly, Pavlenko (2007) highlighted how learners' narratives reveal tensions between native and target language identities, showing how self-perception evolves through linguistic challenges. These studies underscore that language learning is deeply intertwined with personal meaning-making, making narrative inquiry an ideal approach for exploring learners' reflections on their own errors.

The connection between narrative inquiry and error analysis lies in their shared recognition of learning as a developmental process. Traditional error analysis seeks to describe *what* errors occur and *why*, whereas narrative inquiry seeks to understand *how* learners experience and interpret those errors. When students recount stories of how they noticed or corrected mistakes, they externalize their inner dialogues, transforming tacit awareness into explicit knowledge. Golombek and Johnson (2017) describe this as "narrative mediation," where reflection through storytelling helps learners reconstruct their understanding of language use. This process aligns closely with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which views learning as a socially mediated activity. Narratives thus become tools of both expression and cognition, allowing learners to articulate the developmental path between confusion and mastery.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative narrative inquiry design to explore how university students perceive and correct their linguistic errors in learning English as a foreign language. Narrative inquiry was considered the most suitable approach because it allows for an in-depth understanding of learners' lived experiences rather than the measurement of linguistic performance. It assumes that human experience is storied and that people make sense of their lives through narratives. In this research, the students' stories about their encounters with linguistic errors, their feelings of frustration or success, and their reflections on learning formed the primary data that revealed how reflection contributes to their language development.

The study was conducted in a higher education context, specifically among undergraduate students at an Indonesian university where English is taught as a compulsory course. The participants were selected purposively based on several criteria: they were active students in an English-related course, had prior experience in academic writing or speaking in English, and were willing to participate in extended reflective activities. A total of eight to twelve students were involved in this study, representing varied backgrounds and proficiency levels to ensure diversity in the narratives collected. Their participation was voluntary, and they were informed about the purpose of the research and their right to withdraw at any stage.

Data were gathered through multiple narrative sources to construct a rich and holistic picture of each participant's experience. The primary method was in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted over two to three sessions with each participant. These interviews provided space for students to narrate their personal experiences with language learning—particularly moments when they noticed, confronted, and corrected their errors. The first interview focused on students' broader experiences in learning English and their general perceptions of making mistakes. The second and third interviews centered on specific incidents where they became aware of their linguistic errors and engaged in self-correction, allowing participants to reflect on the emotions, thoughts, and strategies involved in those moments. Each session lasted approximately 60–90 minutes and was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

To complement the interviews, participants were also asked to keep reflective journals over a period of six to eight weeks. In these journals, they wrote about their weekly experiences in English learning, focusing on situations where they made or recognized errors, the reactions they had, and the strategies they used to correct them. The journals offered an introspective and temporal dimension to the data, capturing how reflection developed over time. Additionally, students' written assignments and selected speaking transcripts were collected as supporting artefacts to triangulate the stories told during interviews. These linguistic artefacts provided a visible trace of the learners' evolving awareness of their errors and their progress in correcting them.

The process of data analysis followed the logic of narrative inquiry as proposed by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), moving from raw data to storied representations. Each participant's interview transcripts, journal entries, and artefacts were read and re-read to identify meaningful events, emotional tones, and recurring reflections. The data were then organized chronologically to reconstruct the individual stories—how each student experienced, interpreted, and responded to linguistic errors across time. These personal narratives were presented in coherent forms that captured the context, turning points, and reflections embedded in each learner's journey. After the construction of individual narratives, a cross-case thematic analysis was carried out to identify broader patterns and shared meanings among participants. This involved coding and categorizing key themes related to awareness, emotional response, reflection, and correction strategies. The process combined inductive reasoning from the data and interpretive reflection from the researcher, allowing both convergence and divergence in learners' experiences to emerge naturally. The aim was not to generalize but to highlight the diversity of perspectives and the human dimension of learning through errors.

Throughout the study, the researcher maintained reflexivity as part of the narrative inquiry tradition, acknowledging how their own background and assumptions might shape the interpretation of the stories. A reflexive journal was kept to record decisions, impressions, and reflections that arose during the research process. The final narratives were returned to participants for validation to ensure that their voices were authentically represented. In essence, the methodological process of this research reflects the philosophical stance of narrative inquiry itself: that knowledge is co-constructed through stories, lived experience, and reflection. The combination of interviews, journals, and artefacts enabled a deep exploration of how students engage with their errors not as failures to be corrected, but as meaningful experiences that foster self-awareness, linguistic development, and a stronger sense of agency in their English learning journey.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The stories shared by the participants in this study revealed that the process of learning English through reflection is deeply personal, dynamic, and shaped by emotional and cognitive engagement with language. Through narrative inquiry, the participants' experiences became a window into understanding how learners perceive and correct their linguistic errors not as isolated moments of failure, but as evolving steps toward greater awareness and autonomy. As each participant recounted their journey, patterns began to emerge, showing that reflection was not a single event but an ongoing dialogue between self, language, and context. Their narratives highlighted how error awareness, emotional experience, and reflective strategies interacted to shape their learning process.

For these students, reflection functioned as a bridge between experience and understanding. The act of recalling and reinterpreting past mistakes allowed them to move beyond the technical aspects of grammar correction and enter a more transformative form of learning. In narrating their struggles, moments of confusion, and realizations, the students were essentially constructing their identities as learners who could take control of their growth. This aligns with Dewey's (1933) idea that reflection transforms experience into genuine learning when individuals think critically about what happened and what it means. In the students' accounts, their errors became not simply data points of deficiency but moments of insight that revealed how language, thought, and identity are intertwined.

Another dimension that emerged was the influence of the learning environment teachers, peers, and institutional culture on how reflection occurred. Many students described how classroom interactions, feedback sessions, and journal assignments created spaces where they could pause and think about their learning. These reflective spaces, both personal and social, enabled them to become more conscious of their progress and more open to self-correction. Narrative inquiry helped capture this complexity: reflection was not a detached analysis of errors but an emotionally textured process shaped by social interaction and personal meaning-making. In light of these stories, three interrelated themes emerged as central to the participants' reflective learning journey: (1) awareness and recognition of errors, (2) emotional and cognitive responses to errors, and (3) reflective strategies for self-correction and growth. Each theme is discussed below in relation to existing theoretical and empirical perspectives.

Awareness and recognition of errors

The first recurring theme in the narratives was the development of awareness, students' realization that their linguistic performance contained patterns of error that could be identified and understood. For most participants, awareness was not immediate but gradually emerged through repeated exposure to feedback, opportunities for self-review, and structured reflection activities such as journal writing. Several participants recalled that they had been making the same grammatical or lexical errors for years without realizing it until they began reflecting intentionally on their language use.

One participant vividly described her moment of realization after reviewing her essay feedback:

"When I saw the teacher's notes, I realized that my verbs were mixed between past and present. At first, I thought it was just small mistakes, but then I noticed it kept happening in every paragraph. That's when I started to pay attention to how I was forming sentences."

This initial recognition marks the emergence of metacognitive awareness, which Flavell (1979) defines as the ability to think about one's own cognitive processes. In this case, students began to view their language production not as automatic but as something that could be observed and controlled. The reflection journals assigned during the semester played a crucial role in cultivating this awareness. As one student noted in her journal, *"When I wrote about my mistakes, I began to notice patterns. I realized that missing articles or prepositions wasn't random, it was because in Bahasa Indonesia, we don't use them the same way."*

This kind of self-realization illustrates what Corder (1967) described as the learner's internal syllabus, a personal system of understanding that evolves as students recognize and repair errors. The narrative evidence showed that awareness often emerged from contrasts between the learners' native language and English, suggesting that reflection naturally integrates contrastive thinking even when it is not explicitly taught. Moreover, peer feedback and collaborative learning also stimulated awareness. Students reported that hearing others' mistakes during group tasks made them notice similar errors in their own speech or writing, reinforcing the social dimension of reflection. As Menekse et al. (2025) note, reflection is often co-constructed; it develops through interactions where learners mirror and respond to each other's linguistic behavior. Awareness marked the first turning point in students'

reflective journeys. Recognizing errors was not simply noticing what was wrong, it was about reorienting how they thought about their own learning process. Once awareness was achieved, reflection began to transform from a passive acknowledgement of mistakes into an active process of understanding and problem-solving.

Emotional and cognitive responses to errors

The second major theme emerging from the data involved the interplay between emotional reactions and cognitive processing when students confronted their errors. Nearly all participants described strong emotional responses to being corrected or realizing their mistakes. These emotions ranged from embarrassment and frustration to acceptance and eventual confidence. Initially, many participants viewed their mistakes as evidence of incompetence. For instance, recalled feeling humiliated when his grammatical errors were pointed out in front of classmates:

"I felt very nervous every time the lecturer corrected my grammar in front of the class. It made me afraid to speak again. But later, I realized that I couldn't improve if I didn't make mistakes. That moment changed how I saw errors."

This narrative echoes the developmental nature of reflection: emotional discomfort often precedes growth. Zamora et al. (2025) refer to this as linguistic resilience, a learner's ability to reinterpret negative emotions as motivation. Over time, through guided reflection and repeated exposure, students learned to see errors not as personal flaws but as natural and necessary steps in language acquisition. Another participant expressed this shift clearly in her journal: *"When I make mistakes, it means I'm trying. I tell myself that every error is part of the process."* Such reframing indicates the development of what Schön (1983) calls a reflective practitioner mindset, where learners approach their performance with curiosity rather than judgment.

The cognitive side of this theme was equally revealing. Emotional engagement appeared to influence how well students retained and applied corrections. Mistakes that caused strong feelings of embarrassment, surprise, or even pride were often remembered longer and corrected more effectively. This aligns observation that emotional salience enhances language retention. For instance, students who could recall a particularly embarrassing mistake in speaking often reported that they never repeated it, precisely because it had left a deep emotional impression.

However, the narratives also highlighted the delicate balance required in feedback delivery. When corrections were harsh or unclear, students' emotional reactions tended to block reflection, leading to avoidance rather than learning. In contrast, supportive feedback and opportunities for private reflection encouraged positive reinterpretation. As Emaliana (2017) emphasizes, reflective learning flourishes in environments where learners feel psychologically safe to make and discuss errors. Overall, the emotional and cognitive dimensions of reflection cannot be separated. Emotions shaped how participants perceived their mistakes, while cognition determined how they acted upon them. The dynamic interaction between feeling and thinking became the driving force behind sustained engagement with the reflective process.

Reflective Strategies for Self-Correction and Growth

The final theme concerns the strategies students developed to engage with their errors reflectively. Once awareness and emotional readiness were established, participants began to adopt intentional practices to monitor, analyze, and correct their linguistic output. These strategies varied across individuals but shared a common purpose: to transform external correction into internalized understanding.

The first strategy, self-monitoring, involved consciously checking one's speech or writing during or after production. For example, one participant explained how she became more deliberate in her speaking *"Sometimes when I speak, I pause and repeat the sentence in my mind. I ask myself, is it right? Is the verb correct? It slows me down, but it helps me to be more accurate."* This reflective self-monitoring aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) notion of inner speech, where learners use internal dialogue to regulate their linguistic behavior.

The second common strategy was contrastive reflection, in which students compared English structures with those of Bahasa Indonesia to understand the source of errors. This was particularly evident in grammar-related reflections. As one participant wrote, *"I realized that in Indonesian, we can say 'Dia guru,' but in English, we need 'He is a teacher.' Now I always check if I forget 'to be.'"* This process embodies the essence of contrastive analysis (Ellis, 1997), reimagined as a learner-driven, reflective act rather than a prescriptive comparison.

The third strategy involved contextual experimentation using corrected forms in new contexts to test and consolidate understanding. Students described trying out revised expressions in conversations, journal entries, or presentations to see if they felt natural. Over time, repetition and contextual use transformed conscious correction into intuitive accuracy. One student explained, *"When I used the corrected sentence several times, it started to sound right. I didn't need to think about the rule anymore."*

Through these strategies, reflection became cyclical: awareness led to monitoring, emotional engagement sustained effort, and practice solidified learning. The process mirrors Dewey's (1933) reflective cycle experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation applied to language learning. It also underscores the narrative nature of reflection: each student's strategy was not prescribed but evolved organically through personal experience and meaning-making.

Integrating Reflection into the Broader Learning Process

Taken together, the narratives reveal that reflection in language learning operates on multiple levels: cognitive, emotional, and social. Individually, students engaged in introspection, questioning, and self-evaluation; socially, they found meaning through interaction with teachers and peers who acted as reflective mirrors. This integration illustrates Golombek and Johnson's (2017) view of narrative inquiry as a mediational space a setting where reflection and learning are co-constructed through dialogue.

Beyond linguistic development, reflection also reshaped students' sense of self as English users. Through the act of narrating and analyzing their experiences, participants began to see themselves as capable learners who could take responsibility for their progress. Barkhuizen (2013) emphasizes that such identity reconstruction is central to narrative inquiry: learning is not only about mastering language forms but also about reimagining oneself in relation to the language.

The pedagogical implications of these findings are significant. Incorporating structured reflection into higher education English instruction can enhance students' metacognitive awareness, resilience, and autonomy. As Diab & Awada (2022) noted, reflective writing promotes both linguistic accuracy and deeper self-understanding. The narratives in this study reaffirm that reflection transforms the traditional focus on error correction into a more holistic process of meaning-making and growth. Ultimately, the students' stories suggest that learning English through reflection is not simply about mastering rules; it is about understanding oneself as a learner. Errors become mirrors that reflect not failure, but development. Through narrative reflection, learners discover that every mistake tells a story, and every story contributes to their evolving competence and confidence as users of English.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that learning English through reflection is a developmental, emotionally layered, and cognitively engaged process in which students actively make sense of their linguistic errors. Through the narrative inquiry approach, the participants' stories revealed that errors are not merely indicators of deficiency but meaningful experiences that trigger awareness, emotional negotiation, and strategic self-correction. The students gradually shifted from being passive recipients of feedback to reflective learners who could recognize recurring patterns, question the causes of their mistakes, and connect these insights with their evolving understanding of English.

The findings highlight that reflection emerges through the interplay of three key dimensions: awareness of errors, emotional and cognitive responses, and the deliberate strategies students adopt to correct themselves. Awareness served as the turning point where learners began noticing their linguistic habits; emotional engagement influenced how they internalized and remembered corrections; and reflective strategies such as self-monitoring, contrastive thinking, and contextual experimentation transformed isolated feedback into lasting development. Importantly, reflection was shaped both individually and socially, supported by teachers' feedback, classroom interactions, and reflective spaces created through journal writing.

Overall, this study affirms that integrating reflective practices into EFL instruction can enhance learners' metacognitive growth, resilience, and autonomy. When students are encouraged to narrate, interpret, and revisit their experiences with errors, they develop deeper linguistic insight and a stronger sense of agency in their learning. Reflection allows learners to see their mistakes not as failures but as meaningful moments that contribute to identity

formation and linguistic mastery. In this way, learning English through reflection becomes a continuous journey of understanding oneself, negotiating challenges, and constructing new possibilities for language use.

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Linguistics and Literature Journal
Vol. 6, No. 231 - 239
E-ISSN: 2723-7273

available online at: http://jim.teknokrat.ac.id/index.php/linguistics_and_literature/index

DEIXIS EXPRESSION BY MAGDALENA HOELLER IN TED TALKS CHANNEL

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Received: (October 2025) **Accepted**: (November 2025) **Published :** (December 2025)

Abstract

This study investigates the types and functions of deixis used in the TED Talk "Why Love is Harder in a Second Language (2025)". The research aims to identify and interpret the deictic expressions based on Levinson's (1983) classification, which includes five types of deixis: person, spatial, temporal, social, and discourse deixis. Using a descriptive-qualitative method, the researchers analyzed the transcript of the speech and identified sentences containing deictic elements. The results reveal that all five types of deixis are present in the speech with varying frequencies. Person deixis appears most dominantly through the speaker's use of I, you, and we, which serve to build rapport, establish participant roles, and create an inclusive atmosphere. Spatial deixis is used metaphorically rather than physically to guide the audience through conceptual and emotional spaces within the narrative. Temporal deixis organizes the sequence of events and highlights contrasts between past and present experiences. Social deixis indexes interpersonal relationships and cultural identities, while discourse deixis contributes to textual cohesion by referring to earlier or upcoming parts of the speech. Overall, the findings demonstrate that deixis plays an essential role in shaping meaning, constructing narrative flow, and supporting intercultural communication in speech. This study suggests that further research explore deixis in various digital communication contexts to better understand how reference and orientation operate in contemporary discourse.

Keywords: interpretation of deixis, Speech, TED conference, type of deixis

INTRODUCTION

Language is not only a tool for communication but also a means to express context, identity, and the relationship between speakers and listeners. According to Levinson (1983), pragmatics is the study of how people use language in context. It explores how speakers and listeners interpret and convey meaning beyond the literal words and structures of the sentences. Language helps us understand what other words mean, especially in speeches, where the speaker's choice of words, structure, and delivery guide the audience in interpreting the intended message. In a speech, language is used not just to inform, but also to persuade, inspire, or influence emotions. This shows that meaning is not fixed. It depends on how language is used in real-time communication, particularly in spoken form. Speeches delivered by influential and well-known figures are valuable sources of knowledge that can inspire and motivate others (Bunyarang, 2022). Such speeches often encourage people to develop positive mindsets and attitudes. Through carefully chosen language, speakers express their beliefs, thoughts, and ideologies to the wider public. Therefore, a powerful speech reflects the speaker's skill in using language to communicate ideas, viewpoints, values, and aspirations that can influence the audience and create a lasting impact. Speech has functions for three things that are often done by a lot of politicians, persuading others to support our willingness to volunteer, providing insight or information on other people, and making others happy with an entertaining speech to make others happy and satisfied with the Speech we delivered (Manik, 2023). In studying deixis, speeches like these are important materials because they reveal how speakers use language to connect themselves with their audience, refer to events, time, or place, and convey meaning clearly within a particular situation.

The concept of deixis refers to words or phrases, such as this, here, you, and now, whose meanings depend entirely on the context of utterance (Yule, 1996). As noted by Yule, "Deictic expressions point to persons, places or times relative to the speaker's position in the speech event" (Yule, 1996). In other words, deixis serves as an indexical device that connects language to its communicative situation.

The significance of deixis in English and in language in general is evident for two main reasons. First, deixis is a universal linguistic feature that appears pervasively across languages, as shown by numerous corpus-based studies indicating its frequent occurrence in everyday communication (Alkhawaldeh, 2022). Second, deixis has attracted considerable scholarly attention and has been analyzed in a wide range of languages, genres, and text types from multiple theoretical perspectives. This widespread interest reflects the crucial role deixis plays in linking language to its context of use. It helps speakers and listeners identify who is involved, when events occur, and where they take place.

(Čerņevska, 2021) points out, the meaning of linguistic elements is interconnected with the context of their use, and the interpretation of deictic expressions depends on the identification of the speech event. This shows that deixis not only enhances our understanding of linguistic structure but also deepens our awareness of how meaning is constructed and interpreted in communication. In academic discourse, particularly in the analysis of speeches or written texts, deixis provides valuable insight into how speakers position themselves, address their audience, and create shared reference points that support clarity, persuasion, and coherence.

Deixis involves utilizing a verbal word to "point" to a contextual discourse entity or quality. (Widianti, 2024.) In other words, deixis functions as a linguistic tool that connects the structure of language with the surrounding context of communication. It allows speakers to refer to people, places, objects, and time in relation to the moment of speaking. (Wayan et al., 2020) Words such as *I, you, here, there, now,* and *then* gain their meaning only when interpreted within a specific context. This context-dependent nature makes deixis an essential aspect of pragmatics, as it helps establish shared understanding between the speaker and the listener.

Furthermore, deixis is not merely about reference (Safi', 2025). It also reflects how speakers construct social relationships, express attitudes, and organize discourse. Through the use of personal, spatial, temporal, discourse, and social deixis, speakers can shape how messages are interpreted, guiding the audience's focus and framing meaning in ways that serve communicative or even ideological purposes. Therefore, analyzing deixis provides a deeper understanding of how language operates dynamically within real-life interaction and how meaning is co-constructed through contextual clues.

Another example of deixis use in public speaking can be seen in President Joko Widodo's speech at the plenary meeting of the Istana Negara Republik Indonesia in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. In that speech, the President expressed strong criticism of his ministers for their performance. A study by Ritonga, (2023) analyzed this speech using a descriptive qualitative approach with video data from the Kompas TV YouTube channel. The findings revealed 101 utterances containing deixis, which were categorized into five types: person, place, time, discourse, and social deixis. The research concluded that deixis plays an essential role in emphasizing the speaker's stance and conveying contextual meaning in formal communication.

Similarly, a study on Lera Boroditsky's TED Talk, *"How Language Changes the Way We Think?"* by (Ningsih, 2022), highlighted the importance of analyzing deixis in formal speeches. The research identified six categories of deixis: person, place, time, social, discourse, and emotional deixis, and showed that each deictic expression carries meaning depending on the situational and contextual factors of the speech. Recognizing these expressions allows for a deeper understanding of the speaker's intentions and how audience engagement is managed through linguistic cues.

Building upon these insights, the present study focuses on the deixis expressions used by Magdalena Hoeller in her TED Talk. TED Talks provide a compelling platform for examining deixis because speakers often combine verbal and non-verbal cues to communicate ideas persuasively to a global audience (Putri, 2024). In this context, Hoeller's speech demonstrates how deixis can create shared understanding, foster emotional engagement, and establish coherence between the speaker and her listeners.

Therefore, this study aims to identify the types and functions of deixis in Magdalena Hoeller's TED Talk and to analyze how these expressions contribute to meaning construction, coherence, and audience involvement in authentic spoken discourse (Ningsih, 2022) By doing so, the research intends to enrich the understanding of deixis in multimodal communication and provide insights applicable to both linguistic theory and public speaking practice.

Based on the explanation above, deixis serves as a crucial linguistic tool that links language to context, allowing speakers to convey meaning, express social relationships, a nd engage their audience effectively. Previous studies

in political speeches and TED Talks have demonstrated the multifaceted role of deixis in shaping interpretation, highlighting speaker intention, and facilitating audience understanding. Building on these insights, the present study focuses on Magdalena Hoeller's TED Talk to explore how verbal and non-verbal deictic expressions function in real-life communication. By analyzing these expressions, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamic interplay between language, context, and audience engagement in formal speech, thus enriching both theoretical and practical perspectives on deixis in Magdalena Hoeller's speeches.

Therefore, the researchers bring out two research questions on the deixis investigation in the webinar as follows: (1) What types of deixis based on Levinson's (1983) theory are used in the TED Talk Why Love is Hard in a Second Language (2025)? (2) How are the meanings of each deictic expression interpreted in light of the speech? Furthermore, this recent study seeks to examine the various forms of deixis and identify the most prevalent deixis employed in Magdalena's speech, based on Levinson's theory.

METHOD

The researchers employed a descriptive-qualitative method, in which the data were presented in the form of sentences and analyzed descriptively according to the research problems. The primary data source of this study was the transcript of a TED-style speech entitled "Why Love is Harder in a Second Language (2025)", which discusses intercultural relationships and communication challenges between partners. This video was selected because it contains abundant deictic expressions that represent natural spoken discourse and pragmatic meaning. The secondary data consisted of the written transcript extracted from the YouTube captions, which was manually verified for accuracy and contextual coherence.

Using a qualitative descriptive approach (Creswell, 2014; Moleong, 2017), the researchers transcribed the video, identified the deixis expressions, and classified them based on Levinson's (1983) pragmatic theory of deixis. The deixis were grouped into six types: person deixis, spatial/place deixis, temporal/time deixis, social deixis, discourse deixis, and emotional deixis. Each expression was then contextually analyzed to determine its referential meaning and communicative function.

The descriptive-qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth interpretation of deixis in natural contexts (Miles, 2014) has been widely applied in recent linguistic studies. Previous research by (Manalu, 2024), and (Giffary, 2023), also used similar qualitative methods to investigate deixis in public speeches. These studies demonstrate that deixis analysis provides valuable insights into how speakers establish reference, engagement, and cohesion in discourse.

The data were analyzed through several steps: first, transcribing the speech; second, reading and understanding the context of each utterance; third, identifying and classifying all deixis expressions according to Levinson's framework; and finally, interpreting their pragmatic meanings. The total data consisted of approximately 190 utterances containing deictic expressions. The results were displayed descriptively in tables and supported by excerpts from the speech to show how deixis functions to construct interpersonal meaning, discourse coherence, and emotional nuance in the speaker's communication.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Types of Deixis

After analyzing the transcript of the speaker's text, six types of deixis based on Levinson's (1983) theory were found: person deixis, spatial/place deixis, temporal/time deixis, discourse deixis, social deixis, and emotional deixis. The classification and number of occurrences are shown below.

Table A Types of deixis

No	Types of deixis	Number of utterances
1.	Person deixis	137
2.	Spatial/place deixis	15
3.	Temporal/time deixis	22
4.	Social deixis	14
5.	Discourse deixis	69
Total		**257**

It can be seen in **Table A** that the researchers found 137 person deixis, 15 place/spatial deixis, 22 temporal/ time deixes, 14 social deixes, and 69 discourse deixis. The type of deixis most used by the speaker was person deixis. The use of person deixis plays a significant role in the way the speaker delivers the message of the speech.

2. *Interpretation of the Meaning*

Each deictic expression has its meaning depending on its context. This section presents the results that have more than one reference, and the ones that represent each category are presented.

a. Person Deixis

Person deixis refers to the participants involved in the speech event. The speaker (first person), the addressee (second person), and other individuals (third person) who may or may not be present in the discourse (Levinson, 1983). In this speech, person deixis dominates because the speaker narrates her personal experience, reflects on intercultural marriage, and directly engages with the audience. The following data illustrate its occurrences and meanings.

Data 1

*"On a cold but sunny autumn afternoon, **I** was riding on the back of **my** husband's motorcycle, just cruising along one of **our** favorite routes around Newcastle. It was a pretty fresh day, so **we** were all rugged up in **our** protective gear. At a set of red lights, **my** husband lifted **his** visor and **he** said to **me**, 'Hey, come feel **my** handles." (0.03-0.24)*

This excerpt contains multiple first-person deixis (*I, my, our, we, me*) referring to the speaker herself and her shared experience with her husband. The pronouns *he* and *his* mark third-person deixis, referring to the husband. These deixis expressions show intimacy and establish the narrative perspective from the speaker's point of view.

Data 2

*"What **I** didn't tell **you** so far is that **I'm** from Austria, so **my** first language is Austrian German, and **my** husband is from Australia, so **he** speaks English." (1.16-1.22)*

Here, *I, I'm, my* indicates the speaker (first person), while *you* refers to the **audience** (second person deixis). The contrast between *I* and *you* shows a direct address that builds an interactive, conversational tone typical of spoken discourse. The third-person deixis *he* introduces another participant (the husband) as a reference outside the immediate context.

Data 3

*"If **you** cannot flawlessly communicate with the person **you** want to be closest to in this world, how does that affect **your** relationship? This is what **I'm** going to answer for **you** today." (2.01-2.11)*

The words "*you"* and "*your"* are **second-person deixis** used to involve the audience personally. By addressing the listener directly, the speaker turns a general topic into a **personal reflection**, encouraging audience empathy. The *I'm* represents the speaker's authority and promise to deliver insight, showing interaction between speaker and listener.

Data 4

*"Now **my** husband and **I**, **we** mostly speak English together. Does that mean when **I** say 'I love **you**' in English, it means less because **I'm** emotionally detached from it?" (4.14-4.21)*

This part combines **first-person deixis** (*I, my, we, I'm*) and **second-person deixis** (*you*). The speaker uses *we* inclusively (referring to herself and her husband) and *you* to generalize the experience to the audience. It bridges personal experience with collective understanding, a hallmark of persuasive storytelling.

Data 5

*"Early on in **my** relationship, during an argument, **I** dropped a certain C-word. **I'm** not going to say what it is, **you** all know. But **my** husband, **he** was shocked and rightly so. **I've** never used it since in any context." (4.58-5.32)*

This excerpt combines **first**, **second**, and **third-person deixis** in one situation. *I, my, I'm, I've* (first person) expresses the speaker's self-reflection; *you all* (second person) appeals to audience familiarity; *he* (third person) refers to the husband, signaling an external participant. The interplay among these deixis categories illustrates personal storytelling intertwined with audience engagement.

b. Spatial / Place Deixis

Spatial or place deixis refers to expressions that locate people, objects, or events in space relative to the speaker and listener. According to Levinson (1983), these expressions signal proximity (near the speaker) or distality (far from the speaker). In the analyzed text, place deixis is used both literally (to describe physical places like *Newcastle*) and metaphorically (to locate social or emotional "spaces" like *in this world* or *here in relationships*).

Data 1

*"On a cold but sunny autumn afternoon, I was riding on the back of my husband's motorcycle, just cruising along one of our favorite routes **around Newcastle**." (0.03-0.10)*

The phrase around Newcastle indicates a specific physical location, functioning as distal deixis because the event occurred in the past and outside the current speaking context. It anchors the narrative geographically and helps the audience visualize the setting.

Data 2

*"By a show of hands, who in **here** knows at least one intercultural couple?" (1.35)*

The proximal deixis here points to the immediate physical environment shared by the speaker and the audience, emphasizing shared spatial context. It positions both speaker and listener in the same communicative space, typical in live speeches or presentations.

Data 3

*"We can observe this also with other emotions. For example, something that comes up **in relationships:** anger, frustration." (4.27-4.33)*

The phrase in relationships functions metaphorically as locative deixis, marking a conceptual space (relationship context) rather than a physical one. Such usage extends spatial deixis to abstract domains, a frequent strategy in emotional or psychological discourse.

c. Temporal / Time Deixis

Temporal or time deixis refers to the expressions that locate an event in time relative to the moment of speaking (coding time) and the moment of hearing (receiving time) (Levinson, 1983). In the analyzed speech, the speaker frequently uses time deixis to indicate temporal transitions from past experiences to present reflections and to guide the audience through the progression of her narrative. Time deixis also functions to mark structure and pacing in spoken discourse, such as introducing a new topic (*now*) or emphasizing relevance (*today, these days, so far*).

Data 1

*"What I didn't tell you **so far** is that I'm from Austria, so my first language is Austrian German, and my husband is from Australia." (1.16-1.22)*

The phrase so far refers to the time up to the moment of speaking. It marks a temporal boundary, indicating that the speaker is about to reveal new information that hasn't been shared earlier. This deixis connects the past narrative with the present point of speech, showing a transition in discourse.

Data 2

*"**Now** I grew up with the words 'ich liebe dich' from my parents, so over the years these have gained an emotional weight beyond what any other language can achieve for me." (3.45-3.52)*

The temporal deixis now introduces a shift in time reference, signaling a move from the general discussion to a personal anecdote. Although grammatically present, now here functions as a discourse marker, establishing a connection between the earlier abstract explanation and a concrete personal example.

Data 3

*"**Now** my husband and I, we mostly speak English together." (4.14)*

Again, now acts as temporal deixis marking the present habitual state of the speaker's relationship. It contrasts with past experiences discussed earlier, showing how time deixis can distinguish between different stages of the speaker's intercultural journey.

Data 4

*"One third of Australian marriages are intercultural **these days**, according to the ABS." (1.04-1.09)*

The phrase these days refers to the current time frame of the speaker's sociocultural observation. It positions the statement within the contemporary context, emphasizing the relevance of intercultural relationships in modern Australia.

Data 5

*"Let me take you on a journey **today** through the science behind all of these 'love handles' stories out there." (2.25-2.27)*

The adverb today marks the immediate present of the speech event, connecting directly to the moment of delivery. It reinforces the live, spontaneous character of spoken discourse and enhances the feeling of participation among the audience.

d. Social Deixis

According to Levinson (1983), social deixis refers to expressions that encode aspects of the social relationship between the speaker and the addressee or between the speaker and a third party. It indicates social status, intimacy, politeness, respect, or group identity through specific address terms, titles, or honorifics. In the analyzed speech, the speaker uses social deixis to express affectionate intimacy, cultural awareness, and polite engagement with the audience. These forms reflect both interpersonal and intercultural dynamics, emphasizing equality and closeness rather than hierarchy.

Data 1

*"At a set of red lights, **my husband** lifted his visor and he said to me, 'Hey, come feel my handles.' So naturally, I reached for his hips and gave them a playful squeeze and said, 'These handles are perfect, **baby**." (0.20-0.33)*

The noun phrase my husband and the term of endearment baby are both social deixis. *My husband* encodes a social role (marital relationship) between the speaker and another participant. The address *baby* conveys affectionate intimacy, signaling closeness typical of a romantic relationship. Both reflect familiar and informal social relations.

Data 2

*"**Honey**, it's not what you said, it's how you said it." (4.49)*

The vocative Honey is a clear marker of intimate social deixis, used within close relationships such as spouses or partners. It highlights the speaker's use of socially embedded endearment, revealing emotional warmth and relational context. Such deixis reflects cultural intimacy markers in English.

Data 3

*"By a show of hands, **who in here** knows at least one intercultural couple? Maybe it's even you. Yeah, exactly. Now in my research with intercultural couples, I found many beautiful aspects... **Let me ask you** this." (1.35-1.59)*

The direct invitation "Let me ask you" and the inclusive phrase "who's in here" show social deixis of politeness and inclusion. The speaker positions herself as friendly and respectful, reducing the distance between the academic researcher and the audience. It signals solidarity and shared identity within a public communication setting.

Data 4

"*So **let me take you** on a journey today through the science behind all of these 'love handles' stories out there." (2.25-2.27)*

This phrase shows solidarity deixis. The use of *let me take you* signals the speaker's cooperative stance, implying equality between herself and the audience. This aligns with Levinson's view that social deixis can manifest not only in formal address but also in inclusive discourse strategies.

Data 5

*"Now **my husband** and I, we mostly speak English together." (4.14)*

The relational title my husband again marks social deixis of familial relation. It identifies the husband's social role relative to the speaker. This type of deixis is important in intercultural discourse because it frames the cultural and linguistic dynamic within a social hierarchy of marital partners.

e. Discourse Deixis

According to Levinson (1983), discourse deixis refers to expressions that indicate or refer to portions of discourse either backward (anaphoric) to something previously mentioned, or forward (cataphoric) to something that will follow. In other words, discourse deixis helps listeners track ideas, arguments, or sections within the unfolding text.

In this speech, the speaker uses discourse deixis frequently through demonstratives such as this, that, these, those, and it to connect segments of her talk and to organize her storytelling effectively.

Data 1

*"Yeah, a classic and genuine misunderstanding. And lucky we both have good humor, otherwise **this** could have ended in an argument." (0.45-0.50)*

The word this refers back (anaphorically) to the previous story about the misunderstanding between the speaker and her husband. It functions as discourse deixis pointing to the entire preceding event, linking the narrative to its humorous conclusion.

Data 2

*"But interactions like **these** happen every day in intercultural relationships." (0.54)*

The demonstrative these refers back to the previously narrated miscommunication incident. By using *these*, the speaker generalizes her personal story to a wider phenomenon, connecting individual experience with broader social observation. It shows how discourse deixis can shift focus from specific to general reference.

Data 3

"If you cannot flawlessly communicate with the person you want to be closest to in this world, how does that affect your relationship? ***This*** *is what I'm going to answer for you today." (2.01-2.11)*

Here, this serves as cataphoric deixis, pointing forward to the main topic of the talk, the issue of communication and language barriers in intercultural relationships. It signals a transition from the introduction to the body of the discourse.

Data 4

"So let me take you on a journey today through the science behind all of ***these*** *'love handles' stories out there." (2.25-2.27)*

The demonstrative functions as anaphoric deixis, referring to previously mentioned humorous misunderstandings ("love handles" confusion). It helps maintain thematic cohesion, ensuring the audience can connect the earlier story to the scientific discussion that follows.

Data 5

"The first challenge I'd like to share with you today is how different languages carry different emotional weights for people. What does ***that*** *mean?" (3.00-3.08)*

The pronoun that functions as discourse deixis, referring backward to the previous sentence's idea, shows the difference in emotional weight between languages. It signals a shift from assertion to explanation, guiding the audience's comprehension.

CONCLUSION

In this speech, the speaker uses all five types of deixis Levinson 1983 proposes, namely person deixis, spatial deixis, temporal deixis, social deixis, and discourse deixis. Person deixis is the most frequent in this speech because it establishes participant roles through first- and second-person pronouns, like I, you, and we, which effectively establish contact with the audience. Spatial deixis is not about physical directions but more about conceptual markers, helping navigate different narrative contexts. Temporal deixis serves to indicate shifts in time; it contrasts past and present experiences and structures the chronology of events. Social deixis is used through relational identities such as my husband or partners, emphasizing the social roles of actors in the speaker's stories. On the other hand, discourse deixis serves to organize the flow of the speech through earlier and upcoming parts and thus supports textual coherence. Based on these observations, it may be firmly stated that all five kinds of deixis are in active service throughout the speech.

The meaning of these deictic expressions suggests that deixis does much more than merely fulfill referential functions; it considerably helps the speaker convey meaning in his narrative. Person deixis builds intimacy and sharing; it allows the audience to feel inclusive in the intercultural journey of the speaker. Spatial deixis conveys metaphorical meaning; it navigates the listeners through emotional and conceptual rather than physical spaces. Temporal deixis situates the audience within the timeline of events, emphasizing linguistic development and relationship progression. Social deixis informs about interpersonal relationships and cultural identity, while discourse deixis ensures coherence and emphasizes key points. Overall, the interpretation suggests that deixis operates as a pragmatic strategy that shapes understanding, enhances engagement, and reflects the complexity of communication in intercultural contexts.

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Linguistics and Literature Journal
Vol. 6, No. 240 - 250
E-ISSN: 2723-7273

available online at: http://jim.teknokrat.ac.id/index.php/linguistics_and_literature/index

TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES OF LAURA IN DANNY AND MICHAEL PHILIPPOU'S *BRING HER BACK* (2025)

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Received: (October 2025) **Accepted**: (November 2025) **Published :** (December 2025)

Abstract

This study analyzes Laura's traumatic experiences in Danny and Michael Philippou's *Bring Her Back* (2025) using Herman's trauma typology and Caruth's psychoanalytic theory of belatedness. The research aims to explain how Laura's psychological instability, fragmented memories, and sensory distortions reflect different forms of trauma while illustrating the psychoanalytic dynamics of repetition and delayed understanding. Employing a qualitative descriptive method, the analysis focuses on scenes depicting intrusive flashbacks, dissociation, hypervigilance, and emotional breakdowns. The findings indicate that Laura's blindness intensifies her traumatic perception by forcing her to rely on auditory and tactile impressions, which deepen the fragmentation of her memory. Her recurring hallucinations of her daughter, emotional volatility, and persistent self-blame align with contemporary trauma studies emphasizing the disrupted relationship between memory, identity, and psychological pain. The film also suggests the beginning of recovery as Laura gradually confronts avoided memories and regains emotional clarity. Overall, *Bring Her Back* presents a multidimensional portrayal of trauma by revealing how unresolved experiences shape one's memory, identity, and perception of reality.

Keywords: identity, memory, psychoanalysis, trauma

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the topic of mental health has gained substantial attention in both academic and social discussions. The global focus on emotional well-being has expanded beyond medical definitions to include social, artistic, and cultural perspectives on human suffering. This phenomenon indicates a growing awareness that mental health is not only a medical concern but also a social and cultural issue that defines how individuals experience and express pain. Kleinman (1988) states that "mental health must be understood not only as a biological disorder but as a constructed reality. The discussion of mental health inevitably leads to an examination of how power shapes human consciousness, how societal structures regulate what can be spoken, remembered, and forgotten. Consequently, unmaintained mental health can cause serious and dangerous conditions, leading to situations known as mental disorders.

According to Gustiani (2023), "mental disorders are conditions in which people cannot live normally in their environment. Sufferers usually experience difficulty in carrying out daily activities due to the distortion of thoughts. This definition highlights that mental disorders not only disrupt an individual's internal psychological state but also interfere with daily functioning and social interaction. It also emphasizes cognitive distortion, such as irrational beliefs, intrusive thoughts, or impaired perception. Therefore, understanding mental disorders requires not only clinical assessment but also an awareness of how psychological symptoms manifest in every human's behaviour. Symptoms of mental disorders can be observed through several indicators, such as anxiety, memory problems, substance abuse, etc. This situation is usually defined as a painful condition.

A painful condition refers to any physical or psychological disorder in which pain is a primary or dominant feature. Pain itself is defined as "an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with, or resembling that associated with, actual or potential tissue damage" (IASP, 2020). Therefore, painful conditions should be understood not only as physical symptoms but also as complex subjective experiences influenced by emotional and cognitive factors, requiring a comprehensive approach to assessment and treatment. Painful conditions may arise from injury, illness, nerve damage, or psychological factors. In many cases, these painful responses are closely linked to traumatic experiences, as trauma can alter pain perception and contribute to the development of long-lasting physical and emotional pain.

Trauma is the lasting emotional response to a distressing experience that overwhelms an individual's capacity to cope. Caruth (1996) argues that trauma is not simply a direct reaction to a violent or shocking event, but a psychological wound that returns repeatedly in the form of nightmares, intrusive memories, or flashbacks, reflecting the mind's inability to fully process what happened. Following this idea, Herman (1992) explains that trauma also disrupts a person's fundamental sense of safety, agency, and connection, often leaving survivors in a state of disempowerment and withdrawal. For instance, a survivor may develop hypervigilance, avoidance, or emotional numbing because their basic sense of security has been shaken. Herman further emphasizes that recovery is not merely an internal psychological task, but also a social one, requiring survivors to rebuild autonomy and trust within supportive relationships. In this way, both Caruth and Herman show that trauma is not confined to the past but continues to shape one's emotional and cognitive life long after the event.

In trauma studies, scholars agree that trauma does not appear as a single, uniform response, but takes different forms depending on the duration, intensity, and context of the distressing event. Herman (1992) explains that trauma varies because individuals face violence, fear, or loss under different relational and environmental circumstances, which shape the level of psychological harm. Similarly, Bryant (2016) notes that traumatic reactions differ because prolonged or repeated trauma affects the mind differently from a sudden incident, often leading to distinct emotional and cognitive disruptions. These views stress the importance of categorizing trauma in research and clinical practice, since each type has its own psychological pattern and requires specific treatment approaches. Therefore, contemporary trauma studies classify trauma based on the factors that shape its development, leading into the next section, which explains the different types of traumas in more detail.

There are several types of traumas proposed by trauma scholars, such as Herman (1992), each distinguished by the nature and context of the experience that triggers psychological disruption. Acute trauma refers to the response that emerges from a single, sudden, and overwhelming event that threatens an individual's physical or emotional safety. Herman (1992) explains that this type of trauma often results from incidents like accidents, natural disasters, or isolated acts of violence that provoke intense feelings of fear, helplessness, or shock. The immediate effects may include intrusive memories, heightened arousal, and difficulty managing emotions as the mind struggles to make sense of an experience that exceeds normal coping abilities. Although the event occurs within a short time frame, its psychological consequences can continue long after, especially when adequate support or intervention is lacking. Understanding acute trauma is therefore essential to ensure timely treatment and prevent short-term distress from developing into longer-lasting psychological conditions. From this point, trauma studies also recognize another form known as chronic trauma, which emerges not from a single event but from repeated or prolonged exposure to distress.

Chronic trauma refers to psychological harm that results from repeated or prolonged exposure to distressing events over an extended period. Herman (1992) explains that, unlike acute trauma, which stems from a single sudden incident, chronic trauma develops from ongoing patterns of threat such as long-term childhood abuse, repeated bullying, domestic violence, or living in a war zone. This cumulative exposure disrupts emotional regulation, cognitive processing, and the development of a stable sense of safety, often leading to long-lasting psychological difficulties. De Jongh et al. (2016) note that individuals exposed to prolonged trauma may display persistent hypervigilance, emotional numbing, dissociation, and difficulties forming secure interpersonal relationships, as repeated stress shapes maladaptive coping strategies and internal psychological patterns. Because of its duration and repetitive nature, chronic trauma is frequently associated with complex post-traumatic stress disorder (C-PTSD), depression, and other long-term personality disturbances. This conceptual understanding also leads scholars to identify a more severe form known as complex trauma, which arises when prolonged exposure occurs under conditions of entrapment or powerlessness, and will be discussed in the next section.

Complex trauma refers to the profound psychological and relational disturbances that arise from exposure to multiple, prolonged, and interpersonal traumatic events, often beginning early in life. Herman (1992) first described how such trauma typically involves repeated experiences of abuse, neglect, or coercive control in which the individual is harmed by caregivers or figures of authority. More recent scholars, such as Cook et al. (2017), emphasize that because these experiences occur within critical developmental periods, they disrupt emotional regulation, identity formation, and the establishment of secure attachment patterns, resulting in long-term difficulties in affective stability, cognition, and interpersonal functioning. Individuals affected by complex trauma frequently show symptoms that go beyond traditional post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), including dissociation, chronic shame, persistent relational distrust, and entrenched self-blame. These manifestations indicate that complex trauma reshapes fundamental psychological structures rather than producing isolated symptoms, which is why treatment must be long-term and integrative, addressing both traumatic memories and developmental interruptions. Building on this understanding, the discussion can move toward real-world cases that demonstrate how complex trauma appears in lived experiences and contemporary social contexts.

Real world cases illustrate how trauma manifests across different layers of society. Lady Gaga's public revelation of her PTSD after sexual assault demonstrates how traumatic experiences can affect even highly successful public figures, challenging the assumption that fame or privilege provides psychological protection. Her testimony underscores the long-term psychological consequences of sexual violence, including intrusive memories, anxiety, and emotional dysregulation, which align with clinical descriptions of post-traumatic stress disorder. Gaga's case highlights the broader social significance of trauma disclosure, as her openness has contributed to increasing public awareness, reducing stigma, and encouraging other survivors to speak about their experiences. Such examples demonstrate how trauma is not only an individual psychological burden but also a socially embedded phenomenon that reflects power dynamics, cultural silence, and the need for collective recognition and support. These experiences reveal how emotional distress interacts with power structures, patriarchal norms, celebrity expectations, and social silence that dictate how individuals manage suffering. Trauma, therefore, is not merely a private psychological wound but a product of larger systems of power that shape human identity.

Similarly, Chester Bennington's mental health battle shows how the pressures of fame, productivity, and masculinity intensify trauma's impact. Herman (1992) observes that trauma disrupts not only the psyche but also the ability to connect with others, making it a fundamentally social wound. Bennington's struggle with depression, addiction, and unresolved childhood trauma reveals how early experiences of abuse can resurface throughout adulthood, especially when reinforced by relentless public scrutiny and performance demands. His tragic death further illustrates how trauma, when left untreated or inadequately supported, can lead to self-destructive coping mechanisms and even suicide. In this context, Bennington's case serves as a reminder that trauma does not disappear with success or achievement; instead, it may become more deeply internalized when individuals feel compelled to maintain a public image of strength while suffering privately. This visibility not only highlights the pervasive nature of traumatic experiences but also demonstrates how media can serve as powerful platforms for processing, expressing, and transforming trauma into meaningful narratives.

As research continues to examine trauma in personal narratives, scholars also increasingly explore how artistic media portray emotional suffering. Cinema, in particular, has emerged as a powerful site for trauma representation. Film scholars argue that the visual and auditory capabilities of cinema can mirror the instability, fragmentation, and sensory overload that characterize traumatic memory (Kaplan, 2017). Cinematic techniques such as nonlinear structures, distorted sound design, and subjective camera perspectives allow filmmakers to convey psychological states that are difficult to articulate verbally (Smith, 2020). Because of this, trauma studies and film studies often intersect, forming a rich space for analyzing how emotional pain is depicted through narrative and symbolism.

Recent scholarship shows that horror films provide especially fertile ground for examining trauma. The genre frequently externalizes internal psychological conflict through supernatural or uncanny manifestations, visually representing unresolved grief, fear, or guilt (Lee, 2021). Studies of films like *The Babadook* and *Hereditary* describe how horror uses monstrous imagery, spectral figures, and temporal distortion to symbolize the return of repressed emotional experiences (Smith, 2020; Lee, 2021). These interpretations align with Caruth's theory of belatedness and Herman's concept of intrusive symptoms, illustrating how horror cinema can function as a metaphorical stage where hidden emotional wounds become visible.

Given these developments, contemporary films that blend horror and psychological realism offer valuable material for trauma analysis. *Bring Her Back* (2025), directed by Danny and Michael Philippou, exemplifies this trend. Early reviews describe the film as a hybrid narrative that uses supernatural elements to explore unresolved grief and emotional disintegration (Saito, 2024). The protagonist, Laura, a blind mother grieving the loss of her daughter, experiences intense hallucinations, perceptual confusion, and emotional instability. These symptoms resemble the intrusive memories, dissociative episodes, and narrative fragmentation discussed in contemporary trauma research (Frewen et al., 2020). Thus, the film provides a compelling basis for analyzing trauma through both Herman's typology and Caruth's theoretical framework.

Moreover, Laura's blindness adds a symbolic dimension that deepens the analysis. Scholars argue that sensory impairment within trauma narratives often mirrors the survivor's inability or refusal to perceive the full reality of the traumatic event (Kaplan, 2017). In *Bring Her Back*, Laura's limited visual perception becomes intertwined with her emotional disorientation, suggesting that her traumatic memories remain partially obscured and only emerge through distorted sensory impressions. This portrayal aligns with Herman's assertion that trauma disrupts cognitive clarity and alters how reality is processed (Herman, 1992), while also resonating with recent studies that emphasize the sensory dimension of traumatic recall (Boyd et al., 2022).

Her mental deterioration embodies Caruth's (1996) idea of belated experience, the delayed confrontation with trauma that cannot be fully grasped. Laura's haunting visions symbolize her subconscious guilt, while her repetitive breakdowns reveal the concept of compulsion to repeat. Beneath these symptoms lies the operation of

power: the internalized moral expectations of motherhood and purity that punish her through guilt. Laura's trauma thus reflects both her psychological wound and the disciplinary power that governs female suffering.

Considering these intersections between trauma theory and cinematic representation, *Bring Her Back* becomes an important case study for understanding how film visualizes and narrativises psychological suffering in contemporary media culture. Through its narrative structure, character design, and visual symbolism, the film reflects the core elements of trauma identified in both classical and recent scholarship: fragmentation, persistent intrusion, emotional dysregulation, and disrupted memory (Dekel & Bonanno, 2016; Frewen et al., 2020). These characteristics justify a detailed analysis grounded in Herman's framework of acute, chronic, and complex trauma, while also incorporating Caruth's insights on belatedness and narrative rupture.

Caruth's trauma theory provides the primary framework for this study. She emphasizes three key aspects of trauma: belatedness, fragmentation, and repetition. These elements describe how trauma destabilizes identity and time. Laura's fragmented perception aligns with these notions her memories are non-linear, her consciousness split between reality and illusion.

Based on these theories, the research problem is defined as follows: *How does Bring Her Back (2025) represent the intersection of psychological trauma and power structure through Laura's fragmented identity, and how do Caruth's and Foucault's frameworks explain this portrayal?* The study aims to demonstrate that trauma in horror cinema is not only psychological but also a manifestation of power relations.

The definition of trauma has been the subject of extensive debate. Herman (1992) describes trauma as a violation of fundamental human trust that shatters an individual's sense of control and safety. More contemporary works reinforce this understanding by highlighting how overwhelming events disrupt not only emotional stability but also neurological and cognitive functioning (Boyd et al., 2022). Caruth (1996), on the other hand, conceptualizes trauma as an event that is not fully grasped in the moment of occurrence and returns belatedly in intrusive forms. Recent trauma scholars extend Caruth's emphasis on belatedness, arguing that traumatic memory often consists of fragmented sensory impressions rather than coherent narratives (Frewen et al., 2020). Together, these perspectives provide a comprehensive foundation for analyzing trauma in narrative and cinematic forms, where fragmentation and sensory distortion are often rendered through stylistic techniques.

Understanding trauma also requires a clear categorization of its various forms. Herman's (1992) typology, acute, chronic, and complex trauma. Remains one of the most widely used frameworks in contemporary trauma literature. Recent clinical studies continue to apply this structure, noting that acute trauma arises from a single shocking event, chronic trauma results from prolonged exposure, and complex trauma emerges in contexts where interpersonal harm accumulates over time (Porges & Dana, 2018). Although these categories differ in their origin and duration, recent research stresses that they share similar symptomatic patterns, such as intrusive memories, avoidance behaviors, and emotional dysregulation highlighting the intricate nature of trauma's psychological impact (Dekel & Bonanno, 2016). This typology becomes crucial when analyzing narratives like Bring Her Back, where the protagonist exhibits overlapping symptoms that reflect more than one category of trauma.

The relevance of trauma theory in film studies has grown significantly in the past decade. Scholars argue that cinema possesses unique representational tools capable of conveying the sensory and temporal disruptions characteristic of traumatic memory (Kaplan, 2017). Nonlinear storytelling, unstable visual framing, and abrupt shifts in perspective are often used to mimic the fragmented nature of traumatic recollection (Smith, 2020). Furthermore, Boyd et al. (2022) emphasize that trauma manifests not only through verbal expression but also through sensory distortion, bodily reactions, and involuntary memory intrusions. This is particularly relevant to cinematic language, where filmmakers can visually render psychological turmoil through stylistic choices such as close-up shots, disorienting soundscapes, or erratic editing patterns.

Horror cinema, in particular, has become a central focus of trauma scholarship. Researchers argue that the genre frequently externalizes internal psychological states through symbolic or supernatural imagery, providing a metaphorical space where trauma becomes visible (Lee, 2021). In her analysis of The Babadook, Smith (2020) notes that the monstrous figure functions as a manifestation of unresolved maternal grief, illustrating how horror narratives often link emotional distress with external threats. Similarly, Lee's (2021) study of Hereditary highlights how familial trauma, guilt, and inherited suffering are dramatized through disturbing imagery and narrative breakdowns. These works collectively demonstrate that horror films frequently represent trauma through metaphor rather than explicit psychological exposition, allowing audiences to engage with emotional complexity indirectly.

While these studies provide valuable insights, some limitations remain. Many scholars focus primarily on metaphorical interpretations of trauma, emphasizing symbolic representation rather than analyzing the character's

psychological process in detail. For instance, Smith (2020) prioritizes metaphor over the character's coping attempts, while Lee (2021) examines trauma primarily as a thematic device. These approaches are important but do not fully account for the psychological specificity of individual characters. In contrast, more recent research encourages a deeper integration of psychological theory with narrative analysis, emphasizing how characters' symptoms correspond with real-world trauma frameworks (Brewin, 2018). This shift underscores the need for analyses that consider both symbolic and psychological dimensions of trauma representation.

Furthermore, recent trauma scholarship highlights the importance of considering sensory and perceptual limitations in trauma narratives. Boyd et al. (2022) argue that sensory impairment or distortion often mirrors the survivor's emotional fragmentation, as trauma disrupts how individuals perceive and interpret their environment. Kaplan (2017) similarly points out that visual instability in film often reflects a character's inner turmoil. These insights are particularly relevant to Bring Her Back, where Laura's blindness affects how she navigates traumatic memories. Her limited visual perception collaborates with her emotional instability, illustrating what Frewen et al. (2020) describe as the interplay between sensory vulnerability and intrusive memory.

Although research on trauma in horror cinema is abundant, scholarly work specifically addressing Bring Her Back remains scarce because the film is relatively new. However, early studies and reviews note that the Philippou brothers blend psychological realism with supernatural horror to portray the protagonist's emotional deterioration (Saito, 2024). This aligns with recent scholarship emphasizing cinematic trauma as a mixture of psychological precision and metaphorical exaggeration (Kaplan, 2017). Thus, while Bring Her Back has not yet accumulated extensive academic literature, its thematic elements align closely with ongoing trends in trauma-focused film analysis.

Based on this background, the present research positions itself within recent trauma scholarship by integrating Herman's typology with Caruth's belatedness framework. Herman's emphasis on emotional violation and fragmented functioning provides a lens for analyzing Laura's symptoms, while Caruth's concept of delayed understanding explains the film's nonlinear and cyclical portrayal of traumatic memory. More recent works from Brewin (2018), Boyd et al. (2022), and Frewen et al. (2020) provide updated insights that bridge classical theory with contemporary research. This combination ensures that the analysis is theoretically sound and academically relevant, while also situating Bring Her Back within the broader conversation about trauma in modern cinema.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze Laura's traumatic experiences in Bring Her Back through the combined theoretical lens of Herman's trauma typology and Caruth's theory of belatedness. A qualitative design is appropriate because trauma manifests through subjective expressions, memory fragments, emotional reactions, and perceptual distortions, which cannot be measured or quantified but must be interpreted within narrative and psychological contexts (Frewen et al., 2020). The film was examined using close textual and visual analysis, focusing on scenes that depict Laura's emotional disorientation, intrusive memories, and dissociative states. These scenes were selected based on criteria derived from recent trauma research, which identifies intrusion, avoidance, and fragmentation as core indicators of traumatic distress (Brewin, 2018). Herman's (1992) framework guided the classification of trauma into acute, chronic, and complex types, while Caruth's (1996) emphasis on delayed understanding was used to interpret scenes involving cyclical memory and sensory disruption. Supporting insights from contemporary trauma scholars such as Boyd et al. (2022) and Kaplan (2017) strengthen the methodological grounding by ensuring that the analysis remains aligned with post-2016 academic developments. All interpretations prioritize narrative context and psychological plausibility, ensuring that cinematic representation is evaluated both symbolically and clinically.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this analysis demonstrate that Laura's trauma manifests as both psychological repetition and systemic repression. Her blindness signifies her partial awareness, a symbolic refusal to confront the full scope of her loss. As Caruth (1996) notes, trauma often "returns in a haunting form that resists understanding" (p. 5). Laura's visions of her daughter thus represent the belated arrival of the traumatic event into consciousness. Each hallucination acts as a repetition compulsion, a Freudian mechanism where the mind replays pain to regain mastery over it.

Trauma is generally classified into three major types: acute, chronic, and complex trauma, each shaping psychological responses in distinct ways.

a). Acute Trauma

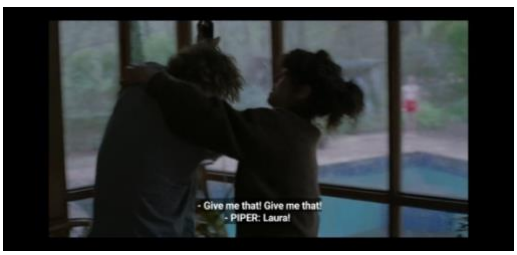
Datum 1

This scene, the character suddenly reacts with raised voice and visible distress as he says, “Like you protected Cathy?” followed by the defensive response, “I’m not gonna let you hurt her again.” The emotional outburst occurs immediately after a triggering statement, showing a sharp and sudden emotional reaction. This moment is categorized as acute trauma because it reflects a brief, intense response to a specific psychological trigger. The character’s tone, facial tension, and abrupt escalation indicate a short-term stress reaction caused by a single moment of perceived threat.

In this scene, the character’s sudden emotional outburst, triggered by the line “Like you protected Cathy?” reflects an acute traumatic response. Acute trauma typically emerges from a single distressing event or a specific triggering moment, producing immediate psychological shock or fear. The abrupt shift in his tone, body language, and facial expression indicates that the character is momentarily overwhelmed by a sudden resurgence of distressing memories. According to Caruth’s concept of trauma as an “overwhelming experience that exceeds the mind’s capacity to process in the moment,” this reaction demonstrates how a single verbal cue can reactivate an unresolved shock. The character’s defensive posture and heightened emotion show that he is reliving a moment of perceived danger or helplessness, even though the threat is no longer present. Thus, the scene underscores the characteristics of acute trauma: immediate activation, short-term intensity, and emotional overload caused by a specific, sharply defined trigger.

Datum 2

The character is shown in a state of intense distress as she physically struggles with another person while desperately shouting, “Give me that! Give me that!” Her face is visibly bruised, and she later cries out, “He’s gonna bring her back!” The chaotic physical movement, raised voice, and visible injuries emphasize that the character is reacting to a sudden and overwhelming situation occurring in the moment. The scene focuses on the immediate emotional shock and bodily tension experienced during the confrontation, capturing the abrupt and highly charged nature of the event.



The scene depicts a woman crying hysterically, her face covered in wounds and blood, as she desperately screams, "He's gonna bring her back!" This intense display of terror, despair, and obsessive conviction aligns closely with scholarly understandings of trauma. Drawing on Judith Herman's (1992) framework of complex trauma, the character's emotional dysregulation manifested through uncontrolled crying and frantic vocalization reflects the profound disruption of affective stability that occurs after prolonged exposure to interpersonal harm. Her insistence that someone "will bring her back" suggests a collapse of rational belief systems, illustrating Herman's notion of *traumatic bonding a*nd the fragmentation of meaning that often emerges when individuals cannot fully integrate the reality of loss.

Furthermore, her desperate appeal to another character indicates the erosion of relational trust, a hallmark of trauma's impact on interpersonal dynamics. From Caruth's (1996) perspective, the repeated and urgent invocation of the lost figure signifies *traumatic repetition,* where unassimilated experiences return intrusively in the form of obsessive utterances or reenactments.

This scene reflects **acute trauma** because the character is experiencing an immediate psychological shock triggered by a sudden and overwhelming event. Her frantic shouting, physical struggle, and visible injuries indicate that she is not processing the situation rationally but reacting instinctively to an intense moment of fear and desperation. According to trauma theory, acute trauma occurs when an individual is confronted with a single, abrupt, and highly distressing incident that overwhelms their capacity to cope. Here, the character's panicked insistence—"Give me that!"—and her desperate claim that someone "is gonna bring her back" show a breakdown of emotional regulation in response to an abrupt threat or loss. The intensity of her behavior illustrates how the traumatic moment intrudes directly into her body and voice, highlighting the sudden and overwhelming nature of the experience.

b). Chronic Trauma

Datum 1

In this scene, Laura's caseworker explains that "Laura's had issues," indicating a long-standing pattern of emotional instability. The office setting, combined with the caseworker's serious tone, suggests that Laura has been experiencing psychological difficulties over an extended period. The dialogue implies that her distress is not a recent development but part of a continuous and recurring emotional struggle.

This scene shows that the character Laura exhibits psychological symptoms that indicate a history of past trauma. In the dialogue, the counselor states that *"Laura has problems with troubled children from her past,"* suggesting that the traumatic experience did not occur once, but happened repeatedly over a long period of time. Laura's defensive attitude, her tendency to be easily triggered, and her difficulty regulating emotions in certain school situations further support the indication of chronic trauma.

Findings from the scene indicate that the trauma experienced by Laura is best categorized as **chronic trauma**. Chronic trauma arises when an individual experiences stress, fear, or emotional conflict repeatedly over an extended period. In the context of the film, Laura's past encounters with "troubled children" suggest prolonged stressful interactions. This type of trauma typically leaves lasting effects such as hypervigilance, fear, and unstable emotional responses.

Herman (1992) defines chronic trauma as trauma that occurs repeatedly over a prolonged period, often within contexts that create continuous fear, uncertainty, or emotional instability. Laura's experiences with "troubled children" in her past suggest the presence of long-term exposure to emotionally overwhelming interactions. Chronic trauma is known to produce effects such as hypervigilance, emotional dysregulation, and heightened sensitivity to triggers signs that can be observed in Laura's present behavior. As Herman explains, chronic trauma *"creates prolonged states of fear, helplessness, and exhaustion"* (p. 34), echoing the emotional landscape suggested by Laura's response.

Datum 2

In this scene, the social worker mentions that Laura has dealt "with troubled kids in the past," indicating a recurring pattern of emotionally distressing experiences throughout her earlier life and caregiving role. The tone of the dialogue and the serious expression of the social worker highlight that Laura's difficulties are not isolated events but part of a long-standing history. The setting in a formal office further reinforces the seriousness and continuity of Laura's psychological issues.

This scene represents chronic trauma because it reveals that Laura's emotional struggles are rooted in ongoing and repeated experiences of stress rather than a single traumatic moment. Herman (1992) argues that chronic trauma develops over a prolonged period, often through repeated exposure to distressing interpersonal situations. The reference to past experiences with "troubled kids" suggests that Laura has faced persistent emotional challenges that have shaped her psychological condition across time. Brewin (2018) adds that chronic trauma manifests in lasting patterns of emotional strain and difficulty maintaining stable relationships. The social worker's acknowledgment of Laura's history indicates that her trauma accumulates across years, showing long-term dysfunction rather than a short lived reaction.

c). Complex Trauma

Datum 1

In this scene, the character reveals a disturbing memory by stating, "I saw my dad in the shower." The expression on her face and the serious tone of the moment indicate that this memory is emotionally charged and tied to a deeply unsettling experience within her family environment. The scene suggests that the event occurred during her childhood, creating long-term psychological distress.

The analysis of the selected scene reveals several prominent psychological symptoms exhibited by the young male character. First, he reports **seeing his father in the bathroom**, despite the father not being physically present. This indicates an episode of **hallucinatory flashback**, in which traumatic memories return with sensory vividness. Second, the character recalls that the father *"said something"*, but struggles to articulate the details, suggesting the presence of **fragmented intrusive memories**. This fragmentation is a common characteristic of trauma survivors whose recollections return in incomplete and emotionally charged pieces.

In the subsequent scene, the character states that *"he will die in the rain."* This utterance functions as a **symbolic intrusive recall**, where the traumatic memory does not manifest as a coherent narrative but appears as a condensed symbolic statement. Physiologically, the character displays a blank, distant gaze and reduced responsiveness, indicating **dissociation**, a temporary detachment from the surrounding environment.

Datum 2

In this datum, the image shows the character lying on a hospital bed with a distressed and unfocused expression while saying, "He said something." His weakened physical posture and anxious facial expression indicate emotional overwhelm and psychological instability. This reaction demonstrates how the character struggles to recall the traumatic event clearly, suggesting fragmented memory a common symptom of complex trauma. According to Herman (1992), complex trauma often emerges from repeated interpersonal harm, resulting in difficulties in emotional regulation and disrupted memory processing. Brewin

The analysis of the scenes indicates that the young male character is experiencing psychological symptoms characteristic of **complex trauma**. The first symptom appears when he reports **seeing his father in the bathroom**, even though the father is not physically present. This illustrates a **sensory flashback** manifesting in the form of hallucinatory perception a common reaction among survivors of prolonged domestic trauma.

He also recalls that his father *"said something,"* but he is unable to articulate the memory in full. This reveals the presence of **fragmented intrusive memories**, where traumatic recollections do not emerge as coherent narratives but as disjointed fragments.

The findings can be interpreted using Judith Herman's trauma framework. Herman (1992) asserts that trauma survivors often "oscillate between reliving the trauma as if it were happening in the present and avoiding any

reminder of it" (p. 37). This dual reality is evident in the character's experience: although physically safe in a hospital, his mind reactivates past experiences with his father, causing him to perceive the father as present in the room.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of Bring Her Back reveals that Laura's experiences reflect a multidimensional form of trauma that cannot be understood through a single theoretical lens. Herman's framework provides a clear structure for identifying acute, chronic, and complex trauma in Laura's behavioral patterns, while Caruth's emphasis on belatedness and fragmentation helps interpret the film's nonlinear and sensory-driven portrayal of traumatic memory. Throughout the narrative, Laura's perceptual disruptions, intrusive hallucinations, and dissociative episodes illustrate how trauma destabilizes the survivor's relationship with time, memory, and self. These findings align with contemporary trauma scholarship, which argues that traumatic recollection emerges not as a coherent story but as scattered sensory fragments, often returning through involuntary flashbacks or emotional triggers (Boyd et al., 2022; Frewen et al., 2020).

Moreover, the film effectively visualizes the instability documented in post-2016 trauma research, particularly the heightened sensitivity to sound, touch, and atmosphere in individuals who have lost access to visual cues. Laura's blindness deepens the impact of traumatic recollection by forcing her to rely on sensory channels that trauma often distorts, reinforcing Kaplan's (2017) argument that cinematic techniques can parallel survivors' perceptual limitations. Each scene demonstrates the interplay between psychological distress and sensory fragmentation, illustrating how trauma becomes embedded in the survivor's everyday environment and bodily experience. Ultimately, this research underscores the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in understanding trauma. By combining psychological, philosophical, and cinematic perspectives, it reveals how personal suffering is deeply entangled with structural power. *Bring Her Back* stands as a reminder that pain is never purely individual; it is shaped, contained, and expressed within systems that define what it means to feel, to grieve, and to survive.

Another key conclusion is that Laura's trauma manifests not only through symptoms of intrusion and avoidance but also through relational breakdowns characteristic of complex trauma. Her shifting emotional responses, fear, guilt, anger, and withdrawal mirror Herman's (1992) description of trauma that emerges from prolonged interpersonal strain and unresolved grief. Recent studies affirm that externalizing guilt or withdrawing from close relationships often indicates deep psychological injury rather than personal failure (Dekel & Bonanno, 2016; Brewin, 2018). Laura's conflict with her husband, her self-blame, and her emotional isolation illustrate such patterns clearly.

Despite the severity of her symptoms, the film also portrays the early stages of recovery. Laura's eventual acknowledgment of her daughter's death, her willingness to confront previously avoided memories, and her tentative movement toward the outside world all signal the beginning of psychological integration. These moments reflect Brewin's (2018) assertion that trauma recovery begins when fragmented memories are gradually reorganized into a tolerable narrative. The film's closing scenes balance realism with emotional depth, depicting recovery not as a tidy resolution but as a fragile process involving clarity, vulnerability, and perseverance.

Overall, Bring Her Back provides a nuanced portrayal of trauma that aligns with contemporary academic and clinical perspectives. By integrating Herman's typology with Caruth's theory of belatedness and supporting research published after 2016, this study demonstrates that the film captures both the psychological complexity and the sensory intensity of traumatic experience. Laura's journey illustrates the cyclical nature of trauma, the struggle for emotional coherence, and the slow emergence of healing offering a compelling cinematic representation of the profound ways trauma shapes memory, identity, and relational life. Through this analysis, the film stands as an important cultural text that sheds light on the emotional realities faced by trauma survivors, reinforcing the relevance of trauma studies in understanding contemporary visual narratives.

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Linguistics and Literature Journal
Vol. 6, No. 251 - 257
E-ISSN: 2723-7273

available online at: http://jim.teknokrat.ac.id/index.php/linguistics_and_literature/index

AN ANALYSIS OF REALITY, NEUROTIC, AND MORAL ANXIETY IN *DON'T BREATHE* FILM

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Received: (October 2025) **Accepted**: (November 2025) **Published :** (December 2025)

Abstract

This article analyzes the depiction of anxiety in the *Don't Breathe*, focusing on the types of anxiety experienced by the characters, Rocky and Alex. Using Calvin Hall's theory of anxiety (1954), the research identifies three key forms of anxiety portrayed in the film: reality anxiety, neurotic anxiety, and moral anxiety. Reality anxiety manifests through the characters' fear of real external dangers, such as getting caught or physical harm. Neurotic anxiety reflects their internal conflicts and fears about losing control over instincts and impulses. Moral anxiety reveals their feelings of guilt and shame related to the ethical implications of their actions. Employing a qualitative approach, this article examines how these anxieties shape the characters' decisions and behaviours in a high-pressure, life-threatening situation. The film's use of setting, cinematography, and narrative techniques intensifies the portrayal of anxiety, immersing viewers in the characters' psychological struggles. This analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of how psychological theories of anxiety can be applied in film studies to explore complex character experiences and enrich narrative meaning.

Keywords: anxiety, *Don't Breathe,* moral anxiety, neurotic anxiety, reality anxiety

INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is a complex and multifaceted emotional state that deeply influences human behavior and decision-making. Hall (1954) defines anxiety as "the unpleasant emotional state that is brought on by bodily organ excitations" (p. 6), emphasizing its physical and psychological dimensions. It is a universal experience, often triggered by external dangers or internal conflicts, and can be observed not only in real life but also vividly portrayed in literature and film. The intersection between psychology and film offers a rich field for exploring how anxiety affects characters and narratives. As noted by Yimer (2019), "psychology investigates human behaviors and their causes, and literature portrays human behaviors through fictional narratives" (p. 159). This research focuses on the psychological portrayal of anxiety in the *Don't Breathe* film by Fade Alvares (2016), analyzing how the characters experience and respond to anxiety in life-threatening situations.

In *Don't Breathe*, three young protagonists, they are Rocky, Alex, and Money, attempt to steal from a blind man's house, believing the task to be easy due to the man's blindness. However, their plans quickly unravel as they face unexpected danger, and their fears escalate dramatically. The film intensifies the characters' anxiety through its dark, claustrophobic setting and tense narrative, creating a gripping atmosphere where every sound can spark panic. The film displays the anxiety that is dealt by the characters and makes the audience feel the same fear as the characters. This portrayal provides a powerful lens for examining anxiety not only as fear of external threats but also as internal moral and neurotic struggles.

Calvin Hall's theory of anxiety categorizes anxiety into three types: reality anxiety, neurotic anxiety, and moral anxiety (Hall, 1954, p. 62). Reality anxiety arises from real external dangers, exemplified in the film when the characters face the immediate threat of physical harm, such as Alex's worry about "getting caught" and the consequences of their actions. Neurotic anxiety stems from internal conflicts and fears, manifesting in the characters' struggles with loss of control and fear of impulsive reactions. Moral anxiety emerges from the

conscience and feelings of guilt or shame, notably in Alex and Rocky's internal conflict about stealing from a vulnerable blind man and Rocky's compassion for a captive woman they discover. As Hall (1954) explains, moral anxiety is experienced as feelings of guilt or shame in the ego, aroused by a perception of danger from the conscience (p. 68). The film skillfully integrates these anxieties, illustrating the psychological depth of the characters and the moral complexities they face.

According to Creswell (2005), a literature review involves summarizing journals, articles, books, and other relevant sources related to the research topic. It provides information from both past and current studies, organizing the material into subtopics essential to the research (p. 79). This indicates that the researcher relies on previously written or published works to support the research. Junaid (2017) views literature as an art, not due to its subject matter, but because of the creative way the author transforms ideas and thoughts (p. 23). Literature encompasses various forms such as prose, poetry, drama, and films. In this research, the focus is on films as the object of analysis. Jing (2023) highlights that film is a captivating medium that combines visuals, sound, and performance to narrate stories that transcend different eras, cultures, and languages (p. 142). Thus, film integrates images, sounds, and acting across diverse times, cultures, and languages. This chapter outlines the theoretical framework used to analyze the research subject, addressing both narrative and cinematographic components.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach to analyze anxiety in the *Don't Breathe* film. Qualitative methodology, as defined by Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault (1949), "refers in the broadest sense to research that produces descriptive data, people's own written or spoken words and observable behavior" (p. 7). This method gathers rich, descriptive information to simplify complex topics by exploring phenomena from participants' perspectives. The data source consists of key scenes and dialogues from Fade Alvares' (2016) film, illustrating how characters Rocky and Alex experience anxiety in intense situations. The film's use of camera angles and dark lighting enhances the tense atmosphere, enabling the audience to feel the characters' fear.

The data collection process involves identifying the research focus and repeatedly watching the film to deeply understand the plot and characters. These steps form the foundation for analyzing the film's intrinsic elements, such as narrative and cinematography, alongside extrinsic aspects using Calvin Hall's anxiety theory. The qualitative method allows the writer to provide a descriptive analysis of the film by capturing "important scenes that are related to the research question" and examining these through both the literary and psychological lenses. This approach ensures credible and accountable data interpretation, grounded in a thorough film analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

REALITY ANXIETY

Hall (1954) describes reality anxiety as a natural emotional response to actual and immediate dangers in the external environment (p. 63). It occurs when a person perceives a real threat to their safety or well-being, which can be rooted in inherited fears or learned through life experiences. For example, fear of heights or the anxiety caused by a past car accident are forms of reality anxiety because they relate to genuine risks. This type of anxiety functions as a protective mechanism by alerting individuals to dangers, helping them take precautions. Unlike neurotic anxiety, which involves fear of imagined threats, and moral anxiety, related to guilt, reality anxiety is always based on real external threats. Its purpose is to enhance survival by making individuals aware of and responsive to real dangers.

Alex's anxiety about the potential consequences of getting caught.
(Minute 07:30)

In this scene, Alex warns his friends about the real consequences of their robbery plan by saying, "it means 10 years if we get caught," demonstrating Hall's idea of reality anxiety, which stems from recognizing actual threats. His statement reminds them that their plan is not merely reckless fun but

carries serious risks and legal penalties. This cautionary message urges his friends to think carefully about the potential dangers before moving forward, emphasizing the gravity of their situation.

The setting of the scene, a quiet public place with gentle, natural lighting and a softly blurred background that draws attention to the importance of their conversation. The camera's close, eye level shot of Alex creates a sense of intimacy, making viewers feel as if they are part of the discussion. This cinematographic approach highlights the characters' emotional expressions, strengthening the tension and seriousness of the moment. The focus on Alex's face and dialogue help communicate the "weight of their decision" and the anxiety about the possible consequences of their risky actions.

By concentrating on the character's facial expression and dialogue, the scene effectively communicates the emotional weight of the situation. Viewers can sense the fear and uncertainty the characters face as they consider the dangerous risks ahead. This attention to detail in both performance and filming reinforces the reality anxiety Alex experiences, emphasizing how "the weight of their decision" and the "fear of facing the consequences" shape their actions.

Alex is worried about a potential police investigation.
(Minute 07:35)

In this scene, Alex expresses his concern about the possible consequences of their robbery plan by saying, "and there will be an investigation," illustrating Hall's concept of reality anxiety. This type of anxiety comes from fear of real dangers, as Alex understands that a police investigation could uncover their involvement and cause serious trouble for everyone. Hall (1954) explains that reality anxiety arises from the awareness that actions have real-world consequences (p. 63). Alex's worry reflects this understanding, showing that he and his friends recognize the risks they face, which encourages careful consideration before making dangerous choices.

The scene is set in a bright, open space with large windows, creating a calm contrast to the tense conversation. This setting, combined with the medium close-up shot at eye level, allows viewers to closely observe Alex's facial expressions and body language, emphasizing his anxiety. The soft, natural lighting and blurred background help maintain focus on Alex, enhancing the emotional realism of the moment. These cinematographic choices effectively convey the seriousness of the situation and build empathy for Alex's fear, showing how reality anxiety plays a key role in the characters' decision-making process.

Alex's anxiety about a loved one facing consequences for their actions
(Minute 07:36).

In this scene, Alex expresses his worry by saying, "*My dad can get in trouble*," reflecting a deep sense of responsibility not only for himself but also for his family. This aligns with Hall's concept of reality anxiety, which is rooted in real-life dangers and consequences outside the mind (Hall, 1954, p. 63). Alex's fear extends beyond personal punishment to the potential harm his actions could cause to his father's reputation and social standing. This highlights a mature awareness of the broader impact of his choices, illustrating how reality anxiety is shaped by social and cultural contexts. The scene adds emotional depth by showing that the consequences of their plan affect not just the individuals involved but also their loved ones.

The setting is a bright, open public space, possibly a café, which contrasts with the seriousness of Alex's words and heightens the tension of their secretive conversation. The camera focuses closely on Alex at eye level, framing

only his upper body to make him the focal point. This shot, combined with soft natural lighting and a blurred background, emphasizes his emotions and the gravity of the situation. The use of shallow depth of field isolates Alex from his surroundings, drawing the audience's attention to his internal conflict and the weight of his decisions. Through these cinematographic choices, the scene effectively conveys Alex's reality anxiety and invites viewers to connect with the seriousness of the moment.

NEUROTIC ANXIETY

Hall (1954) defines neurotic anxiety as an internal fear originating from a person's instincts or strong impulses, where the ego worries that it might fail to control these urges (p. 95). This anxiety is not caused by real external threats but by the fear that one's uncontrollable emotions, such as anger or aggression, might suddenly overwhelm them. For example, a person may feel anxious about unexpectedly losing their temper and acting impulsively. Since neurotic anxiety stems from inner conflict, it can create tension and worry even when no real danger exists. To manage this, the ego employs defence mechanisms like repression or denial. Physical symptoms may also appear, such as rapid heartbeat or sweating, despite the absence of actual external threats.

Rocky shares her anxiety (Minute 07:41)

In this scene, Rocky tries to reassure Alex about their robbery plan by saying, "*Alex, if we do this, we'll never have to do it again*." While her words aim to convince Alex that the risky action is a one-time event, they also reveal a deeper anxiety within her. This type of fear, known as neurotic anxiety, arises from internal struggles rather than immediate external dangers. According to Hall (1954), neurotic anxiety occurs when the ego fears it may fail to control strong impulses or urges (p. 95). Rocky's tense expression and cautious words show her effort to manage her inner fear and maintain control during a situation that could easily become dangerous if emotions get out of hand.

Rocky's anxiety stems from the worry that either she or Alex might lose control emotionally or behaviorally at a critical moment. Even though there is no direct threat in the scene, this internal tension makes her nervous and stressed. The ego tries to protect her by suppressing extreme emotions like panic or aggression, but the underlying fear remains. Her nervous demeanour and attempts to calm Alex illustrate how she struggles to keep things under control, reflecting Hall's idea that neurotic anxiety relates to the fear of the mind's own impulses causing harm when the ego cannot manage them properly (1954, p. 95).

The cinematography strengthens the emotional intensity of the scene by using a close-up shot of Rocky's face at eye level, bringing viewers into the heart of the moment. The soft, natural lighting and muted color palette create a serious and tense atmosphere, emphasizing the weight of their conversation. These visual choices help the audience connect with Rocky's feelings and highlight the importance of the plan while capturing the tension and anxiety she experiences internally.

Alex starts to be anxious (Minute 25:48)

In this scene, Alex questions Money by asking, "*Why'd you bring a gun?*" revealing his growing unease about the plan becoming more dangerous. His concern goes beyond the fear of getting caught; he worries about the unpredictable risks the gun might introduce inside the house. According to Hall's concept of neurotic anxiety, this fear arises from within Alex's mind rather than from immediate external threats (1954, p. 95). Neurotic anxiety involves a vague but persistent worry about potential problems, making Alex imagine negative outcomes that

have not yet occurred. This internal fear creates a feeling of being out of control and increases his stress as he grapples with the unknown dangers the gun may bring.

The cinematography in this scene heightens the tension by using a low-angle shot, which makes the characters appear larger and more imposing, intensifying the seriousness of the moment. The dim lighting, with faint illumination from windows and a ceiling lamp, casts shadows that contribute to a sense of mystery and danger, reflecting the gravity of their conversation. The characters are positioned apart within the frame, highlighting the tension between them. These visual elements combine to immerse the audience in the atmosphere of fear and uncertainty, reinforcing the neurotic anxiety Alex experiences as he contemplates the possible consequences of the gun's presence.

MORAL ANXIETY

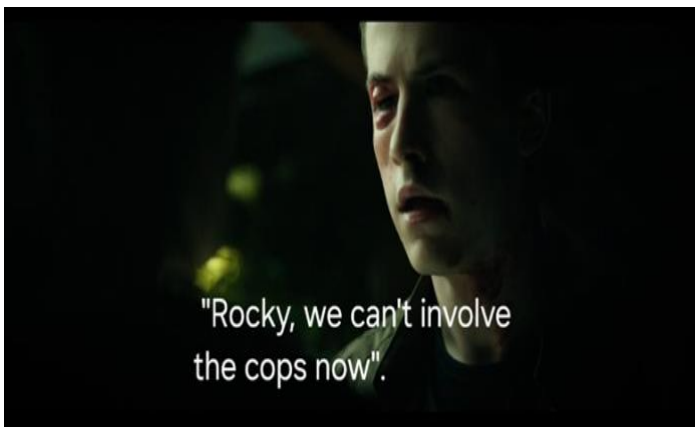
Hall (1954) describes moral anxiety as a feeling of fear or worry originating from a person's conscience or sense of right and wrong (p. 69). It occurs when the ego senses a threat from the conscience, warning the individual that they may have done something wrong or might violate their moral values. This inner alarm causes feelings of guilt or shame, prompting people to recognize their mistakes and motivate them to correct their behavior. For example, a person who lies to a friend or a student who cheats on an exam may experience moral anxiety, feeling guilt even if their actions go unnoticed. Similarly, in Exodus: Gods and Kings, Moses experiences moral anxiety through his deep guilt over failing his people and family (Warkey, et al., 2020, p. 98). Moral anxiety serves as a reminder to adhere to one's values and maintain ethical behavior, despite sometimes causing discomfort or stress.

Alex believes stealing from a blind person is wrong and extreme
(Minute 13:45)

In this scene, Alex expresses his discomfort about robbing a blind man by saying, "*it's kind of f*** up to rob a blind guy, isn't it*?" This reveals his internal struggle and guilt, reflecting what Calvin Hall (1954) describes as moral anxiety, a fear rooted in one's conscience over doing something that contradicts personal values (p. 69). Alex's worry is not only about the external risks but also about the unfairness and harm their plan could cause. His feelings of guilt and shame show how moral anxiety influences him to question whether they should go through with the robbery, highlighting the powerful role conscience plays in guiding ethical decisions.

The cinematography enhances this emotional tension by placing the camera inside the car, using a close-up shot focused on Alex's face and ear, which makes the audience feel as if they are right beside him. The blurred background directs attention solely to his expressions and words, emphasizing his inner conflict. Soft, dim lighting and natural colors create a tense, intimate atmosphere, while the confined space of the car makes viewers share Alex's sense of being trapped by the difficult moral choice. These visual elements work together to underline the seriousness and pressure of the moment as Alex wrestles with his moral anxiety.

Alex tries to stop Rocky from reporting the blind man immediately
(Minute 12:14)



In this scene, Alex tells Rocky, "*Rocky, we can't involve the cops now*," expressing his worry and the pressure he feels after the robbery. His fear goes beyond being caught; it stems from a deep guilt rooted in his conscience, which warns him that their actions are morally wrong. According to Calvin Hall

(1954, p. 69), moral anxiety is the feeling of guilt or shame that arises when the conscience signals moral danger. Alex's hesitation to involve the police reflects his awareness of the legal repercussions and the shame that would come with admitting their wrongdoing. This moral anxiety acts as an internal alarm, making Alex cautious about the next steps to avoid worsening the situation.

The cinematography reinforces the intensity of the moment through a close-up shot tightly framed on Alex's face and upper body, focusing the audience on his serious expression and words. The dark, blurry background removes distractions, enhancing the tension and gravity of the conversation. Dim, side lighting casts shadows on Alex, creating a secretive and tense atmosphere that mirrors his fear and uncertainty. The eye-level camera angle makes viewers feel present in the scene, emphasizing the stress and seriousness in Alex's plan to stop Rocky from contacting the police. Together, these visual choices deepen the emotional impact of Alex's moral anxiety.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the analysis reveals that the *Don't Breathe* film portrays various types of anxiety as described by Hall: reality anxiety, neurotic anxiety, and moral anxiety. Reality anxiety is evident when Alex fears real threats such as imprisonment, police investigations, or his father facing trouble if they are caught during the robbery. Neurotic anxiety appears through Alex and Rocky's internal nervousness and guilt, even when no immediate danger is present, as they worry about potential problems with their plan. Moral anxiety arises from their awareness that their actions conflict with their values and sense of right and wrong. Throughout the scenes, Alex tries to make his friends recognize the serious risks involved, emphasizing that robbing is not a trivial act but one that can cause harm to themselves and others. The film effectively conveys their anxiety by focusing on their concerned expressions and using quiet, sombre settings with soft lighting to evoke the tension and gravity of their decisions. Together, these forms of anxiety contribute to making the story feel authentic, highlighting the importance of understanding real consequences, internal fears, and moral considerations when facing difficult choices.

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Linguistics and Literature Journal
Vol. 6, No. 258 - 262
E-ISSN: 2723-7273

available online at: http://jim.teknokrat.ac.id/index.php/linguistics_and_literature/index

THE MAIN CHARACTER'S RESPONSE TO RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN *INVICTUS* MOVIE

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Received: (October 2025) **Accepted**: (November 2025) **Published :** (December 2025)

Abstract

This article examines how the main character, Nelson Mandela, responds to racial discrimination in Invictus (2009), directed by Clint Eastwood. The research focuses on Mandela's strategies in addressing the deep racial divisions in post-apartheid South Africa. Using John Paul Lederach's theory of reconciliation, the analysis highlights four key responses shown by Mandela: truth, forgiveness, justice, and peace. These responses are expressed through dialogue, symbolic actions, and leadership decisions in the film. The findings reveal that Mandela's commitment to reconciliation helped transform rugby, a sport once seen as a symbol of racial division, into a unifying tool for the nation. His responses demonstrate that racial discrimination can be resisted not only through political struggle but also through moral leadership and inclusive vision. This article aims to give readers a deeper understanding of how film portrays responses to racial discrimination and to provide a useful reference for further studies in literature and film analysis.

Keywords: film analysis, Invictus, Nelson Mandela, racial discrimination, reconciliation

INTRODUCTION

Racial discrimination is one of the most destructive problems in society because it not only harms individuals but also breaks the relationships between groups. Victims of racial discrimination often experience deep pain, anger, and injustice, while society becomes divided and filled with mistrust. The struggle against discrimination, therefore, is not only about changing unfair laws or political systems, but also about healing the broken relationships among people. To achieve this, reconciliation becomes an important process to restore trust, understanding, and cooperation between former enemies.

John Paul Lederach (1997) explains reconciliation as a long process that involves four connected elements: truth, forgiveness, justice, and peace. Truth requires people to face past pain honestly; forgiveness offers a chance to let go of hatred; justice restores fairness and dignity; and peace becomes the final goal of living together in harmony. As Lederach (1997) says, "Reconciliation requires that people deal with the past in ways that are honest and open" (p. 27). This theory gives a useful perspective for analyzing how characters in literature and film respond to racial discrimination and how they transform conflict into peace.

Clint Eastwood's film Invictus (2009) portrays Nelson Mandela's leadership in post-apartheid South Africa, where racial discrimination had left deep wounds in the nation. Instead of choosing revenge, Mandela responds with reconciliation by applying truth, forgiveness, justice, and peace in his actions and words. His famous line, "Forgiveness liberates the soul. It removes fear. That is why it is such a powerful weapon," reflects his belief in healing through forgiveness rather than hatred. This article analyzes Mandela's response to racial discrimination in Invictus by using Lederach's reconciliation theory as a framework. Through this analysis, the article shows how Mandela's responses illustrate a powerful model of leadership and reconciliation that transformed racial division into national unity.

This study is supported by several theoretical perspectives that strengthen the analysis of social issues depicted in Invictus. To provide a comprehensive view, it combines approaches from both literary and film studies, particularly focusing on narrative structure and cinematography. Literary theory is useful in examining how elements such as character, setting, and conflict reflect wider social problems, while film theory explains how visual techniques—including camera angles, lighting, and shot composition- communicate ideas of race, power, and division. By integrating these disciplines, the research can interpret racial discrimination not only as a social reality but also as an artistic message conveyed through the medium of film.

In addition to literary and cinematic approaches, this study also relies on sociological theories that address racism and racial discrimination. Blank, Dabady, and Citro (2004) highlight the different forms and consequences of discrimination, which provide a framework for understanding the struggles represented in the film. To analyze the main character's response, John Paul Lederach's (1997) theory of reconciliation is applied, emphasizing four key elements: truth, forgiveness, justice, and peace. This perspective allows the study to connect Mandela's personal choices and leadership with broader social healing, bridging the artistic portrayal of discrimination in Invictus with the political and cultural realities of post-apartheid South Africa.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research method to analyze racial discrimination portrayed in the film Invictus (2009). According to Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault (1949), qualitative research focuses on gathering meaningful, descriptive data, whether written, spoken, or observed behavior to gain a deep understanding. The writer collected primary data from the movie's scenes, dialogues, and character expressions that depict racial discrimination and reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa. Key scenes, such as the contrast between segregated sports fields and Mandela's security guards refusing to work with former regime officers, illustrate the deep-rooted racial tensions and set up the narrative for reconciliation.

Data collection involved repeated viewings of the film to fully understand its story and social context, followed by selecting and transcribing relevant scenes and dialogues related to racial discrimination. The writer then categorized this data based on types of discrimination and responses to it. Data analysis used a descriptive qualitative approach, organizing and interpreting the data with the theoretical framework of racial discrimination by Blank, Dabady, and Citro (2004). This framework helped identify various forms of discrimination in the film, such as verbal hostility, social exclusion, and institutional injustice, illustrating the social realities of racial issues in post-apartheid South Africa.

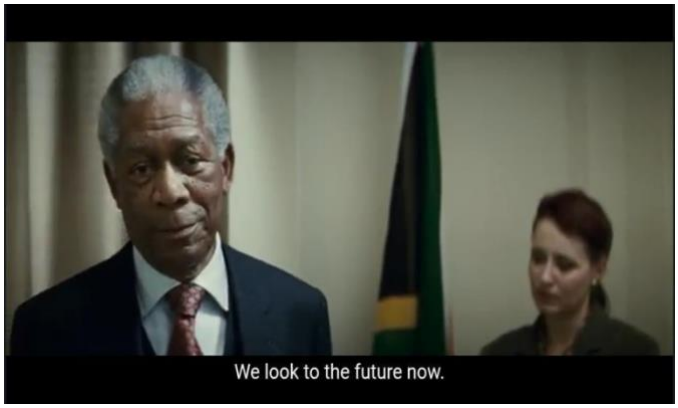
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Lederach (1997) developed a reconciliation theory that focuses on repairing broken relationships after conflict or injustice. He emphasized that reconciliation is not only about ending violence but also about creating new bonds built on honesty, healing, and fairness. According to him, reconciliation requires four interconnected elements: truth, forgiveness, justice, and peace. Truth encourages people to face past pain openly, forgiveness allows individuals to let go of hatred, justice ensures fairness and responsibility, and peace creates lasting harmony in society. As Lederach (1997) noted, "Reconciliation requires that we envision our mutual future, even as we deal with the painful past" (p. 27). These elements work together to help individuals and groups heal from deep wounds like racism, making it possible to rebuild trust and unity.

TRUTH

Lederach (1997) emphasizes that truth is essential for reconciliation, as facing the past honestly is necessary for healing. He states, "Truth is the first step toward restoring the person and the relationship" (p. 29), meaning truth involves not just facts but also sharing emotions and experiences. By telling the truth, people better understand each other, giving victims a voice and building trust. This foundation of truth is crucial for lasting peace and justice.

Nelson Mandela Makes All His Staff Realize It (Minute 11:15)



At the beginning of his presidency, Nelson Mandela addressed the fears of white workers worried about losing their jobs under the new leadership by reassuring them that there was no need for concern. In the film Invictus, Mandela tells his staff, "*Past is the past, we look to the future now*" (Eastwood, 2009, 00:11:14–00:11:17). This moment illustrates Mandela's approach to truth; he neither sought revenge nor ignored the painful history but accepted it honestly while emphasizing the importance of moving forward together as a nation.

This perspective aligns with Lederach's (1997) view that reconciliation requires confronting the past honestly and openly (p. 27). Truth, therefore, is not about erasing or hiding what happened but acknowledging past suffering and using that understanding as a foundation to build peace and unity for the future. Mandela's approach demonstrates how embracing truth can help a divided society heal and progress.

FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness plays a crucial role in achieving peace by choosing to let go of anger and hatred despite past harm. Lederach (1997) explains that "Forgiveness breaks the cycle of revenge and creates a new path toward peace" (p. 29), meaning it stops ongoing pain without erasing what happened. Forgiveness interrupts cycles of conflict, allowing healing and the rebuilding of relationships. Although difficult, forgiveness is a courageous and hopeful step essential for lasting peace.

Nelson Mandela convinces Jason Tsabalala (Minute 14:40)

In this scene from Invictus, Mandela addresses his head of security, Jason, who is upset about working alongside white officers formerly involved in harming Black South Africans. Mandela responds, "*The Rainbow Nation starts here"*. "Reconciliation starts here. Forgiveness starts here too. Forgiveness liberates the soul. It removes fear. That is why it is such a powerful weapon" (Eastwood, 2009, 00:13:55–00:14:45). Mandela's words demonstrate his belief that forgiveness is essential for peace and healing, reflecting Lederach's view that forgiveness breaks the cycle of anger and revenge.

Lederach (1997) explains that "Forgiveness frees the person from being a hostage to the past and opens up the possibility of a new future" (p. 29). In this moment, Mandela does not deny the pain caused by the past but chooses to forgive, allowing the process of reconciliation to begin. This illustrates that forgiveness is not about forgetting past wrongs but about consciously opting for peace over hatred, enabling a future built on healing and unity.

JUSTICE

Justice is a vital part of reconciliation, as true peace depends on the feeling that fairness has been achieved. Lederach (1997) states, "Justice seeks to address the wrongs and restore the right relationships that were broken by violence or oppression" (p. 29). This means that those harmed by past injustices, such as racism or apartheid, deserve fair treatment and respect. Justice involves creating fair laws, ensuring equal opportunities, and preventing harm from recurring. Rather than seeking revenge, justice promotes trust and peaceful coexistence.

Nelson Mandela Reassures Jason Tsabalala (Minute 14:35)

When Mandela's head of security, Jason, grew upset after noticing four white Special Branch officers joining the team men who had once tried to harm Black South Africans, he questioned Mandela's decision to allow them to work there. Mandela responded calmly, saying, "*The Rainbow Nation starts here. Reconciliation starts here. Forgiveness starts here too. Forgiveness liberates the soul. It removes fear. That is why it is such a powerful weapon*" (Eastwood, 2009, 00:13:55–00:14:45). This scene reflects Lederach's (1997) view that forgiveness is a vital step toward reconciliation and peace, as it breaks the cycle of anger and retaliation. As he explained, "Forgiveness frees the person from being a hostage to the past and opens up the possibility of a new future" (p. 29). In this moment, Mandela demonstrates that forgiveness does not erase past suffering but instead represents a conscious choice to pursue peace rather than hatred, making it possible for healing to begin.

PEACE

Lederach (1997) views peace as more than just the absence of conflict; it involves building new relationships based on respect and fairness. He states, "Peace is built on relationships. It requires people to see themselves in a web of relationships, including with their enemies" (p. 26), emphasizing connection rather than division. True peace emerges when people listen, understand each other, and recognize one another as human, not enemies. Although peace is a gradual and challenging process, it becomes possible through trust and hope.

Nelson Mandela congratulates Captain Pienaar (Minute 02:05:09)

The concept of peace in Lederach's (1997) theory is vividly illustrated in the final scene of Invictus. After the Springboks win the Rugby World Cup, Black and White South Africans celebrate together in a display of unity and joy. Nelson Mandela joins the field wearing the team's jersey and hands the trophy to François Pienaar, the White team captain (Eastwood, 2009, 02:05:09). This moment symbolizes that peace goes beyond ending conflict, it marks the beginning of new relationships. Lederach (1997) emphasizes that "Peace is built on relationships, including with those we once saw as enemies" (p. 26). Despite a history of division fueled by hatred and fear, this scene shows how peace can flourish when people unite in respect, understanding, and hope for what lies ahead.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of Invictus shows that Nelson Mandela's response to racial discrimination is best understood through Lederach's (1997) theory of reconciliation, which highlights truth, forgiveness, justice, and peace as essential elements for healing divided societies. Mandela demonstrates truth by acknowledging the painful past while encouraging his people to move forward, forgiveness by choosing peace over hatred even toward former oppressors, justice by promoting fairness and dignity without seeking revenge, and peace by uniting Black and White South Africans through shared experiences such as rugby. These responses illustrate that overcoming racial discrimination requires more than political change; it demands moral leadership, reconciliation, and a vision of unity. Through Mandela's example, the film portrays how reconciliation can transform deep wounds of racial division into the foundation for lasting national harmony.

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Linguistics and Literature Journal
Vol. 6, No. 263 - 269
E-ISSN: 2723-7273

available online at: http://jim.teknokrat.ac.id/index.php/linguistics_and_literature/index

DELINEATING BRITISH INDUSTRY REVOLUTION IN *ENOLA HOLMES: THE CASE OF MISSING MARQUESS* NOVEL BY NANCY SPRINGER

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Received: (October 2025) **Accepted**: (November 2025) **Published :** (December 2025)

Abstract

This study aims to delineate the representation of the British Industrial Revolution in Nancy Springer's novel "Enola Holmes: The Case of the Missing Marquess". The research is conducted through a qualitative approach using socio-historical criticism as its theoretical framework. The Industrial Revolution, which brought massive economic, social, and political changes to Britain during the 18th and 19th centuries, serves as a background context that shapes the narrative elements within the novel. The novel is not merely a detective story for young readers, but a literary text that embeds significant representations of industrial modernity through its characters, setting, symbols, and conflicts. The primary data of this research consist of narrative excerpts and quotations from the novel that reflect conditions such as urban expansion, technological advancement, gender oppression, and class division. The analysis focuses on how these elements are constructed and symbolized through industrial images like trains, factories, newspapers, and coded messages and how they relate to the broader historical realities of Victorian England. The character of Enola Holmes, in particular, becomes a symbolic figure of female resistance who challenges gender roles and asserts independence in a society marked by patriarchal and industrial structures. The findings of the study indicate that Nancy Springer's novel offers a subtle yet powerful critique of the social inequalities and ideological tensions of the Industrial Era. Enola's journey through industrial London represents more than a personal quest; it mirrors the larger struggles of individuals especially women and the lower class against societal systems that sought to define, confine, and control them. This research contributes to the field of literary studies by highlighting how children's fiction can function as a vehicle for socio-political commentary and historical reflection.

Keywords: class, *Enola Holmes*, gender roles, industrial Revolution, socio-historical criticism, symbolism, Victorian society

INTRODUCTION

Racial discrimination is one of the most destructive problems in society because it not only harms individuals but also breaks the relationships between groups. Victims of racial discrimination often experience deep pain, anger, and injustice, while society becomes divided and filled with mistrust. The struggle against discrimination, therefore, is not only about changing unfair laws or political systems, but also about healing the broken relationships among people. To achieve this, reconciliation becomes an important process to restore trust, understanding, and cooperation between former enemies.

John Paul Lederach (1997) explains reconciliation as a long process that involves four connected elements: truth, forgiveness, justice, and peace. Truth requires people to face past pain honestly; forgiveness offers a chance to let go of hatred; justice restores fairness and dignity; and peace becomes the final goal of living together in harmony. As Lederach (1997) says, "Reconciliation requires that people deal with the past in ways that are honest and open" (p. 27). This theory gives a useful perspective for analyzing how characters in literature and film respond to racial discrimination and how they transform conflict into peace.

Clint Eastwood's film Invictus (2009) portrays Nelson Mandela's leadership in post-apartheid South Africa, where racial discrimination had left deep wounds in the nation. Instead of choosing revenge, Mandela responds with reconciliation by applying truth, forgiveness, justice, and peace in his actions and words. His famous line, "Forgiveness liberates the soul. It removes fear. That is why it is such a powerful weapon," reflects his belief in healing through forgiveness rather than hatred. This article analyzes Mandela's response to racial discrimination in Invictus by using Lederach's reconciliation theory as a framework. Through this analysis, the article shows how Mandela's responses illustrate a powerful model of leadership and reconciliation that transformed racial division into national unity.

This study is supported by several theoretical perspectives that strengthen the analysis of social issues depicted in Invictus. To provide a comprehensive view, it combines approaches from both literary and film studies, particularly focusing on narrative structure and cinematography. Literary theory is useful in examining how elements such as character, setting, and conflict reflect wider social problems, while film theory explains how visual techniques—including camera angles, lighting, and shot composition- communicate ideas of race, power, and division. By integrating these disciplines, the research can interpret racial discrimination not only as a social reality but also as an artistic message conveyed through the medium of film.

In addition to literary and cinematic approaches, this study also relies on sociological theories that address racism and racial discrimination. Blank, Dabady, and Citro (2004) highlight the different forms and consequences of discrimination, which provide a framework for understanding the struggles represented in the film. To analyze the main character's response, John Paul Lederach's (1997) theory of reconciliation is applied, emphasizing four key elements: truth, forgiveness, justice, and peace. This perspective allows the study to connect Mandela's personal choices and leadership with broader social healing, bridging the artistic portrayal of discrimination in Invictus with the political and cultural realities of post-apartheid South Africa.

METHOD

This chapter covers the methodology of the current research. The method is very helpful in guiding the author to gain the information related to the topic that is being discussed. This chapter is divided into four parts, which are research design, data and data sources, data collection and data analysis. 3.1 Research Design To elaborate on the idea of this research, the writer applied qualitative research. Qualitative research helps the writer write the research to achieve the objective of the study. According to Connaway & Powell (2010), "the case study is a specific field or qualitative research method and thus is an investigation. Moreover, this type of research is chosen because the data is one of the phenomenon which use language as a medium. The method can be described as an effective model that occurs in a natural setting that enables the writer to develop a level of detail that is highly involved in actual experiences (Creswell, 2003). From the explanation above, in conducting this research, this study uses a qualitative method, which is influential because this study considers the experience or the act that happens from many perspectives to understand a phenomenon that appears from the character inside the novel. Moreover, the analysis will be presented in the form of words, clauses, and sentences instead of in a form of numbers. The writer is allowed to write the detailed information from various sources according to the method (Connaway & Powell, 2010).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and analysis of how the British Industrial Revolution is delineated in Enola Holmes: The Case of the Missing Marquess by Nancy Springer. The analysis uses a socio-historical approach, emphasizing the connection between the novel's content and the socio-cultural, economic, and political conditions of 19th-century Britain. Data were collected from narrative and dialogue excerpts that reflect the changes brought by industrialization in the novel. The findings are classified into three aspects: economic, social, and political conditions. Finding and Analysis

Economy Conditions

Economic condition refers to the state of financial systems, labor structures, industrial development, and wealth distribution within a given society, in this case, Victorian England during the Industrial Revolution. The rise of factory-based production, urbanization, and mechanization significantly altered how people earned and spent money, how resources were managed, and how class divisions emerged. Literature often explores how these

changes affected not only economies but the daily lives of individuals, especially the working class. In *Enola Holmes*, depictions of labor, poverty, and industrial cities reflect these shifts, presenting economic transformation as both opportunity and oppression. The British Industrial Revolution caused massive changes in the economy, especially in urbanization, labor, and mechanization. These elements are reflected in the environment Enola encounters.

"London was not the city of dreams I imagined. It was filled with smoke, noise, and people rushing to factories." (Springer, 2006)

Analysis: This quotation illustrates London as a busy industrial city, overwhelmed by machinery, pollution, and workers. The urban space is defined not by comfort, but by the harsh, crowded, and polluted environment shaped by industrialization. It marks a shift from rural and domestic life to the machine-driven rhythm of factory life, a hallmark of the Industrial Revolution.

"The smoke from the trains and factories turned the sky a permanent grey, as if the city had forgotten the color blue." (Springer, 2006, p. 34)

Analysis: This metaphor illustrates the environmental impact of industrialization. The "permanent grey" sky symbolizes how factories have overpowered nature, turning beauty into monotony. It shows that industrial progress brings not only economic growth but also pollution and urban decay — common in 19th-century industrial cities.

"People were everywhere, walking quickly, their faces pale from lack of sun. They worked long hours, they said." (Springer, 2006, p. 29)

Analysis: This reflects the exhausting routine of industrial labor. Pale faces and long hours point to poor working conditions and health effects, especially among factory workers. The novel indirectly critiques the exploitative economic systems of the time.

Social Condition

Social condition refers to the organization of societal roles, norms, expectations, and relationships within a community. In the context of the Industrial Revolution, Victorian society was marked by rigid gender roles, class-based hierarchies, and increasing social alienation due to rapid urban expansion. Literature often mirrors these conditions through themes of family structure, education, social mobility, and marginalization. In "Enola Holmes", Enola's navigation of London society reveals how social systems controlled identity and behavior, especially for women and the poor,highlighting the struggle to assert individuality in a restrictive social world. The novel also displays the social impact of industrialization, particularly regarding gender roles, urban poverty, and child labor.

"Mycroft wishes me to go to a finishing school, to become a proper lady. But I would rather ride a bicycle and read books." (Springer, 2006)

Analysis: This quotation reflects the rigid social norms of the Victorian era, where women were expected to be submissive and domestic. Enola's refusal to conform to this ideal shows a growing resistance to traditional gender roles. Her independence is a form of social commentary on the inequality embedded in the society of the time.

"He told me I must not ride a bicycle because it was unladylike, but I had no intention of being a lady as he defined it." (Springer, 2006, p. 42)

Analysis: This line critiques rigid gender norms. Enola's refusal shows her challenge to Victorian ideals, where women were expected to behave passively. The bicycle becomes a symbol of freedom, mirroring women's early struggles for independence.

"There were children, younger than I, selling newspapers or scrubbing boots to earn their keep." (Springer, 2006, p. 38)

Analysis: A clear image of child labor, this reflects the harsh reality of industrial society. Children had to work in dangerous or demeaning conditions, highlighting class inequality and lack of protection for the poor.

Political Condition

Political condition encompasses the power structures, governance, and institutional ideologies that shape how authority is exercised in a given society. During the Industrial Revolution, political systems in Britain were highly patriarchal, with limited rights for women and the working class. Laws and institutions often reinforced social inequality and male dominance. In literature, political conditions are shown through conflicts over control, freedom, and resistance. In "Enola Holmes", the attempts to discipline or institutionalize Enola reflect a political effort to suppress female autonomy. Her defiance becomes a form of political resistance, making the novel a critique of power embedded in Victorian legal and familial systems. The political environment of the Industrial Revolution involved control, reform, and resistance — all of which appear in the novel through Enola's conflicts with male authority.

"Sherlock and Mycroft speak as if I am a problem to be solved, not a person to be heard." (Springer, 2006)

This statement underlines the patriarchal control exerted over women, even within the family. The political subtext critiques the lack of autonomy granted to women and the systemic barriers to their independence. Enola's struggle becomes symbolic of wider demands for reform during the Industrial Era — including women's rights, education, and freedom of choice.

"Mycroft wants to send me to finishing school to be corrected, not educated." (Springer, 2006, p. 45)

Analysis: This criticizes how institutions were used to suppress women. Finishing schools did not empower girls but taught obedience. The quote reveals how education was politicized to enforce patriarchy.

"A woman must be invisible, obedient, and proper — or so they insist." (Springer, 2006, p. 49)

Analysis: This reflects the dominant ideology of the time that limited women's roles. It also shows Enola's awareness of these restrictions and the beginning of her resistance to them.

Industrial Symbols and Settings Beyond

The direct references to factories and pollution, the novel uses symbolic settings and imagery to convey the essence of the Industrial Revolution. For example, the frequent appearance of train stations, machinery, and coded messages reflects a society increasingly dependent on technology and systematisation. The railways, in particular, symbolise not only technological progress but also the expansion of networks, both physical and social. Enola's frequent movement through trains and carriages parallels the era's rapid pace of life and industrial connectivity. These symbols subtly reinforce the industrial backdrop and create a living, breathing Victorian world that is both complex and changing. Enola's journey through railway stations, coded letters, and public posters reflects the technological infrastructure born from the Industrial Revolution. These settings and symbols emphasize the modernization of society and the centrality of communication and control.

"I boarded the train — an iron beast, loud and fast, that carried me to a future I could not see." (Springer, 2006, p. 51)

Analysis: The train is a symbol of industrial power and uncertainty. It reflects how technology pushed people forward, often without clarity or control. For Enola, it represents escape — but also risk — mirroring how industrialization disrupted stability.

"Even the walls spoke in London. Posters, letters, coded symbols everywhere — the city was alive with messages." (Springer, 2006, p. 58)

Analysis: This suggests the rise of mass communication in urban life. The "speaking walls" imply that information, propaganda, and surveillance had become tools of power in industrial society

Gender Roles and Economic Dependency

Gender roles and economic dependency refer to the socially constructed expectations placed upon individuals based on their perceived gender, particularly as they relate to financial autonomy and power dynamics. In 19th-century industrial Britain, gender norms were deeply rooted in patriarchal values, where men held positions of authority, and women were expected to be passive, domestic, and economically reliant on fathers, husbands, or

brothers. This division was not just cultural, but institutional—reflected in laws, education, employment access, and inheritance rights. Literature often explores how these gendered power relations restrict female autonomy. Economic dependency was both a symptom and an instrument of gender oppression: by denying women control over wealth and labor, patriarchal systems ensured continued dominance.

In Enola Holmes, Enola's rejection of economic reliance on her brothers and her assertion of financial and personal agency represent a radical break from Victorian gender norms. Her struggle mirrors that of many women during the Industrial Revolution who sought education, employment, or entrepreneurship as pathways to liberation. This subtopic, therefore, allows the analysis of how economic freedom is intricately tied to gender identity, personal empowerment, and resistance to traditional roles. Enola's refusal to be dependent on her brothers mirrors the experiences of many women in an industrializing world who sought independence through education or work. The novel subtly suggests that economic liberation is a key to personal freedom.

"My money is my own, and I intend to keep it so. I shall not ask my brothers for a penny." (Springer, 2006, p. 60)

Analysis: Enola asserts financial independence, which challenges traditional gender roles. In a time when women were expected to be economically dependent, this statement signals resistance to patriarchal control.

"Corsets were prisons; lace gloves, shackles. Even my boots felt like chains." (Springer, 2006, p. 47)

The metaphor of clothing as restriction illustrates how gender roles are enforced materially. Economic and bodily control go hand in hand, and Enola's resistance signifies liberation.

The Role of Technology and Communication

Technology and communication are among the defining features of the Industrial Age, and their role in literature often serves to expose both the possibilities and perils of modernity. During the Industrial Revolution, advancements in transportation (trains), communication (telegraph, print media), and surveillance (bureaucratic records, public signage) transformed how people interacted, moved, and controlled information. These technologies created new forms of social structure and altered the individual's relationship with the state and society. In literary texts, communication is frequently a site of negotiation between power and resistance. Who controls information? Who has access to truth? Who is silenced or surveilled? In Enola Holmes, communication becomes both a tool of rebellion and a mechanism of oppression. Enola uses print, codes, and messages to subvert the authority of male figures like Mycroft and to navigate an increasingly controlled public space. This subtopic allows a deeper investigation into how characters use technology to reshape their agency, and how industrial-era tools reflect ideological shifts—where information is both a weapon of liberation and a strategy of control. The importance of print media and coded messages in the novel highlights how information and communication were revolutionized by industrial advancements. These tools were used for both control and empowerment, reflecting a society in transition.

"The newspapers had more facts than Mycroft's theories. Yet they refused to read them." (Springer, 2006, p. 63)

Analysis: This highlights the shift from elite knowledge to public information. Newspapers became a source of truth for the masses, while traditional authorities like Mycroft clung to outdated thinking.

"Every message left a trace. Every letter was watched." (Springer, 2006, p. 61)

This indicates the rise of surveillance culture through industrial-era communication. It links technology with control, not just progress.

Class Distinction and Industrial Hierarchy

Class distinction and industrial hierarchy refer to the systematic divisions of society that emerged or were intensified by industrial capitalism. With the rise of factory systems, mass production, and urban migration, wealth became concentrated in the hands of industrialists and property-owning elites, while the working class faced exploitative labor, poor housing, and limited social mobility. Literature from and about the Industrial Era often portrays this stratification through contrast, between luxury and poverty, between visibility and invisibility. In literary analysis, class is not only an economic concept but a cultural and symbolic system that affects speech, appearance, morality, and agency. Characters are marked by their class status and often limited by it. In Enola Holmes, clear contrasts are drawn between the privileged Holmes family and the impoverished people Enola meets during her journey. The novel portrays the city as a space where these classes collide, but rarely connect.

Through this subtopic, the study examines how industrial society builds and enforces hierarchies based on wealth, birth, and access to power, and how literature reveals the human cost of this system, especially for those at the bottom. Interactions between wealthy elites and impoverished characters show the widening class gap of the time. Industrialization created a new kind of social stratification, which is reflected in the people Enola meets and the situations she witnesses.

"The man in fine wool did not glance at the girl in rags. We were different species in the same city." (Springer, 2006, p. 68)

Analysis: A powerful image of class inequality. Industrialization created visible divisions between rich and poor. The phrase "different species" suggests deep social separation, not just economic difference.

"Children with blackened hands ran beside carriages, begging with hollow voices." (Springer, 2006, p. 55)

This observation emphasizes how wealth and poverty coexisted side-by-side. The image of suffering children shows the cost of industrial growth on the vulnerable

CONCLUSION

This study has critically explored the delineation of the British Industrial Revolution as represented in Nancy Springer's novel Enola Holmes: The Case of the Missing Marquess using a socio-historical literary approach. The analysis demonstrates that the novel does not simply narrate a detective story but serves as a subtle vehicle for socio-political commentary that intersects with the lived experiences of 19th-century industrial Britain. Through a close examination of economic, social, political, and symbolic elements, the research reveals how literature can both reflect and challenge the ideological undercurrents of its historical setting. Economically, the novel articulates the consequences of industrial capitalism through its depiction of labor, class stratification, and urban transformation.

The imagery of soot-covered cities, overcrowded spaces, and mechanized movement underscores the dehumanizing effects of rapid industrialization. Characters' experiences, especially those of the urban poor and working children, expose the unequal distribution of wealth and opportunity, aligning with Ashworth's (2014) claim that industrial progress is often accompanied by systemic exclusion. Socially, the narrative foregrounds the constraints of Victorian norms, particularly those imposed on gender and identity. Enola Holmes, as the central figure, operates as a counter-discursive force against the patriarchal structures that sought to define and contain womanhood. Her rejection of finishing school, her mobility through public space, and her economic independence all signify a radical re-articulation of gender roles during a period of significant social anxiety and transformation.

This resonates with liberal feminist critiques, such as those offered by Sakinah et al. (2022), who argue for the representation of female autonomy within male-dominated frameworks. Politically, the novel engages with the mechanisms of control embedded within industrial society, ranging from familial governance to institutional surveillance. The persistent tension between Enola and her brother Mycroft reflects broader ideological battles between tradition and modernity, autonomy and obedience, freedom and discipline. Technologies such as newspapers, posters, and letters serve dual functions: as tools of liberation for the protagonist, and as instruments of institutional regulation for society at large. This duality positions communication and information as both emancipatory and oppressive, mirroring the ambivalence of industrial modernity itself. Symbolically, Springer's novel constructs a layered textual space where trains, corsets, street alleys, and industrial London function not merely as narrative details but as ideological signifiers.

These symbols condense the contradictions of the industrial age: mobility versus restriction, visibility versus anonymity, knowledge versus control. The novel thereby invites the reader to consider how material environments and symbolic structures shape individual consciousness and resistance. In conclusion, this study has shown that Enola Holmes: The Case of the Missing Marquess is a literary work deeply embedded with the historical logic and social tensions of the Industrial Revolution. It reveals how fiction, particularly youth fiction, can articulate serious critiques of power, identity, and structure. By situating the analysis within a socio-historical framework, this research contributes to the broader field of literary criticism, demonstrating that the interpretation of industrial literature need not be limited to canonical realist novels. Instead, even genre fiction can serve as a meaningful site for historical memory, cultural critique, and ideological negotiation.

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Linguistics and Literature Journal
Vol. 6, No. 270 - 275
E-ISSN: 2723-7273

available online at: http://jim.teknokrat.ac.id/index.php/linguistics_and_literature/index

LEWIS CAPALDI'S SOMEONE YOU LOVED: A READER RESPONSE ANALYSIS OF THE LYRIC

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Received: (October 2025) **Accepted**: (November 2025) **Published :** (December 2025)

Abstract

This research analyzes Lewis Capaldi's song Someone You Loved using Reader-Response Theory. The study focuses on how listeners give meaning to the song lyrics based on their personal feelings and experiences. Reader-Response Theory, especially Louise Rosenblatt's transactional approach, explains that meaning is not fixed in the text but created through interaction between the text and the reader. The researcher used a qualitative descriptive method and collected data through a Google Form questionnaire based on seven reader-response strategies from Beach and Marshall (1991): describing, engaging, conceiving, explaining, connecting, interpreting, and judging. Twenty respondents from different countries shared their emotional and personal reactions after listening to the song. The findings show that most listeners interpreted the song as a story about love, loss, and emotional healing. Each listener's background and experience influenced how they understood the song's message. This study proves that song lyrics can be studied as modern literature and that listeners play an active role in creating meaning from popular music.

Keywords: Lewis Capaldi, reader-response theory, *Someone You Loved*, song lyrics, qualitative research

INTRODUCTION

Literature is a way for humans to express emotions, thoughts, and experiences, and it can appear not only in poems or novels but also in song lyrics that reflect human feelings in artistic and symbolic ways. Song lyrics are considered a form of modern poetry because they share literary elements such as imagery, metaphor, rhythm, and emotional depth (Dewi & Handayani, 2019). As Perrine (1969) states, poetry uses language in a more intense way than ordinary speech, and Peter Barry (2002) also notes that the line between poetry and song lyrics is increasingly blurred. Lewis Capaldi's Someone You Loved (2018) is one of the best examples of a song that combines poetic language and emotional power. The song, which expresses love, loss, and healing, has touched millions of listeners worldwide. However, each listener may interpret and emotionally connect to the song differently depending on their own life experience.

This research focuses on that process by applying Louise Rosenblatt's (1978) Reader-Response Theory, which states that meaning is not fixed in the text but created through interaction between the reader (or listener) and the text. The problem under study is how listeners from various backgrounds construct personal meaning from the lyrics of Someone You Loved based on their emotions, memories, and cultural context. This topic is important because most literary studies focus on poems or novels, while few explore how people respond to songs as literary works. By analyzing this song, the study shows that popular music can also be a meaningful medium for reflection and interpretation. The urgency of this research lies in the growing influence of music in digital culture, where listeners share their interpretations online and collectively shape the meaning of songs.

This study uses a qualitative descriptive design with data collected through a Google Form questionnaire based on the seven reader-response strategies by Beach and Marshall (1991): describing, engaging, conceiving, explaining,

connecting, interpreting, and judging. Twenty respondents from various countries participated, providing diverse emotional and cultural perspectives. The analysis, based on Rosenblatt's transactional theory, focuses on how each listener's background influences their interpretation of the song. This research contributes theoretically by expanding Reader-Response Theory to popular media and practically by showing how song lyrics can be used as literary material in education. By exploring how listeners emotionally interact with Someone You Loved, this study highlights that song lyrics are not just entertainment but a form of modern literature that allows people to find meaning, healing, and connection through art).

METHOD

This research is based on Reader-Response Theory, especially the Transactional Approach developed by Louise Rosenblatt (1978), which explains that meaning is not fixed in the text but is created through an active interaction between the reader and the text. In this study, the "reader" is the listener who constructs meaning from the lyrics of Lewis Capaldi's Someone You Loved through emotional and personal engagement. Rosenblatt's idea of aesthetic reading, which focuses on feelings, imagination, and experience, fits this study because it explores how listeners emotionally respond to a song rather than extract information. Supporting concepts from Wolfgang Iser (1978), Hans Robert Jauss (1982), and Stanley Fish (1970) strengthen the analysis by showing that interpretation is influenced by imagination, social background, and shared cultural experience.

To organize the responses, the study uses the seven reader-response strategies by Beach and Marshall (1991): describing, engaging, conceiving, explaining, connecting, interpreting, and judging. This research applies a qualitative descriptive method because it aims to understand and describe the meaning of listeners' responses rather than measure them statistically. Data were collected through a Google Form questionnaire shared online, containing open-ended questions based on the seven strategies. Twenty respondents from various countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Japan, Turkey, Germany, Switzerland, Vietnam, Canada, and the United States participated in this study, representing diverse emotional and cultural perspectives.

Each participant listened to the full song before answering to ensure authentic responses. The primary data came from their written answers, while secondary data included books, journals, and past studies related to Reader-Response Theory. The data were analyzed by grouping responses according to the seven strategies, identifying emotional and interpretive themes, and interpreting them through Rosenblatt's theory to show how each listener's background and experience shape personal meaning. This approach highlights that every response is valid and unique, proving that song lyrics can function as a form of modern literature that expresses human emotion and allows for multiple interpretations.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this research are based on the responses of twenty listeners from various countries who participated in a qualitative questionnaire about Lewis Capaldi's song Someone You Loved. Their answers were analyzed using the seven reader-response strategies from Beach and Marshall (1991) to understand how listeners constructed meaning from the song through their emotions and personal experiences. The results show that the song successfully connects deeply with listeners because of its relatable themes of love, loss, and emotional healing. The diversity of responses also proves Rosenblatt's (1978) claim that meaning is created through a transaction between text and reader, and that each interpretation depends on the listener's background, feelings, and life experience.

Describing: Remembering the Content and Emotion of the Song

In the first strategy, describing, respondents recalled specific lyrics, melodies, and emotional impressions that stood out to them. Most listeners mentioned the lines "Now the day bleeds into nightfall" and "I guess I kinda liked the way you numbed all the pain," which they felt expressed sadness and emotional emptiness after losing someone. Some respondents, such as those from Indonesia and Germany, focused more on the melody, describing it as soft, emotional, and comforting despite the sadness of the lyrics. This shows that listeners are not only influenced by the words but also by the musical tone that creates the mood of the song. Through Rosenblatt's concept of aesthetic reading, the song acts as a trigger for emotional engagement, and each listener's memory of

the lyrics reflects how the text resonates personally.

Engaging: Expressing Emotional Reactions

In the engaging stage, listeners shared their emotional reactions after listening to the song. The majority felt sadness, longing, and reflection, while others described feelings of calmness and emotional release. For example, several respondents admitted to remembering someone they had lost or separated from, showing empathy and personal identification with the lyrics. One participant from Sri Lanka wrote that the song made him "remember someone who has come and gone," while another from the United States said that it reminded her of "the pain of missing someone who used to be a big part of my life." However, a few respondents reported not feeling a strong emotional reaction, stating that they appreciated the melody but did not personally relate to the lyrics. These differences show that aesthetic experience varies widely, depending on emotional readiness and personal background. According to Rosenblatt (1978), this emotional transaction between text and reader is what transforms simple reading or listening into a meaningful experience.

Conceiving: Imagining the Intention and Story Behind the Song

When asked what they thought Lewis Capaldi was trying to express, most participants interpreted the song as a portrayal of heartbreak, emotional dependence, and the struggle to move on. Many listeners imagined that the song tells the story of someone who has lost a loved one and is learning to live with that pain. Some respondents described it as a song about "needing someone to heal the loneliness," while others viewed it as "a reflection on love that once brought comfort but now brings emptiness." This stage shows that listeners not only understood the literal meaning but also engaged imaginatively to fill in the "gaps" in the text, as described by Iser (1978). The song's open and universal language allows listeners to construct their own stories around the lyrics, making each interpretation personally meaningful.

Explaining: Interpreting the Message or Theme

In the explaining category, listeners tried to interpret the message behind the song. Most agreed that the central theme is emotional vulnerability and the difficulty of coping after losing someone important. Some respondents connected the message to the idea of accepting loss as part of human experience, while others saw it as a warning about emotional dependence. One respondent from Turkey said, "The song reminds me that we sometimes rely too much on others to find happiness," showing a reflective understanding of the song's deeper meaning. Another listener from Vietnam mentioned that the song's message is about "the process of grief and the strength to face loneliness." These findings demonstrate how listeners actively make meaning beyond the surface of the lyrics, turning a personal song into a universal reflection on human emotion.

Connecting: Relating the Song to Personal Experience

The connecting stage produced the most emotional and varied responses. Many participants linked the song to their personal experiences of heartbreak, loss of a family member, or separation from a loved one. A respondent from Indonesia said that the song reminded her of losing her grandmother, while another from Canada related it to the end of a romantic relationship. Several participants described how listening to the song provided comfort and emotional release during difficult times. This finding strongly supports Jauss's (1982) idea of the horizon of expectations, showing that each listener's background and life story influence their interpretation. The song's power lies in its universality; it allows people from different countries and cultures to find their own stories within its words.

Interpreting: Giving Personal Meaning

In this stage, respondents gave their personal interpretations of specific lines from the song, particularly the lyric "Now the day bleeds into nightfall, and you're not here to get me through it all." Many saw this line as a metaphor for emotional emptiness and the difficulty of facing life without someone they love. Some interpreted "day bleeding into nightfall" as the transition from hope to despair, while others saw it as a symbol of time passing and memories fading. A few listeners viewed the lyric more positively, interpreting it as a process of healing and acceptance. These varied interpretations demonstrate Rosenblatt's (1978) claim that meaning is not static but dynamic, changing according to the reader's or listener's emotional and psychological state. The lyric serves as a

"textual space" that invites multiple meanings, proving the richness of song lyrics as literary texts.

Judging: Evaluating the Emotional and Artistic Quality

The final category, judging, asked listeners to evaluate whether the song effectively conveyed emotional pain and vulnerability. Almost all respondents agreed that it did. They praised Capaldi's sincere voice and simple yet emotional lyrics, which made the song feel real and relatable. One listener described the song as "a perfect example of how music can express feelings that words alone cannot," while another said that "the song feels like an emotional confession that helps people accept their own sadness." A few respondents also highlighted the song's universal appeal, stating that its message can be understood by people of any age or background. This shows that listeners are not only passive consumers of music but also active critics who can assess emotional quality and authenticity.

Discussion: Meaning Creation and Reader Involvement

Overall, the findings reveal that the interaction between listeners and the song is deeply emotional, reflective, and personal. Each participant created meaning through their own life experiences, confirming Rosenblatt's (1978) idea that reading or listening is a transactional process. The song acted as a mirror that reflected each listener's inner world, while their emotions gave new life to the lyrics. Listeners from different countries interpreted the song differently, influenced by their cultural background and emotional state. For instance, respondents from Asian countries tended to describe the song in terms of emotional healing and patience, while those from Western countries focused more on personal independence and acceptance. This difference supports Jauss's (1982) concept of the horizon of expectations, showing that social and cultural factors shape how meaning is received.

Furthermore, the study highlights that song lyrics function as modern literature that connects directly to everyday emotional life. Someone You Loved uses simple language but carries deep emotional symbolism that resonates universally. Its effectiveness lies in its openness; listeners can enter the song's world and build their own meaning without being restricted by the songwriter's original intention. Through the combination of words and melody, Capaldi's song successfully bridges personal feeling and shared human experience.

In conclusion, the findings demonstrate that the listeners' responses to Someone You Loved are varied, emotional, and meaningful. The song encourages reflection, empathy, and personal interpretation, showing that popular music can be analyzed through literary theories like Reader-Response. This proves that literature is not limited to books or poems but can exist in modern forms such as songs, which continue to play an important role in expressing human emotion and creating collective meaning across cultures.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that Lewis Capaldi's Someone You Loved is a powerful example of how song lyrics can function as modern literature that connects deeply with listeners' emotions and experiences. Using Louise Rosenblatt's (1978) Reader-Response Theory, the study proves that meaning is not fixed in the lyrics but created through the personal interaction between the listener and the song. Each of the twenty respondents constructed their own understanding of the song based on their emotions, memories, and cultural backgrounds. Through the seven reader-response strategies by Beach and Marshall (1991), it was found that listeners experienced the song through several stages: remembering emotional lines, expressing feelings of sadness or healing, imagining the story behind the lyrics, explaining the message, relating it to personal life, giving personal meaning, and finally judging its emotional and artistic impact.

The study shows that Someone You Loved is interpreted by most listeners as a song about love, loss, and the process of emotional recovery. However, each listener's meaning was unique; some saw it as a reflection of heartbreak, others as a reminder of family love, and a few as a message of hope and acceptance. These varied interpretations confirm Rosenblatt's idea of the "transactional" nature of reading (or listening), where the text and reader work together to create meaning. The results also support the ideas of Iser, Jauss, and Fish, who emphasize imagination, cultural context, and interpretive communities in shaping literary understanding. In a broader sense, this research highlights that popular songs like Someone You Loved can be studied academically just like poetry or fiction because they evoke deep emotional and intellectual engagement. The song's simple but expressive lyrics allow people from different countries to connect through shared feelings, proving that music can be both an

artistic and literary medium. This study also suggests that song lyrics can be used as learning materials in literature and language education, as they help students relate to texts emotionally and critically.

In conclusion, Someone You Loved demonstrates that meaning in art is not determined by the author alone but is co-created by the audience. Each listener brings their own life experience into the act of interpretation, turning the song into a personal and emotional journey. Through this interaction, Lewis Capaldi's song becomes not only a story of loss but also a mirror of human resilience and emotional connection.

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Linguistics and Literature Journal
Vol. 6, No. 276 - 279
E-ISSN: 2723-7273

available online at: http://jim.teknokrat.ac.id/index.php/linguistics_and_literature/index

THE UNTRANSLATABILITY OF JOKES IN TREVOR NOAH'S *SON OF PATRICIA*

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Received: (October 2025) **Accepted**: (November 2025) **Published :** (December 2025)

Abstract

This study investigates cases of untranslatability and the translation strategies applied in Trevor Noah's stand-up comedy special *Son of Patricia*. Employing a qualitative research approach, the study analyzes jokes that are considered difficult to translate directly from English into Indonesian. The classification of untranslatability is based on Peter Newmark's theory, while the translation strategies are examined using Vinay and Darbelnet's framework. The analysis focuses on identifying lexical and cultural untranslatability present in the selected data. The findings reveal that untranslatability should not be viewed as a constraint in translation but rather as an opportunity for translators to exercise creativity and problem-solving skills. Many jokes that pose translation challenges can be effectively rendered by selecting the most appropriate equivalents in the target language through the use of suitable translation strategies. The strategies most frequently employed include modulation, equivalence, adaptation, and borrowing. All of these play a crucial role in preserving the humorous effect and the intended meaning of the source text. This study emphasizes the importance of cultural awareness and strategic competence in translating humor, particularly in entertainment texts rich in linguistic and cultural nuances. The research contributes to the field of applied linguistics and translation studies by demonstrating that appropriate translation strategies can bridge language and cultural gaps while maintaining the quality and impact of the original content.

Keywords: stand-up comedy, translation strategies, untranslatability

INTRODUCTION

Comedy plays a significant role in human communication, serving not only as a source of entertainment but also as a medium for expressing opinions, social criticism, and cultural identity. It is frequently used to convey ideas in a light-hearted manner and to create social bonds in various contexts, such as public speaking, seminars, talk shows, and everyday interactions. Hokenson (2006) notes that Plato perceived comedy as a means of allowing audiences to experience moral superiority by ridiculing a particular subject. However, comedy has evolved into diverse forms, among which stand-up comedy has gained popularity in contemporary society.

Stand-up comedy is characterized by a solo performer delivering humorous monologues directly to an audience, usually without elaborate costumes or props. Mintz, as cited in Sjöbohm (2008), defines stand-up comedy as an encounter between a single performer who behaves comically and presents humorous ideas directly to an audience. A defining feature of stand-up comedy is its close relationship with cultural, social, and political contexts. Comedians often rely on language-specific expressions, cultural references, and shared social knowledge to produce humor. This cultural embeddedness, however, becomes problematic when stand-up comedy is translated into another language (Kuswoyo & Audina, 2020), as differences in linguistic structures and cultural frameworks may hinder direct translation.

This difficulty is commonly referred to as untranslatability, a concept introduced by Peter Newmark (1988). Untranslatability occurs when certain linguistic elements, cultural concepts, or expressions in the source language lack direct equivalents in the target language. Previous studies have examined untranslatability from various perspectives. Palmieri (2017a, 2017b) focuses on self-translation in stand-up comedy, highlighting how bilingual comedians navigate untranslatability through oral and mental text restructuring. Darmawan (2019) emphasizes the influence of translators' cultural backgrounds on translation outcomes, particularly in resolving lexical and cultural gaps. Similarly, Fatima and Azeez (2019) explore humor translation by distinguishing between universal and culture-bound humor, while Alwazna (2018) investigates untranslatability in legal translation due to differing legal systems and cultural concepts.

Although these studies address untranslatability, their focuses differ from the present research. Palmieri's studies center on self-translation performed by bilingual comedians, while Darmawan (2019), Fatima and Azeez (2019), and Alwazna (2018) examine untranslatability in non-stand-up or non-entertainment contexts. Therefore, there remains a research gap concerning how untranslatability is addressed in translated stand-up comedy texts, particularly using established translation strategies.

This study seeks to fill that gap by analyzing the types of untranslatability found in Trevor Noah's stand-up comedy special *Son of Patricia*, and by examining the translation strategies employed to resolve them based on Vinay and Darbelnet's framework. By doing so, this research contributes to translation studies and applied linguistics, especially in understanding how humor-rich and culturally embedded entertainment texts can be effectively translated without losing their communicative impact.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative research design to investigate cases of untranslatability and the translation strategies used in a stand-up comedy context. Qualitative research is appropriate for this study because it allows for in-depth analysis of linguistic, cultural, and contextual phenomena embedded in texts (Creswell, 2014). The research focuses on identifying types of untranslatability and examining how such cases are addressed through translation strategies rather than measuring frequency or statistical significance.

The data consist of selected jokes from Trevor Noah's stand-up comedy special *Son of Patricia*, available on Netflix. The jokes were selected based on their comedic effect and their potential difficulty in being translated directly from English as the source language (SL) into Indonesian as the target language (TL). In line with Attardo and Chabanne's (1992) definition, jokes are treated as structured humorous texts that rely on incongruity, cultural knowledge, and interaction between the performer and the audience. The performance discusses Noah's experiences as a South African-born comedian adapting to cultural and social differences in the United States, making it rich in culture-specific references and language-bound humor. The source language data were obtained from the official English subtitles provided by Netflix, while the target language data were taken from the corresponding Indonesian subtitles. These subtitles were used as parallel texts for comparative analysis.

Data were collected through a transcription-based procedure. Although the Netflix platform provides machine-generated subtitles in both English and Indonesian, the subtitles were reviewed to ensure clarity and consistency. The performance was segmented into discrete joke units based on thematic continuity and audience reactions, such as laughter and applause. From these segments, jokes that displayed linguistic or cultural translation challenges were identified and compiled. Only jokes that demonstrated potential cases of untranslatability between the SL and TL were selected for further analysis to ensure that the data were relevant to the research objectives.

The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis adapted from Creswell's (2014) framework. The analysis involved five main stages. First, the data were read repeatedly to achieve familiarity and contextual understanding. Second, the data were categorized according to Newmark's (1988) classification of untranslatability, namely lexical and cultural untranslatability. Third, initial coding was conducted to identify recurring patterns and dominant types of untranslatability within the data. Fourth, the translation strategies applied in the Indonesian subtitles were analyzed using Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) taxonomy, focusing on strategies such as modulation, equivalence, adaptation, borrowing, and other relevant procedures. Finally, interpretations were made by examining how effectively these strategies preserved the humorous effect and intended meaning of the original jokes. The findings were then synthesized and discussed to highlight the implications of untranslatability and translation strategies in the translation of stand-up comedy.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study investigates the phenomenon of untranslatability in Trevor Noah's stand-up comedy special *Son of Patricia*. It focuses on how lexical and cultural elements challenge the translation of humor from English (Source Language/SL) into Indonesian (Target Language/TL). The findings demonstrate that untranslatability is a recurrent and inevitable feature of stand-up comedy due to the genre's reliance on language-specific wordplay, cultural references, and shared social experiences. In line with Newmark's (1988) theory, the analysis confirms that untranslatability does not represent a failure of translation but rather necessitates the strategic and creative application of translation techniques.

Lexical Untranslatability in Stand-Up Comedy

Lexical untranslatability occurs when a word or expression in the source language lacks a direct lexical equivalent in the target language. In *Son of Patricia*, this type of untranslatability frequently appears in jokes involving slang, taboo expressions, racial terminology, and phonological wordplay. These lexical items are embedded in the sociolinguistic context of American English and often carry meanings shaped by historical and social factors.

One prominent example involves the use of racial terms such as **nigger** and **nigga**. Although these terms may be superficially understood by Indonesian audiences through exposure to global media, their emotional weight, pragmatic function, and sociopolitical history cannot be fully conveyed through literal translation. In many cases, the Indonesian subtitles keep the original term through borrowing. This strategy preserves referential meaning but fails to transfer the full pragmatic force of the joke, particularly its ironic or critical intent. As Newmark (1988) suggests, such cases illustrate lexical untranslatability arising from culture-bound meaning rather than linguistic deficiency.

Another form of lexical untranslatability is observed in jokes based on wordplay and homophony. Trevor Noah uses the words **aides** and **AIDS**. This type of humor relies on phonetic similarity, which cannot be replicated in Indonesian due to differences in phonological systems. The translated version often resorts to modulation or explanation, altering the original structure to convey meaning rather than sound-based humor. While these strategies ensure comprehension, they weaken the immediate comedic effect, as humor in stand-up comedy depends on rapid cognitive processing and surprise.

Additionally, slang expressions and culturally specific terms such as **trap music**, **Taco Tuesday**, and **hood** demonstrate lexical gaps between English and Indonesian. These expressions are tied to specific social practices and subcultures that do not have direct counterparts in Indonesian society. Translators often apply adaptation or equivalence by using broader or more neutral expressions. However, this approach reduces the specificity and authenticity of the original joke. This support Palmieri's (2017) argument that humor translation often requires sacrificing certain stylistic elements for clarity.

Cultural Untranslatability and Contextual Dependency

Cultural untranslatability is the most dominant type identified in this study. It occurs when jokes rely on shared cultural knowledge, social norms, or collective experiences that are not equally accessible to target-language audiences. Stand-up comedy, by nature, draws heavily on cultural context, making it particularly vulnerable to this type of untranslatability.

A recurring theme in *Son of Patricia* is the contrast between Trevor Noah's upbringing in South Africa and his experiences in the United States. For example, **jokes about camping** rely on Western cultural assumptions that associate camping with leisure, recreation, and privilege. Trevor Noah subverts this expectation by associating camping with survival and hardship, creating humor through irony. While the translated version conveys the narrative meaning, Indonesian audiences may not fully perceive the irony due to different cultural associations with camping. This illustrates cultural untranslatability rooted in divergent lived experiences.

Political and racial jokes further exemplify cultural untranslatability. References to **Donald Trump**, **crack cocaine**, or **racial profiling** presuppose familiarity with American political discourse and racial history. Although these topics may be globally recognized, their local implications and emotional resonance differ across cultures. The Indonesian translation often employs neutralization or generalization to avoid cultural misunderstanding or offense. While this strategy enhances acceptability, it decreases the satirical aspect of the original joke. This suports Azeez and Azeez's (2019) findings that translating culture-bound humor often results in partial loss of humor.

Moreover, some jokes depend on illocutionary force rather than explicit content. Trevor Noah frequently uses **exaggeration**, **mockery**, and **self-deprecating** humor to critique social norms. These rhetorical devices are closely tied to performance, intonation, and audience expectation. Even when the semantic content is translated accurately, shifts in tone or emphasis may weaken the humorous effect. This supports the argument that humor translation is not merely a linguistic process but also a pragmatic and performative one.

Translation Strategies and Their Effectiveness

The study finds that translators employ both direct and oblique translation strategies as proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995). Direct strategies such as borrowing and literal translation are mainly used for proper nouns and globally recognized terms. However, oblique strategies like particularly modulation, equivalence, and adaptation are more frequently applied to address untranslatability in humor.

Modulation allows translators to change perspective while preserving meaning, which is effective in dealing with idiomatic expressions and culturally sensitive content. **Equivalence** is applied when a similar expression exists in Indonesian, although such cases are relatively rare for stand-up comedy. **Adaptation** proves most useful in handling cultural untranslatability, as it enables translators to reshape the joke to fit the cultural framework of the target audience. However, **adaptation** often requires creative rewriting, which risks altering the comedian's original voice.

The findings align with Newmark's view that untranslatability encourages creative problem-solving rather than indicating translation failure. However, they also confirm that no strategy can fully replicate the original comedic impact when humor is deeply culture-bound.

Implications for Translation Studies

This study contributes to translation studies by demonstrating that stand-up comedy represents a complex and underexplored domain of untranslatability. Unlike written texts, stand-up comedy relies on immediacy, audience interaction, and cultural intimacy. Translators must therefore function not only as linguistic mediators but also as cultural negotiators.

The findings also extend previous research by focusing on a monolingual translation of a stand-up comedy special rather than self-translation by a bilingual comedian. This distinction highlights the unique challenges faced by translators who lack the performer's intuitive control over cultural and comedic timing. The analysis confirms that untranslatability in stand-up comedy is both unavoidable but meaningful. While translation strategies can preserve comprehension and communicative intent, the full humorous effect often remains culturally bounded. Recognizing untranslatability as an inherent characteristic of humor allows translators and scholars to adopt more flexible and creative approaches. This ultimately enriches cross-cultural communication rather than limiting it.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of Trevor Noah's *Son of Patricia* reveals that translating stand-up comedy presents substantial challenges related to lexical and cultural untranslatability. Lexical untranslatability arises when culture-bound terms such as nigger, nigga, and trap music carry socio-historical and emotional meanings that lack direct equivalents in Indonesian. Although strategies such as borrowing and modulation help maintain referential meaning, they often fail to fully convey the original connotations and humorous impact. Cultural untranslatability poses the greatest difficulty because many jokes rely on shared cultural knowledge related to politics, race, and social practices that are not equally accessible to Indonesian audiences. Even with adaptation or equivalence strategies, the humorous effect is frequently reduced.

The findings confirm that untranslatability in humor translation is primarily cultural rather than purely linguistic. Translation strategies can mitigate, but not eliminate, these challenges. Therefore, translating jokes requires not only linguistic competence but also cultural sensitivity and creative decision-making. Untranslatability should thus be viewed not as a limitation, but as an inherent feature of cross-cultural translation that highlights the complex relationship between language, culture, and humor.

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