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CITISPACE-BASED VISUALIZED ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH ON CHINESE EFL LEARNERS' ORAL ENGLISH OUTPUT IN RECENT FIFTEEN YEARS

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Abstract

Oral English output is a core link in the transformation of linguistic knowledge into practical application ability. Taking the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) academic journal network publishing database as the data source, this paper uses the CiteSpace 6.3.R 1 data visualization software to map scientific knowledge, and conducts a systematic analysis of relevant literatures in the field of Chinese EFL learners' oral English output over the past 15 years, so as to reveal the development trends, hotspots and frontiers of this field. The results show that the research in the field of Chinese EFL learners' oral English output from 2010 to 2025 presents a fluctuating characteristic, going through three stages: the accumulation and development stage, the significant growth stage and the stable maturity stage. Research hotspots focus on oral English output, with emphasis on English teaching practice in different school stages; research frontiers concentrate on the cultivation of oral English output ability in specific school stages. Future research should, on the basis of diversifying research methods, carry out studies around different themes, promote interdisciplinary research, and conform to the development of educational digitalization.

Keywords: *CiteSpace; Oral English; Oral output*

1. Introduction

Against the backdrop of increasingly frequent global communication, fluent oral English output is particularly important. In the context of deepening the reform of English curriculum in basic education, the teaching pain point—how to develop students' core competencies, cultivate their oral output ability, and truly improve their language proficiency—urgently needs to be addressed. Meanwhile, the popularization of digital technology has provided new variables for oral English output. However, most prior reviews rely on narrative summaries rather than data-driven visualization methods and they generally lack the overall view of this field. In view of this, this study uses the CiteSpace 6.3.R 1 data visualization software to map scientific knowledge

based on the relevant literatures on Chinese oral English output research published in China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) from 2010 to 2025, aiming to address the following questions: (1) What is the research trajectory of Chinese EFL learners' oral English output in recent fifteen years?, (2) What are the research hotspots in this field?, and (3) What are the research frontiers of this field in different periods? Through this, this analysis reveals the overall research dynamics of this field in the past 15 years, aiming to provide references for the research of Chinese EFL learners' oral English output.

2. Research Design

2.1 Research Tool

This study adopts the CiteSpace 6.3.R 1 data visualization software, a widely used data visualization software developed by Professor Chaomei Chen, to construct a scientific knowledge graph for the field of Chinese EFL learners' oral English output. The software is particularly suitable for this research for two key reasons: First, it excels at analyzing large-scale literature datasets to identify hidden knowledge structures—such as cluster analysis of research themes and burst detection of hot topics—which aligns with the study's goal of revealing long-term (2010–2025) research trends. Second, its visualization function (e.g., node-size mapping of literature impact, color-coding of time periods) enables intuitive presentation of the overall research landscape, making it easier to interpret complex relationships between research hotspots and frontiers. With the assistance of CiteSpace 6.3.R 1 data visualization software, this study is allowed to present the overall research landscape, development trends, research hotspots and research frontiers in this field of Chinese EFL learners' oral English output.

2.2 Data Source

This study takes the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) Academic Journal Network Publishing Database as the data source. The advanced search mode is adopted, with “oral output” as the subject term for retrieval. The time span is set from January 2010 to August 2025, and initially retrieved 374 literature records. To ensure data relevance and methodological rigor, manual screening was then performed: 47 records were excluded, including those irrelevant to the research topic, as well as conference proceedings, newspaper articles, and review papers (which are prone to bias or lack of original empirical content). Finally, 327 valid literature samples meeting the research criteria were selected as the dataset for subsequent analysis.

3. Research Results and Data Analysis

3.1 Annual Number of Published Papers

A diachronic statistical analysis of the number of published literatures can, to a certain extent, reflect the overall development trend in the field of Chinese EFL learners' oral English output. In this study, the CiteSpace 6.3.R 1 data visualization software was used to conduct a visualized analysis of 327 literatures published between

January 2010 and August 2025, and the corresponding statistical results of the number of published papers were obtained. The specific data are shown in Figure 1.

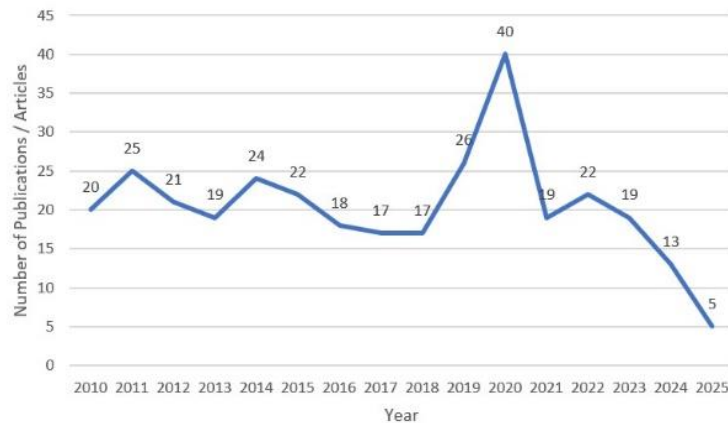


Figure 1. Article Publication Trend Chart

As can be seen from Figure 1, the number of papers on Chinese EFL learners' oral English output research showed obvious fluctuating characteristics during the period 2010-2025, which can be roughly interpreted in three phases.

(1) Accumulation and Development Phase (2010-2018)

During this phase, the number of published papers ranged from approximately 17 to 26, with a relatively even distribution. This period can be regarded as the initial development and accumulation stage of research in this field. During this period, relevant studies focused more on output theories, which have laid a solid theoretical foundation for the conduct of subsequent research.

(2) Significant Growth Phase (2019-2020)

During this period, research on oral English output in China entered a stage of significant growth, with the number of published papers reaching a peak of 40 in 2020. The emergence of this growth trend is closely tied to the practical context of accelerated digital transformation in China's English education. The popularization of online oral English learning platforms and the application of AI-assisted oral training tools have provided richer practical contexts and analytical perspectives for research, effectively expanding the scope of research questions. Meanwhile, the practical demand for oral English proficiency development at the societal level has continued to rise—this has significantly increased the academic community's attention to the field of oral output and encouraged more researchers to direct their academic focus toward innovative exploration in this area.

(3) Stable Maturity Phase (2021-2025)

During this stage, the number of published studies in the field of Chinese EFL learners' oral English output has shown a declining trend, entering a mature phase of research. However, this does not mean that research in the field of oral English output

has lost its value; future research in this field is likely to move toward a path of greater refinement and depth.

3.2 Keyword Co-occurrence Analysis

Keywords are the condensation and summary of the core content of literature, and serve as important indicators for identifying research hotspots, development contexts, and evolutionary trends in an academic field. The research hotspots of a field can usually be identified through high-frequency keywords (Li & Chen, 2016). Therefore, to gain an in-depth understanding of the hotspots in the field of Chinese EFL learners' oral English output research, this study used the CiteSpace 6.3.R 1 data visualization software to generate a keyword co-occurrence network of Chinese EFL learners' oral English output research from 2010 to 2025, as shown in Figure 2.

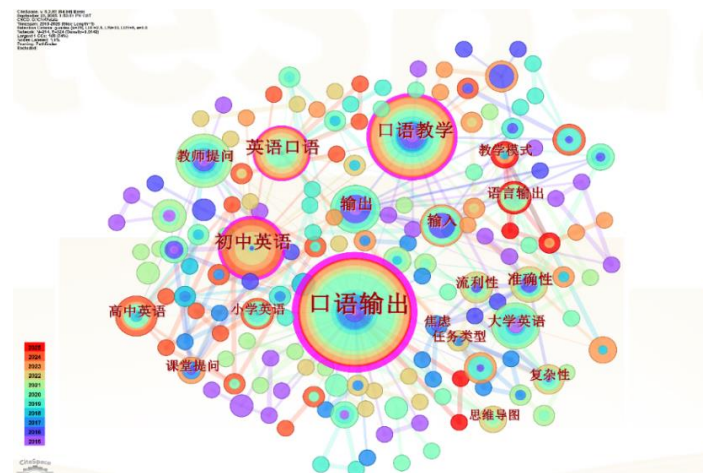


Figure 2. Keyword Co-occurrence Map

As can be seen from Figure 2, the nodes of keywords such as “oral output”, “oral teaching”, “oral English”, “junior high school English”, “output”, “input”, “teacher questioning”, “senior high school English”, and “output theory” are relatively large. This indicates that these keywords have high occurrence frequencies and are the research hotspots in the field of Chinese EFL learners' oral English output. Based on this, this study summarizes the research hotspots in the domestic field of oral English output from two dimensions—research subjects and research focus—by relying on the generated keyword co-occurrence knowledge graph and relevant reference literature.

First, in terms of research subjects, studies on Chinese EFL learners' English oral output mainly focus on four educational stages: primary school, junior high school, senior high school, and university, with attention paid to real-world English teaching scenarios. Against the backdrop of core competencies, English education has long shifted from “knowledge imparting” to “competence development”. Consequently, studies on Chinese EFL learners' English oral output primarily focus on improving the oral output proficiency of learners at different educational stages and exploring effective pathways for truly fostering oral English literacy. For instance, Zhang (2018) focused on primary school English classrooms and studied the impact of teachers' question types on primary school students' English oral output. Sun & Zhao (2022) examined the application of the situational teaching method in junior high school English oral teaching classrooms and pointed out that this method enables students to learn in a

joyful atmosphere and helps develop their English oral output competence. Li (2016) drew on the Input and Output Theories, combined with the current status of senior high school English oral teaching, and explored strategies for cultivating senior high school students' English oral output ability. Wang (2014) investigated the influence of motivation deficiency on the English oral output of non-English major university students, aiming to enhance these students' oral output proficiency.

Second, regarding research focus, relevant studies mostly concentrate on factors influencing the effectiveness of English oral output, such as affective factors, classroom questioning, and peer feedback. Huang & Zhuang (2025) focused on the relationship between students' self-efficacy and in-class oral output, and explored the role of foreign language enjoyment in English oral output. Wu (2015) examined the impact of teachers' questioning on students' oral output in junior high school English classes, and proposed that open-ended questions, effective questioning techniques, and appropriate wait-time can enhance both the quality and quantity of students' oral output. Zeng, Wang, & Tan (2020) investigated the different effects of one-way peer feedback and dialogic peer feedback on second language (L2) oral output in a mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) environment. The study showed that students are more inclined to dialogic peer feedback compared with one-way peer feedback, and this finding provides new insights for the cultivation of L2 oral output ability. From the perspective of theories and competencies, relevant studies rely on L2 acquisition theories such as the "Output Hypothesis" and explore competence indicators of English oral output, including "fluency", "accuracy", and "complexity". For example, Zhang (2015) took Swain's Output Function Hypothesis as a framework, proposed a new model for oral output teaching, and focused on the accuracy, fluency, complexity, and appropriateness of oral output.

3.3 Keyword Burst Analysis

The keyword burst graph reveals the evolution of research frontiers through burst strength and the start and end years of bursts, reflecting the emerging and rapidly developing research directions in the field. In this study, the CiteSpace 6.3.R 1 data visualization software was used to generate the keyword burst graph of Chinese EFL learners' oral English output research from 2010 to 2025, as shown in Figure 3.

Top 15 Keywords with the Strongest Citation Bursts

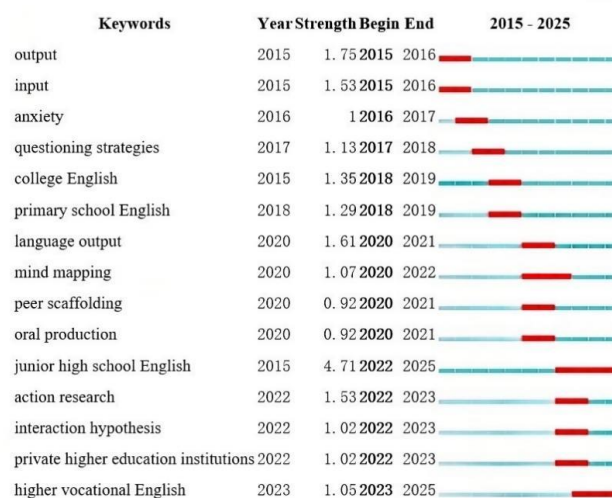


Figure 3. Keyword Burst Map

As can be seen from Figure 3, 15 burst terms are presented in the graph, including keywords, start-end years, and burst strength. After summarization, this study will analyze the research frontiers in the field of Chinese EFL learners' oral English output over the recent 15 years from three stages.

Burst Strength

Among the 15 burst terms, “junior high school English” has the highest burst strength (4.71). This indicates that during the period 2022-2025, research related to “junior high school English” has attracted significant attention from the academic community and become a frontier topic in the field of Chinese EFL learners' oral English output. For example, Wang (2022) focused on the impact of teacher questioning types on the quality and quantity of students' oral output in junior high school English classes, and put forward targeted suggestions for different scenarios. Liu & Liu (2022) explored the impact of teachers' interruption and error correction on students' oral output in junior high school English classes, proposing that teachers should grasp the appropriate timing for error correction, select effective error correction methods, and improve the quality of students' oral output. The burst strengths of other burst terms are relatively evenly distributed, and these terms also received phased attention from the academic community during their corresponding burst periods.

3.3.1 Temporal Evolution of Research Hotspots

During 2015-2019, relevant research mainly focused on second language acquisition theories such as “input”, “output”, “college English”, and “primary school English”, as well as English research in different educational stages.

During 2020-2021, keywords related to English teaching methods and learning strategies, such as “language output”, “mind mapping”, and “peer scaffolding”, began to burst. This indicates that the research focus gradually shifted to specific strategies for improving oral English output competence, promoting the development of research in a more practical direction.

During 2022-2025, the burst of keywords such as “junior high school English”, “higher vocational English”, “action research”, “interaction hypothesis”, and “private higher education institutions” shows that in recent years, domestic research on oral English output has tilted toward specific educational stages, research methods, theoretical hypotheses, and types of colleges and universities, and relevant research has become more refined and in-depth. The burst of “higher vocational English” indicates that research has paid attention to the cultivation of oral output in different educational stages, especially in vocational education, reflecting the comprehensive expansion of research.

4. Conclusion

Using CiteSpace 6.3.R1 for bibliometric analysis of 327 literatures (2010–2025) on Chinese EFL learners' oral English output, this study identifies key insights that advance existing research. It is found that the research in this field has experienced a fluctuating development process, which went through initial development and accumulation, then rapid growth, and finally precipitation and subdivision. There is still broad space for exploration and expansion in the future. Centering on the core of “oral output”, research hotspots have been deepened and expanded in multiple dimensions such as theoretical foundations, teaching practice, and influencing factors, showing a

trend of continuous refinement. However, most current studies in this field focus on practical English teaching scenarios in different educational stages, while interdisciplinary integrated research and research on the application of emerging technologies are relatively scarce, leaving considerable room for further exploration.

Over the past 15 years, research on oral English output in China has been continuously deepened and refined. From theoretical research to discussions on teaching practice, the research scope has gradually expanded. Future research on oral English output can be carried out from the following aspects:

(1) Cross-stage and Interdisciplinary Research

Research on oral English output can strengthen the connection and comparison between different educational stages, such as primary school, junior high school, senior high school, higher vocational education, and university. It can explore the inherent laws of oral output cultivation in different stages to realize cross-stage research. At the same time, research on oral English output can draw on theories from related disciplines such as psychology to broaden research perspectives and achieve interdisciplinary research.

(2) Artificial Intelligence and Oral Output

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI), especially the generative artificial intelligence technology represented by Large Language Models (LLMs), is exerting a revolutionary impact on foreign language education and teaching (Kong, 2024). In the future, research in the field of oral English output should be closely combined with digital tools. It is necessary to analyze how digital tools can more effectively promote oral output, explore the new characteristics of oral output in the digital environment, and provide scientific guidance for practical oral teaching scenarios.

Acknowledgements

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A PRAGMATIC AND TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF HUMOR IN THE CAPTION TRANSLATION OF *JOHNNY ENGLISH*

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Abstract

This study examines how captions translate humor in *Johnny English*, drawing on Mona Baker's equivalence framework—particularly its textual and pragmatic dimensions. Through analysis of selected scenes, the research shows that captions convey meaning not only through linguistic transfer but also by integrating visual cues, sound effects, and comedic timing. Textual equivalence is analyzed in terms of cohesion, coherence, and dialogue sequencing, while pragmatic equivalence addresses implicit meaning, cultural references, and humor reception. The findings reveal that captioning often departs from literal translation to apply pragmatic adjustments, ensuring that irony, slapstick, and parody remain effective for target audiences. Textual strategies such as omission, condensation, and sequencing help preserve narrative flow and comedic rhythm. Overall, the study underscores captions as sites of creative negotiation between fidelity and functionality, reaffirming the relevance of Baker's equivalence model in audiovisual translation.

Keywords: *Audiovisual Translation; Captioning; Humor Translation; Textual and Pragmatic Equivalence*

1. Introduction

Humor is one of the most challenging aspects of translation, particularly when it moves across languages and modes of communication. Unlike technical texts, where accuracy may be measured in terms of terminological consistency, humor relies heavily on timing, cultural context, and shared inference. When translated in audiovisual settings, humor must not only be carried through words but also aligned with images, sounds, and gestures. Captions therefore occupy a unique position: they are expected to condense spoken or implied meaning into concise written text while keeping pace with the rhythm of action. In doing so, captions can be seen as a form of translation that negotiates between language and performance.

The film *Johnny English* provides fertile ground for exploring this phenomenon. As a parody of the spy genre, it relies extensively on slapstick comedy, verbal irony, and cultural stereotypes. Much of its humor is not embedded in witty dialogue alone but in the contrast between what is said and what is done. Johnny's exaggerated confidence, often undermined by his clumsy actions, generates laughter that depends on both visual cues and verbal delivery. Translating this interplay into captions requires more than literal substitution; it demands strategies that capture the comic effect as it unfolds on screen.

To frame this investigation, the present study adopts Mona Baker's theory of equivalence, with particular emphasis on textual and pragmatic dimensions. Textual equivalence is crucial for maintaining cohesion and coherence between captions and the unfolding sequence of events, while pragmatic equivalence addresses implicature, irony, and cultural resonance. Together these categories capture the dual task of captions: to preserve the narrative structure of humor and to transmit the intended comic effect to the audience.

This research builds upon a growing body of scholarship that has examined translation strategies, pragmatic considerations, and equivalence in both written and audiovisual contexts. Sanatifar and Kenevisi (2017) explored the application of Gricean maxims in translation, showing how pragmatic principles can guide translators in rendering meaning beyond the literal. Their findings highlight the role of implicatures and cultural inferences—issues that this study extends by combining Baker's equivalence model with pragmatic strategies in the analysis of captions.

Anisah and Basri (2023) emphasize the importance of culturally appropriate equivalents, especially for idioms and humor, arguing that literal translation often diminishes comic effect. This insight is particularly relevant for subtitling, where brevity and timing already place pressure on translators. The present study builds on this by showing how pragmatic equivalence helps captions preserve humor rooted in cultural references and social context.

Gebbia (2023) focuses on how translator trainees handle metaphors, stressing that ignoring local nuance can weaken a text's persuasive or emotive impact. This is directly parallel to humor in *Johnny English*, where local cultural cues are central to the comedy. Captions must preserve these cues without overwhelming the audience, a balance that this study explores in depth.

From a more technical perspective, Nugraha et al. (2019) survey strategies such as addition, reduction, and modulation, which resonate with subtitling techniques like omission, condensation, and sequencing. These mechanisms are crucial for ensuring that captions remain both legible and effective in sustaining humor.

Finally, Rad (2022) underlines the difficulty of balancing verbal and functional equivalence, a challenge faced acutely in comedy translation where fidelity to words may clash with the need to preserve timing and laughter. This perspective helps situate the present study, which examines precisely this negotiation in the subtitling of *Johnny English*.

Although the studies reviewed provide valuable insights into equivalence, pragmatics, and subtitling strategies, several limitations in the existing scholarship remain. Much of the prior work has tended to examine either textual cohesion or pragmatic inference in isolation. Sanatifar and Kenevisi (2017), for instance, focused on Gricean maxims as a pragmatic framework, while Nugraha et al. (2019) catalogued textual strategies such as omission and modulation. What is still underexplored is how these dimensions interact in real practice—particularly in humor, where timing (a textual issue) and irony (a pragmatic issue) often work together to create laughter. This study addresses that gap by applying Baker's categories of textual and pragmatic equivalence side by side, showing how captions negotiate meaning across modes rather than within a single linguistic level.

A second limitation concerns the scope of audiovisual translation research. Many studies of humor in AVT have concentrated on dubbing, where translators can adjust timing, voice delivery, and performance to match comedic rhythm (Chiaro,

2009). Subtitling, however, poses a different set of constraints: captions cannot change delivery or facial expression; they must instead work within strict limits of space and display time. The challenge of sustaining humor when bound to a maximum of two lines on screen and a few seconds of reading time has received comparatively little systematic attention. By analyzing *Johnny English* through captions, this study contributes to filling that gap, demonstrating how subtitling alone can preserve humor despite its constraints.

Finally, a growing body of research has examined fansubbing and machine-generated captions, often highlighting issues of quality, inconsistency, or the struggle to handle idiomatic and humorous language (Szarkowska et al., 2020; Agarwal et al., 2023). While these studies are valuable, they tend to emphasize technical efficiency or stakeholder perceptions rather than detailed theoretical analysis of equivalence. Very few have explicitly applied Baker's framework to examine humor translation in a multimodal context. This project responds directly to that absence by combining empirical scene analysis with Baker's equivalence model, showing how textual and pragmatic strategies work together to sustain laughter across cultural boundaries.

This study is therefore guided by two central questions. The first asks how textual and pragmatic equivalence interact in the subtitling of *Johnny English*. It explores not only how captions encapsulate humor from the original dialogue, but also how they convey situational context, character intention, and comic effect to the audience (Nida, 1964; Baker, 1992; Chiaro, 2009). The second question turns to the challenges of translating cultural and situational humor. It examines how strategies such as localization, adaptation, or omission affect the preservation of comic timing and irony. Supported by work on humor translation (Baker, 1992; Liu, 2015), this question considers how such strategies shape audience perception and enjoyment. Together, the two questions provide a clear framework for investigating captions as mediators of humor in audiovisual translation.

2. Literature Review

The field of audiovisual translation (AVT), and subtitling in particular, has become a central area of inquiry in translation studies. Scholars have increasingly recognized that subtitling is not merely a technical activity but a complex form of intercultural mediation that demands sensitivity to language, culture, and medium-specific constraints. The challenges are particularly acute when dealing with humor, which relies heavily on timing, irony, and cultural allusion. This review synthesizes relevant research on subtitle processing, cultural references, translation strategies, and humor translation, situating the present study within ongoing debates.

4.1 Cognitive Processing and Viewer Reception

Early concerns about subtitling often focused on whether reading subtitles would hinder viewers' comprehension or enjoyment of films. Research over the past two decades has largely dispelled these fears. Perego, Missier, and Bottiroli (2014) found that both younger and older adults could comfortably process subtitled films, even reporting enhanced engagement because subtitles provided linguistic access without detracting from visual attention. A later cross-national study by Perego et al. (2016) reinforced this finding, showing that comprehension levels remained consistently high across diverse demographic groups. These results align with Szarkowska and Gerber-Morón's (2018) eye-tracking research, which demonstrated that viewers are capable of

processing rapid subtitles without significant loss of comprehension. For comedy, where humor often depends on fast-paced delivery, this capacity is critical. Rapid subtitles, when synchronized with action and timing, can enhance rather than inhibit comic effect.

The viewer's cognitive response is also linked to subtitle design. Line length, segmentation, and condensation influence how easily audiences can follow the subtitles while attending to visual cues. Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2007) emphasize that subtitling must balance readability with brevity, a principle especially relevant in comedy, where punchlines are often short and sharply timed. Thus, subtitle processing research underscores that cognitive load is not inherently problematic; instead, poor subtitle design or mistimed captions are the greater risks.

4.2 Cultural References and the Translation of Humor

The translation of humor has long been recognized as a particularly demanding task because humor is frequently culture-specific. Chiaro (2009) notes that humor often relies on linguistic play, cultural references, and social knowledge, all of which may resist direct transfer. In subtitling, this challenge is magnified by spatial and temporal constraints. Sanatifar and Ayob (2022), studying Iranian films subtitled for international audiences, show how cultural references are either localized to resonate with viewers or left foreign to preserve authenticity. Both strategies have implications: localization can risk oversimplification, while foreignization may hinder comprehension.

Zhang, Mahfoodh, and Lin (2024) further explore the treatment of cultural references, comparing fansubbing and official subtitling in English–Mandarin contexts. Their findings suggest that official subtitlers tend to prioritize clarity and accessibility, while fansubbers often aim for fidelity to source culture, even if it challenges comprehension. These contrasting practices highlight the tension between audience accessibility and cultural authenticity, a tension that subtitlers of comedy must constantly negotiate.

In *Johnny English*, cultural stereotypes and parodic references are central to the humor, such as mockery of French sophistication or exaggerated portrayals of Japanese customs. Translating such humor requires more than literal transfer; it requires strategic decision-making about whether to domesticate the reference for target viewers or retain its foreign flavor for authenticity. This tension resonates with Venuti's (1995) domestication–foreignization debate, which remains relevant in evaluating how humor travels across cultures.

4.3 Translation Strategies in Subtitling

Beyond cultural references, scholars have examined specific strategies employed in subtitling to address constraints of space and time. Gottlieb (1992) identifies key strategies such as condensation, deletion, and paraphrase, each of which may be applied to fit captions within screen limits while preserving meaning. Szarkowska et al. (2016) emphasize that condensation is not necessarily a loss but can be a creative adaptation, ensuring readability while maintaining the essence of the dialogue. This is particularly important in comedy, where brevity and timing are integral to the joke.

Nan (2023) argues from a Skopos perspective that subtitling strategies must align with the purpose of the translation. For comedies, the overriding goal is not strict fidelity but the preservation of humor and entertainment value. Thus, strategies such as omission, adaptation, or reformulation may be justified if they preserve laughter. This

insight supports Baker's (1992) argument that equivalence is functional rather than absolute. In comedic contexts, functional equivalence may mean preserving the comic effect even at the expense of lexical accuracy.

4.4 Humor in Translation Studies

The study of humor in translation has expanded beyond AVT into broader theoretical debates. Delabastita (1996) examines wordplay, noting that puns often resist straightforward translation because they exploit the unique features of a language. Vandaele (2002) frames humor as a cognitive effect, emphasizing that it depends on audience recognition of incongruity or irony. These perspectives are crucial for subtitling, where humor must be re-created within severe temporal constraints.

In film translation, Chiaro (2009) underscores the centrality of context: a line may seem unfunny in isolation but becomes humorous when paired with visual action or situational irony. This is especially relevant in *Johnny English*, where much of the comedy arises from the clash between Johnny's self-perception as a competent spy and the reality of his incompetence. Translators must therefore capture not just the dialogue but the situational context that generates humor. Pragmatic strategies, such as highlighting irony or exaggeration, often become more important than textual fidelity.

4.5 Subtitling, Technology, and Evolving Practices

The rise of fansubbing and machine-assisted subtitling has also reshaped discussions of quality and reception. Szarkowska, Cintas, and Gerber-Morón (2020) note that viewers are increasingly discerning, expecting both linguistic accuracy and cultural nuance. Fansubbing communities often innovate in their treatment of humor, using notes, annotations, or creative renderings that exceed the conventions of professional subtitling. While such practices highlight audience demand for cultural richness, they also raise questions about consistency and readability.

At the same time, advances in machine translation pose new challenges. Neural machine translation can produce captions rapidly, but often struggles with idiomatic or humorous content (Agarwal et al., 2023). Post-editing by human translators remains essential, particularly when humor depends on irony, double meanings, or cultural cues. This intersection of technology and human creativity underscores the continuing relevance of theories like Baker's, which emphasize that equivalence involves judgment and negotiation rather than mechanical transfer.

4.6 Analytical Framework

This study is anchored in Mona Baker's (1992) theory of equivalence, a model that continues to inform translation studies more than three decades after its formulation. Baker proposed multiple levels of equivalence—word, above word, grammatical, textual, and pragmatic—each offering a way of understanding how meaning is carried across languages. For the purposes of this study, the textual and pragmatic dimensions are most relevant, since captions must both maintain cohesion with the unfolding visual narrative and preserve the humor that is often implied rather than directly stated.

4.6.1 Textual Equivalence: Cohesion, Coherence, and Comic Rhythm

Textual equivalence, in Baker's framework, refers to the way translated texts sustain cohesion and coherence. Cohesion is realized through linguistic devices such as

reference, conjunctions, ellipsis, and lexical ties (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). For example, when Johnny repeatedly refers to “the man” in the scene where he pretends to fight an invisible criminal, captions must preserve that cohesive thread to ensure that viewers can follow the narrative. Without such ties, the sequence of crashes and exclamations would appear chaotic rather than comic.

Coherence, by contrast, is not purely linguistic but interpretive: it depends on whether the audience can connect captions with the broader situational context (Nisa et al., 2017). In *Johnny English*, coherence requires captions to align with gestures, pauses, and visual punchlines. When Johnny hurls insults at the French and then turns to find Pascal Sauvage standing before him, the humor hinges on sequencing. The caption must be placed so that the insult precedes the reveal, allowing viewers to process the irony at the exact moment intended by the filmmakers.

Another vital aspect of textual equivalence in subtitling is rhythm. Szarkowska and Gerber-Morón (2018) demonstrate that viewers can read subtitles at high speed, provided that timing aligns with the rhythm of speech and action. In comedies, rhythm is inseparable from humor: punchlines lose their impact if captions appear too early or linger too long. Thus, subtitlers often adjust display times to synchronize captions with comic timing. In the sushi scene, Johnny’s mangled Japanese toast must appear just as the audience sees the confused reaction of his hosts; otherwise, the mismatch would undermine the humor. Timing here is not a technical afterthought but an integral part of textual equivalence.

Condensation techniques also play a role. Because subtitles are limited to two lines of text and must remain on screen for only a few seconds, translators often abbreviate dialogue. In Baker’s terms, this is not a loss but a strategic means of preserving equivalence by ensuring readability. Szarkowska et al. (2016) emphasize that condensation, when well executed, allows humor to survive by stripping away non-essential words while retaining comic essence. In *Johnny English*, lines such as “I’m always careful” remain intact while longer explanatory sentences are shortened, enabling the humor to coexist with the visual gag of Johnny hitting his head.

4.6.2 Pragmatic Equivalence: Implicature, Irony, and Cultural Resonance

Pragmatic equivalence shifts the focus from textual cohesion to context and inference. Grice’s (1975) theory of implicature is central here. According to Grice, speakers often flout conversational maxims—of quality, quantity, relation, or manner—not to confuse but to generate meaning beyond the literal. In comedy, such flouting is routine. When Johnny insists “I’m always careful” moments before injuring himself, the caption carries an implicature that contradicts the spoken claim. The humor arises not from the words themselves but from their pragmatic clash with the visual action.

Irony provides another layer of pragmatic equivalence. Szarkowska and Gerber-Morón (2018) argue that irony works by creating a gap between what is said and what is meant, a gap that audiences must recognize and bridge. For subtitlers, the challenge is to preserve this gap within the confines of short captions. In the scene where Pascal Sauvage remarks that the French are “the best waiters in the world,” the caption must signal sarcasm rather than sincerity. A literal rendering would flatten the line, while a pragmatic translation preserves the ironic tone, allowing audiences to perceive the intended humor.

Cultural references also fall under pragmatic equivalence. As Lu (2025) notes, humor often draws on culturally specific knowledge that may not be shared by all

audiences. In *Johnny English*, exaggerated portrayals of national stereotypes—the French as arrogant, the Japanese as inscrutable—must be negotiated carefully. Subtitlers face a choice: adapt these references to make them accessible (domestication) or retain their foreign character (foreignization). Either strategy involves pragmatic decisions about what target audiences will find humorous, echoing Venuti's (1995) broader debate on translation ethics.

Pragmatic equivalence also involves managing communicative breakdowns, which are themselves sources of humor. The sushi scene illustrates this vividly. Johnny's garbled toast is humorous precisely because it fails to communicate; his hosts are shocked not by what he intends but by what he inadvertently says. Translating this requires a caption that preserves the pragmatic failure rather than correcting it. If the line were sanitized into polite Japanese, the humor would evaporate. By foregrounding the miscommunication, the caption preserves the comic effect for the target audience.

4.6.3 Interplay of Textual and Pragmatic Strategies

Although Baker separates textual and pragmatic equivalence for analytical clarity, in practice they often converge. In *Johnny English*, many captions achieve their effect by combining the two. The truncated caption “flo– or,” for instance, exemplifies textual equivalence by mirroring Johnny's fall in its broken form, while simultaneously achieving pragmatic irony by undercutting his attempt at authority. This layered strategy ensures that the humor is experienced both structurally and contextually.

The interaction of textual and pragmatic equivalence also highlights the multimodal nature of subtitles. Captions are not independent texts but parts of a larger semiotic system that includes image, sound, and gesture. Their effectiveness depends on aligning linguistic choices with visual and auditory cues. As Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2007) observe, subtitling is always multimodal, requiring translators to think across modes. Baker's categories, when applied in this context, illuminate how equivalence is negotiated not only between source and target languages but between semiotic systems.

3. Research Method

4.1 Research Design and Rationale

This study adopts a qualitative, film-text case study of *Johnny English*, focusing on how captions translate humor through Mona Baker's textual and pragmatic equivalence. A qualitative design is appropriate because the object of inquiry is not frequency but function—how cohesion, rhythm, implicature, irony, and cultural allusion are negotiated so that the target audience can still “get the joke.” The design privileges close reading of scenes in their multimodal setting (image, dialogue, sound effects, on-screen timing).

The corpus comprises thirty-five captioned sequences sampled across the film. Scenes were selected if (a) the humor depended on timing or sequencing, (b) the humor relied on irony/implicature or cultural reference, or (c) the caption track included descriptive cues (e.g., sound effects) that helped stage the gag. Sequences whose humor was purely visual (with no captioned contribution) were excluded unless the caption track supplied essential cues that shaped interpretation (e.g., “(toilet flushes)”, “(coughs)”). The unit of analysis is a scene-bound “micro-event”: the moment in which the comic trigger is set up and released (setup → cue → punchline), aligned to the relevant caption(s).

4.2 Data Collection and Preparation

The process of collecting data for this study was carefully designed to capture how captions mediate humor in *Johnny English*. The first step involved extracting the official caption track from the film and aligning it with precise timecodes. This allowed the analysis to preserve details such as speaker changes, interruptions, ellipses, and even non-speech cues like laughter or crashing sounds, which often play a role in comic delivery.

Once the captions were aligned, the film was segmented into what is called “micro-events.” These were moments where a comic sequence is set up and resolved—whether through a punchline, a gag, or an ironic twist. Segmentation was guided both by technical boundaries (camera cuts, changes of speaker) and by humor beats (setup and release). For each micro-event, still images and timecodes were noted, creating anchors that made it easier to revisit the scene during analysis.

The next stage was contextual transcription. Each micro-event was transcribed in two layers: the original spoken dialogue (verbatim, including false starts, hesitations, or stumbles) and the corresponding captions as they appeared on screen. To provide context, a short description of the accompanying action or sound effects was also included. This step ensured that the analysis did not isolate captions from their multimodal environment. All of this material was organized into a structured log sheet. For every entry, the log recorded the scene ID, timecodes, original line, caption, action/sound description, a preliminary note on the type of equivalence involved, and early observations about the comic effect.

4.3 Instruments and Materials

Several instruments and resources supported the analysis. The film itself served as the audiovisual reference point, while the caption provides the textual material under investigation. An annotation workspace, consisting of spreadsheets and qualitative memoing tools, was used to log entries, track coding decisions, and refine observations. Finally, a bunch of text recorded was developed and categorized during the process. This contained operational definitions and decision rules for identifying cohesion devices, rhythm and timing features, implicature types, irony and sarcasm cues, handling of cultural references, as well as strategies like condensation or omission.

4.4 Coding and Categorizing Development

The coding scheme drew on Baker’s model, with the primary focus on textual and pragmatic equivalence. Textual equivalence was operationalized through observable linguistic features such as reference chains (“this,” “that”), conjunctions and sequencing, ellipsis or truncation, lexical repetition, and, importantly for comedy, the timing of caption appearance and disappearance. Pragmatic equivalence was coded through categories of Gricean implicature—quality, quantity, relation, and manner—along with irony and sarcasm markers, cultural allusions, euphemism and dysphemism, and instances of communicative failure such as mispronunciation or malapropism.

The categorization was piloted on a small subset of eight scenes to test clarity and consistency. Based on this pilot, revisions were made, particularly regarding when to classify a case as “textual + pragmatic” rather than forcing it into one or the other. Ambiguous cases were always accompanied by analytic memos explaining the decision, which created an audit trail of reasoning. Once refined, the codebook was applied to the full corpus.

4.5 Analytical Steps

The analysis proceeded in seven broad stages. First, segmentation and alignment confirmed the boundaries of each micro-event and checked caption timing against the visual beat of the gag. Second, dual transcription captured both source dialogue and the caption rendering, while also noting descriptive cues such as “(gasps)” or “(vase crashes).” Third, a first cycle of coding labeled each case as textual, pragmatic, or a combination, with short supporting notes. Fourth, analytic memos were written to explain how the caption contributed to sustaining humor—for instance, “truncation mirrors fall; irony undermines authority.”

The fifth stage involved patterning, where coded cases were grouped into clusters: pure sequencing, sequencing with irony, cultural allusion, communicative failure, and physical comedy supported by descriptive captions. Sixth, scene-level synthesis involved writing narrative accounts of how captions mediated humor in each cluster. Finally, these narratives were integrated with Baker’s theoretical categories and mapped back to the two research questions, allowing the findings to be framed in relation to both theory and empirical data.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

The analysis demonstrates that captions in *Johnny English* rely on a dynamic combination of textual and pragmatic strategies to maintain humor across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Out of the thirty-five sequences examined, textual equivalence was particularly significant in ensuring cohesion, sequencing, and narrative rhythm, while pragmatic equivalence played a central role in preserving implicature, irony, and cultural resonance. To capture the range of strategies, eight representative examples are highlighted in Table 1.

Scene	Source Dialogue/Action	Caption (Target)	Type of Equivalence	Effect/Observation
12	Johnny insults the French, then turns to face Pascal Sauvage	“Sorry, can I help?” / “Jumped-up Frenchman.”	Textual	Sequencing of insult → pause → recognition preserves timing-based irony.
15	Johnny pretends to fight a criminal behind closed doors; loud crashes and shouts are heard	“The man’s a maniac!” / (Vase crashes)	Textual + Pragmatic	Textual sequencing sustains narrative; pragmatic irony reveals false bravado.
25	Johnny mispronounces Japanese toast in an obscene way	“May all your daughters be born with three bottoms.”	Pragmatic	Humor relies on failed communication and absurd mistranslation, not literal accuracy.
30	Johnny declares “I’m always careful” before hitting his head	“I’m always careful.” / (Hits head on pipe)	Pragmatic	Captions convey verbal irony contradicted by physical action.
19	Johnny explains suspects didn’t enter through the floor but falls mid-sentence	“They didn’t come in through the floor.”	Textual + Pragmatic	Truncated caption mirrors his fall (textual), undermining his authority (pragmatic irony).
13	Pascal Sauvage sarcastically remarks about his country	“The French are, after all, fantastic waiters, the best in the world.”	Pragmatic	Sarcasm conveyed through pragmatic equivalence; literal rendering would flatten the humor.

Scene	Source Dialogue/Action	Caption (Target)	Type of Equivalence	Effect/Observation
35	Johnny and Lorna almost kiss, but Johnny presses the eject button and she is launched out of the car	“Johnny!” (screams)	Textual + Pragmatic	Textual sequencing of romance → chaos; pragmatic irony subverts audience expectation.
31	Johnny stuck in a sewer, toilet flushes above, sewage falls on him	(Disgusted coughs; sewerage falls)	Pragmatic	Physical comedy conveyed visually; captions reinforce irony of situation.

Table 1. Representative examples of textual and pragmatic equivalence in captions from *Johnny English*

4.1.1 Purely Textual Equivalence

Scene 12 provides the clearest example of humor preserved solely through textual equivalence. The comic effect rests entirely on sequencing: Johnny, full of self-importance, delivers a scathing insult about the French, only to pause and turn around to find Pascal Sauvage standing directly behind him. The audience laughs because of the ordering of the events—insult, pause, recognition, embarrassment. The captions reproduce this sequence faithfully, ensuring that viewers in the target language receive the humor at the exact intended moment. There is no need for additional cultural explanation or implied meaning; the humor is self-contained within the textual arrangement. This shows how captions can achieve comic equivalence by maintaining cohesion and coherence, aligning with Baker’s view of textual equivalence as the management of ties that hold discourse together.

4.1.2 Hybrid Cases: Textual + Pragmatic Equivalence

Other scenes demonstrate how textual and pragmatic equivalence often work together. Scene 15, for instance, is built on Johnny’s false bravado. He strides into a room, insisting that his assistant guard the door while he deals with a supposed criminal. The audience hears loud crashes and breaking objects from behind the closed door. The captions reinforce this by transcribing the sequence of noise (“(crashes)”) followed by Johnny’s exclamation, “The man’s a maniac!” This maintains textual cohesion by matching the order of events with the order of captions, while the pragmatic irony emerges when Johnny stumbles out, disheveled, pretending he has triumphed. The captions thus preserve the humor by balancing narrative order with implicature, allowing viewers to see through Johnny’s pretensions.

Scene 19 is another striking example. Johnny begins a deduction in a serious tone, declaring, “They didn’t come in through the flo—,” only to fall before completing the word. The caption mirrors this break with a truncated form, “flo— or,” preserving textual equivalence by reproducing the disruption in speech. Yet the real humor lies in pragmatic irony: Johnny’s fall undermines his attempt to appear intelligent, and the caption signals this collapse to the audience. The combination of textual form and pragmatic content demonstrates how captions can preserve both structure and irony in one stroke.

Scene 35 also blends textual and pragmatic strategies. In this romantic setup, Johnny leans toward Lorna for a kiss, and the audience anticipates a tender moment. At the precise climax, however, Johnny accidentally presses the eject button, sending Lorna flying into the air. The caption “Johnny!” —her scream— anchors the action linguistically, while the sequencing of “romance → chaos” sustains textual equivalence.

Pragmatically, the humor lies in the subversion of audience expectation: a moment that should confirm romance instead collapses into slapstick disaster. The interplay of sequencing and irony makes the scene one of the most memorable examples of humor mediated by captions.

4.1.3 Pragmatic Equivalence as the Driver of Humor

Several scenes demonstrate that pragmatic equivalence alone is sufficient to carry humor across languages. Scene 25 illustrates this clearly. Johnny attempts a Japanese toast, intending to impress his company with cultural sophistication, but instead mangles the phrase into an obscene and absurd sentence: “May all your daughters be born with three bottoms.” The caption deliberately preserves this bizarre miscommunication, emphasizing the failure of communication rather than correcting it. Pragmatic equivalence here ensures that the target audience laughs at Johnny’s incompetence, even if they do not understand the original Japanese words.

Scene 30 is similar in its reliance on irony. Johnny declares with confidence, “I’m always careful,” just before hitting his head on a pipe. The caption faithfully records his words, but the humor arises from the contradiction between the statement and the visual action. Pragmatic equivalence allows the audience to process this irony: what Johnny says and what actually happens are diametrically opposed, and that dissonance is the essence of the joke.

Scene 13 depends on pragmatic choices to preserve sarcasm. When Pascal Sauvage remarks, “The French are, after all, fantastic waiters, the best in the world,” the literal words would, if translated plainly, sound like genuine praise. The humor, however, comes from the sarcastic undertone, which must be conveyed in the caption to avoid misinterpretation. Pragmatic equivalence ensures that viewers recognize the intended irony rather than taking the line at face value.

Scene 31 represents physical comedy where captions reinforce the visual gag. Johnny is trapped in a sewer, coughing and gagging, when a toilet flushes above and sewage pours down on him. Although the humor is primarily slapstick, captions such as “(coughs)” and “(toilet flushes)” provide pragmatic equivalence by anchoring the scene for viewers who may be processing quickly between text and image. These small cues ensure that the irony of Johnny’s humiliation is accessible, even to viewers unfamiliar with the visual conventions of slapstick.

By considering these examples together, it becomes evident that captions in *Johnny English* operate across a spectrum: sometimes relying purely on textual equivalence (as in Scene 12), sometimes dominated by pragmatic strategies (Scenes 25, 30, 13, 31), and often blending the two (Scenes 15, 19, 35). This distribution underscores the flexibility of captions as tools of translation. They do not merely reproduce dialogue but actively orchestrate timing, implicature, and cultural nuance. Textual strategies guarantee that the comic structure remains coherent and rhythmically aligned, while pragmatic strategies ensure that the humor embedded in irony, sarcasm, and failure of communication is preserved. Together, they allow the film’s comedy to travel across languages without losing its punch.

4.2 Discussion

The results of this study shed light on the central questions guiding the research, namely the interplay of textual and pragmatic equivalence in humorous subtitling, and the challenges of translating cultural and situational humor in *Johnny English*. By

examining representative scenes, the findings illustrate not only how captions convey humor across languages, but also how subtitlers negotiate between fidelity to source dialogue and the functional demands of comic timing, irony, and audience reception.

4.2.1 The Interplay of Textual and Pragmatic Equivalence

The first research question asked how textual and pragmatic equivalence interact in the subtitle translation of humor and what this means for audience comprehension and enjoyment. The findings suggest that textual and pragmatic strategies rarely operate in isolation; instead, they frequently overlap, producing layered captions that both preserve narrative structure and transmit implicit meaning. Scene 12 provided one of the rare instances of pure textual equivalence. Here, the humor depended entirely on sequencing—the insult, the pause, and the sudden recognition of Pascal Sauvage. No cultural knowledge or implied meaning was required; the joke worked because the captions faithfully preserved the order of events. This confirms Baker’s (1992) description of textual equivalence as the maintenance of cohesion and coherence across translation. In this case, timing itself was the comic trigger, and captions ensured the timing was preserved.

Most other examples, however, showed a fusion of textual and pragmatic strategies. Scene 19, for example, where Johnny’s speech is cut off mid-word as he falls, demonstrates this interplay vividly. Textually, the truncated caption “flo– or” reproduces the disruption in speech, maintaining cohesion between spoken words and visual action. Pragmatically, the humor arises because Johnny’s attempt at intelligence is undercut by his physical clumsiness. This illustrates Chiaro’s (2009) observation that humor often depends on context and incongruity, and captions must be sensitive to both. The textual form gives the audience the broken word, while pragmatic equivalence signals the irony of his failed authority.

This convergence underscores a broader point: equivalence in subtitling humor is not a matter of choosing between textual or pragmatic categories, but of negotiating their overlap. Humor in *Johnny English* often arises from the tension between what is said and what is shown, and captions must mediate that multimodal relationship. By combining textual sequencing with pragmatic implicature, captions allow viewers to both follow the narrative and perceive the irony embedded within it.

These findings resonate with Nida’s (1964) notion of dynamic equivalence, which emphasizes the effect of translation on the audience rather than literal fidelity. In the case of humorous captions, the ultimate test is not whether the words match but whether the audience laughs. Captions that preserve comic timing and irony succeed because they achieve functional equivalence at the level of audience response. Baker’s categories help explain how this is done: textual strategies align events coherently, while pragmatic strategies carry the ironies that spark laughter.

4.2.2 Cultural and Situational Challenges

The second research question explored the difficulties subtitlers face in rendering cultural and situational humor, and the impact of different strategies on comedic effect. The analysis revealed several recurring challenges. One major difficulty is cultural reference, which often has no direct equivalent in the target language. In Scene 13, Pascal Sauvage remarks sarcastically that the French are “the best waiters in the world.” A literal translation might suggest genuine admiration, completely missing the sarcasm. Pragmatic equivalence requires that the caption communicate tone as much

as content, signaling to the audience that the remark is ironic. This reflects Delabastita's (1996) argument that humor, especially wordplay and irony, is highly context-dependent and cannot be reduced to surface meaning. Captions therefore must sometimes depart from literal wording to preserve pragmatic force.

Another challenge is communicative failure as humor, vividly illustrated in Scene 25 when Johnny mangles a Japanese toast into the absurd phrase "May all your daughters be born with three bottoms." The humor lies in the failed attempt at cultural sophistication, and any attempt to "fix" or normalize the line would destroy the joke. Here, captions must deliberately foreground the error. This is a case where Venuti's (1995) notion of foreignization intersects with pragmatic equivalence: rather than smoothing over the cultural misstep, the caption highlights it, preserving the incongruity that makes the moment funny.

Situational humor also poses difficulties. In Scene 30, Johnny asserts that he is "always careful" just before hitting his head. The humor arises from irony through contradiction, which relies on the audience perceiving the gap between his confident statement and his clumsy action. Pragmatic equivalence ensures that this irony is legible: the caption faithfully transcribes his words, trusting the visual action to supply the contradiction. As Vandaele (2002) notes, humor is often a cognitive effect based on incongruity, and captions succeed here by giving the audience just enough linguistic material to recognize the mismatch.

Physical comedy presents another layer of challenge. In Scene 31, where Johnny is drenched by sewage, the humor is largely visual, but captions such as "(toilet flushes)" and "(coughs)" add pragmatic cues that reinforce the gag. Without these, some audience members might miss details in the rapid action. Pragmatic equivalence here ensures that the audience not only sees but interprets the scene as humorous. This supports Díaz-Cintas and Remael's (2007) view that captions are not supplementary but integral to the multimodal construction of meaning.

4.2.3 Implications for Translation Theory and Practice

Taken together, the findings suggest several broader implications. Theoretically, they affirm the continuing relevance of Baker's model. Textual and pragmatic equivalence, though conceptualized separately, are best understood as interactive and overlapping in audiovisual contexts. This expands Baker's framework beyond print texts, demonstrating its applicability to multimodal humor where timing, gesture, and sound intersect with language. The study also reinforces Nida's and Chiaro's insights that the audience's response—laughter—is the ultimate measure of equivalence in humor translation.

Practically, the analysis highlights the need for subtitlers to embrace creative freedom within the constraints of time and space. Strategies such as condensation, omission, and adaptation are not shortcomings but necessary tools for preserving humor. When Johnny's Japanese toast is rendered as an absurd mistranslation, or when sarcasm is carefully signaled in Pascal's remark, the subtitler prioritizes effect over literalness. This aligns with Skopos theory, which emphasizes that translation choices must serve the purpose of the text—in this case, to make the audience laugh.

The findings also emphasize the centrality of the audience. Humor succeeds only if the audience recognizes it, meaning captions must anticipate how viewers will interpret implicatures and cultural cues. Subtitlers must therefore act as cultural mediators, ensuring that irony and parody are accessible without oversimplification.

This echoes Venuti's reminder that translation is never neutral but always involves ethical and cultural decisions.

Finally, the analysis has pedagogical implications. Training subtitlers should not focus solely on technical accuracy but also on developing sensitivity to timing, irony, and cultural nuance. Subtitlers must learn to see captions not as mechanical transcriptions but as creative translations that bridge languages, cultures, and modes.

5. Conclusion

This study examined how captions in *Johnny English* translate humor through the dual lenses of textual and pragmatic equivalence as outlined by Mona Baker. Analysis of thirty-five sequences revealed that captions function not as passive transcriptions but as active translations that negotiate between dialogue, image, and audience response. Humor was preserved not through literal replication but through the alignment of textual cohesion and pragmatic nuance, ensuring that laughter crossed linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Theoretically, the study reaffirms the continuing relevance of Baker's equivalence model within the multimodal landscape of audiovisual translation. The interaction of textual and pragmatic equivalence observed here supports the view that equivalence operates as a negotiated process rather than a fixed correspondence. In humorous contexts, captions must balance the textual economy of timing and space with the pragmatic need to convey irony, sarcasm, or parody. This flexibility demonstrates how Baker's framework can be productively extended from written to audiovisual texts, highlighting the adaptability of equivalence in dynamic, multimodal settings.

Practically, the findings underscore the creative and interpretive role of subtitlers in comedy translation. Far from being technical transcribers, subtitlers act as mediators of rhythm, tone, and cultural resonance. Strategies such as condensation, adaptation, and omission emerged as functional tools that maintain equivalence under the spatial-temporal constraints of AVT. For practitioners, this highlights the need for a dual competence—linguistic precision paired with sensitivity to performance and audience reception.

Pedagogically, the study calls for translator training programs to emphasize humor as a cultural and pragmatic construct. Subtitling should be taught as a creative act of interpretation, not merely a technical task. Students should learn to negotiate between textual brevity and pragmatic expressiveness, understanding how caption choices shape both laughter and comprehension. In this sense, *Johnny English* demonstrates that subtitles are not peripheral additions but integral to how humor travels, reminding us that translation itself is a performative act that keeps comedic meaning alive across languages and cultures.

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OPTIMIZING READING COMPREHENSION IN VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL PHASE F STUDENTS: THE ROLE OF VERBAL-LINGUISTIC INTELLIGENCE AND TEACHER COMPETENCE THROUGH THE UNDERSTANDING BY DESIGN APPROACH

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Abstract

Reading comprehension is a fundamental literacy skill that determines students' academic success and readiness for the workforce. However, Indonesian students' low performance in international assessments highlights the urgency of addressing reading literacy, particularly at the vocational high school level where learners are preparing for internships and direct entry into employment. This study examines the influence of verbal-linguistic intelligence and teacher competence, within the framework of the Understanding by Design (UbD) approach, on students' reading comprehension, with learning motivation considered as a mediating variable. A quantitative research design was applied, involving 104 students from a Vocational High School (Phase F), selected using Slovin's formula and simple random sampling. Data were collected through tests and questionnaires and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling with the Partial Least Squares method. The findings demonstrate that both verbal-linguistic intelligence and teacher competence have a significant positive effect on learning motivation. These factors also showed a positive influence on reading comprehension, although their direct influence had weak significance. Importantly, learning motivation is confirmed as a strong mediator, strengthening the impact of teacher competence and verbal-linguistic intelligence on reading comprehension. This study underscores the importance of fostering students' linguistic capacity and enhancing teacher competence through the UbD approach, as these efforts are more effective when supported by high learning motivation.

Keywords: *learning motivation; reading comprehension; teacher competence; verbal-linguistic intelligence*

1. Introduction

Reading comprehension is an essential component of literacy that serves as a valuable life skill in today's era of global competition. However, according to the latest

results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) released on December 5, 2023, Indonesian students scored an average of only 359 points in reading comprehension. It is still far below the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) average of 476 points (OECD, 2023). The low PISA results highlight a major challenge in improving the quality of education, particularly in the area of reading literacy. The persistently low level of reading literacy not only affects students' academic achievement but also influences graduates' readiness to enter the workforce, especially for those coming from vocational schools (Rahmadani et al., 2023).

The urgency of improving literacy at the vocational high school level, particularly in Phase F (Grades XI and XII), has become a critical concern, considering that Grade XI students are entering their internship period, while Grade XII students are being prepared to graduate and transition directly into the workforce (Depdiknas, 2004). Data from the National Education Report shows that the reading literacy skills of vocational high school students only reached 63.48% (Kemdikbud, 2024). Meanwhile, a good literacy level is defined as achieving at least 70% in accordance with the indicators of the National Education Report.

The increasingly competitive job market requires individuals to develop strong reading and comprehension skills so they can understand work instructions and enhance communication effectiveness. Unfortunately, the teaching of reading comprehension is still far from optimal (Sugandi & Asih, 2019). Research conducted in several vocational high schools confirms that students' low reading comprehension is driven by the limited variety of teaching methods, the lack of effective learning strategies, and weak reading motivation, all of which hinder their ability to understand and connect the content of texts. (Kirana, 2025; Sastri, 2021).

Therefore, the urgency of this study lies in the strategic need to enhance the reading comprehension skills of vocational high school students, particularly those in Phase F who are entering a transitional stage toward the world of work. To address this need, it is essential to explore the various factors that may influence students' ability to comprehend texts. One of the key factors affecting reading comprehension is verbal-linguistic intelligence. Dewi & Wilany (2019) It is stated that there is a significant relationship between verbal-linguistic intelligence and reading ability. Strong intellectual capacity enables individuals to learn more effectively and to further develop their thinking skills. The potential of verbal-linguistic intelligence grows in line with the increase in students' learning motivation, since motivation is strongly and significantly connected to cognitive ability (Misliyanti et al., 2024). In addition, students' success in reading classes cannot be separated from the role and competence of their teachers (Adnan Hakim, 2015). Teachers play a crucial role in creating meaningful learning experiences. The teaching approach currently applied by educators aligns with the training materials in the Teacher Professional Education Program, namely an approach known as *Understanding by Design* (UbD). UbD emphasizes the importance of conceptual understanding and the development of thinking skills that can be applied across various contexts, rather than merely focusing on the mastery of facts (Sutanto, 2024).

Considering the various factors that influence reading comprehension, it is essential to establish a more specific research focus in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of how each factor contributes to improving students' reading comprehension skills. To this end, the present study is framed around two key areas of inquiry: (1) How the partial effects of verbal-linguistic intelligence and teacher competence, when applied through the UbD approach, influence the reading comprehension of Phase F students; and (2) To what extent learning motivation contributes as a mediating variable in the relationship between these two factors and students' reading comprehension. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of a reading literacy instructional model that is more contextual, practical, and aligned with learners' needs.

2. Literature Review

Reading cannot be separated from comprehension, as comprehension is the outcome of an effective reading process (Dewi & Wilany, 2019). Reading comprehension can be optimized when students are provided with examples to complete skill-based activities, given plenty of guided practice with feedback from the teacher, and encouraged to continue applying those skills independently (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). In this study, students' reading comprehension was assessed using test items designed according to the levels of the revised Bloom's Taxonomy by Anderson and Krathwohl, namely remembering (C1), understanding (C2), applying (C3), analyzing (C4), evaluating (C5), and creating (C6) (Larsen et al., 2022).

Internal factors that contribute to reading comprehension include self-potential, particularly multiple intelligences, a concept introduced by Howard Gardner. Each individual possesses nine distinct types of intelligence, which can continue to develop over time (Rofifah & Aflah, 2023). From the nine types of intelligence, this study focuses on verbal-linguistic intelligence. Verbal-linguistic intelligence refers to the ability to analyze information and produce works that involve spoken and written language, such as speeches, books, and memos (Davis et al., 2011).

The potential of verbal-linguistic intelligence develops in line with the increase in students' learning motivation, as learning motivation has a strong and significant relationship with thinking ability (Misliyanti et al., 2024). The higher a student's motivation, the greater the opportunity to sharpen their language skills both spoken and written as well as their ability to understand and process information critically. Learning motivation itself can be categorized into two main types: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation stems from within the student, such as curiosity, personal interest in a subject, or the sense of satisfaction gained from completing a task. In contrast, extrinsic motivation arises from external factors, such as rewards, encouragement from teachers or parents, and competition with peers. Both forms of motivation play an equally important role in fostering a supportive learning environment for the development of verbal-linguistic intelligence.

Students' success in reading classes cannot be separated from the role and competence of their teachers (Adnan Hakim, 2015). Teachers must create a learning environment that centers on students' understanding so that the learning objectives can be more effectively achieved (Hidayat et al., 2024). There are various

approaches to teaching and learning, one of which is Understanding by Design (UbD). UbD is an instructional framework based on the principle of backward design, introduced by Wiggins and McTighe in 1999. The backward design model consists of three stages: identifying the desired learning outcomes, determining acceptable evidence of achievement, and planning the learning experiences and instruction. UbD emphasizes the importance of conceptual understanding and critical thinking skills that can be applied across different contexts, rather than merely focusing on the mastery of facts and procedures (Sutanto, 2024).

The application of UbD in lesson planning for reading classes follows three main stages. The first step is to set clear learning goals, emphasizing that reading is not merely about memorization but about transferring knowledge. The second step involves designing assessments, such as contextual quizzes, to measure students' comprehension. The final step is creating meaningful learning activities in which the teacher ensures that the process is engaging and encourages students to learn independently through authentic performance tasks. At this stage, the teacher provides guiding questions to stimulate critical thinking and help students analyze the text comprehensively. In addition, regular reflection is essential to continuously improve the quality of the learning process (Sariyanti et al., 2024).

3. Research Method

This study employs a quantitative approach. The quantitative method is applied to systematically test the theory by analyzing the relationships among the existing variables. (Creswell, John W, 2018). The type of research employed in this study is associative or correlational research (Yusuf, 2017). This study aims to test the relationship between independent variables consisting of verbal-linguistic intelligence (X1) and X2 namely teacher competence with the Understanding by Design (UbD) approach, on the dependent variable of students' reading comprehension skills (Y) with learning motivation (Z) as an intervening variable.

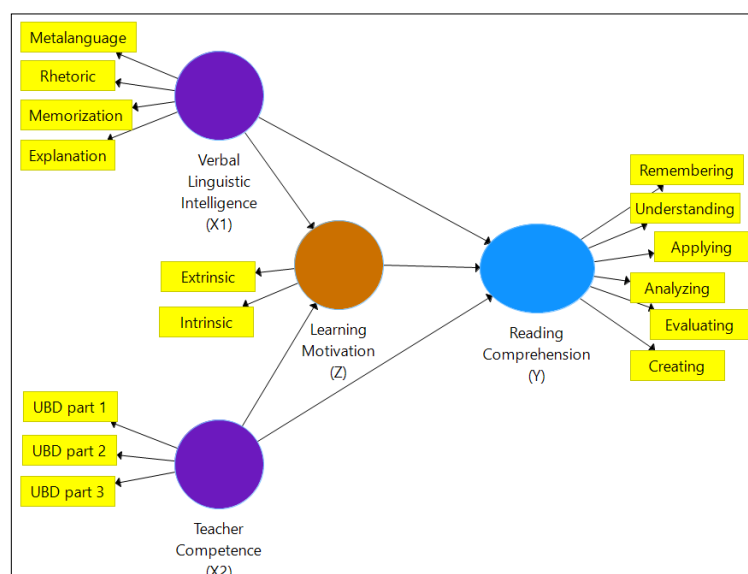


Figure 1. Conseptual Framework

The research will be conducted in 2025 at one of the Phase F schools. The population of this study consists of all Phase F students at SMK Muhammadiyah. The sample was determined to be 104 students, calculated using the Slovin formula. The next step was to employ simple random sampling to select and identify the participants who would serve as samples for each educational level (Yusuf, 2017).

The research instruments consisted of a test instrument in the form of multiple-choice questions and a non-test instrument in the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaire employed a four-point Likert scale with the following options: (1) Never, (2) Rarely, (3) Often, and (4) Always.

No	Variabel	Jenis Instrumen	Item
1	Y (reading comprehension)	Test	A set of 15 multiple choice questions
2	X1 (verbal-linguistic intelligence)	questioner	8 Questions
3	X2 (teacher competence through the UbD approach)	Questioner	9 Questions
4	Z (learning motivation)	Questioner	8 question

Source: Researchers' analysis

Table 1. Research Instrument

All research instruments were developed under the guidance of expert validators, followed by validity and reliability testing using the SmartPLS analysis tool. The outer model analysis was carried out to determine the extent to which the indicators represent the latent variables, thereby ensuring that the measurement meets the standards of validity and reliability. (Hair et al., 2017). There are three approaches, the first being the convergent validity test. An indicator is considered to have convergent validity if it has a loading factor value of ≥ 0.70 and an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of ≥ 0.50 . These values indicate that more than half of the variance in the indicators is explained by their construct. Based on Tables 3 and 4, it can be concluded that the indicators in this study meet the criteria for convergent validity.

	Verbal Linguistic Intelligence (X1)	Teacher Competence (X2)	Learning Motivation (Z)	Reading Comprehension (Y)
Metalanguage	0.726			
Rhetoric	0.747			
Memorization	0.752			
Explanation	0.764			
UBD part 1		0.858		
UBD part 2		0.769		
UBD part 3		0.809		
Extrinsic			0.848	
Intrinsic			0.867	
Remembering				0.712
Understanding				0.737
Applying				0.776
Analyzing				0.820
Evaluating				0.848

	Verbal Linguistic Intelligence (X1)	Teacher Competence (X2)	Learning Motivation (Z)	Reading Comprehension (Y)
Creating				0.710

Source: SmartPLS 3 processed results

Table 2. Loading Factor

	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Verbal Linguistic Intelligence (X1)	0.559
Teacher Competence (X2)	0.661
Learning Motivation (Z)	0.735
Reading Comprehension (Y)	0.591

Source: SmartPLS 3 processed results

Table 3. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

The second stage is the discriminant validity test. One of the indicators used to assess discriminant validity is the Fornell-Larcker criterion, which states that the AVE value of each construct must be higher than its correlation with other constructs. Based on Table 5 below, it can be concluded that the indicators in this study meet the requirements for discriminant validity.

	Teacher Competence (X2)	Learning Motivation (Z)	Reading Comprehension (Y)	Verbal Linguistic Intelligence (X1)
Teacher Competence (X2)	0.813			
Learning Motivation (Z)	0.554	0.858		
Reading Comprehension (Y)	-0.089	0.045	0.769	
Verbal Linguistic Intelligence (X1)	0.298	0.446	0.163	0.748

Source: SmartPLS 3 processed results

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker

The final stage is the reliability test. This test was carried out by analyzing the Composite Reliability (CR) value. A CR value of ≥ 0.70 is expected, as it indicates internal consistency among the indicators and reflects the reliability of the study. Based on Table 6 below, it can be concluded that the indicators in this research are reliable.

	Composite Reliability
Verbal Linguistic Intelligence (X1)	0.835
Teacher Competence (X2)	0.854
Learning Motivation (Z)	0.848
Reading Comprehension (Y)	0.896

Source: SmartPLS 3 processed results

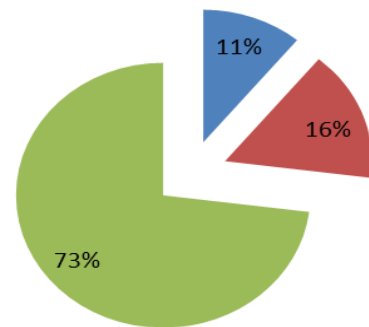
Table 5. Composite Reliability (CR)

All validity and reliability tests were successfully passed, indicating that the entire set of research instruments is dependable and suitable for further analysis. The data analysis technique in this quantitative study employed inferential statistical analysis through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using the Partial Least Squares approach (PLS-SEM), processed with the assistance of SmartPLS software. SEM makes it possible to test the relationships among latent variables, namely variables that cannot be measured directly (Setiabudhi et al, 2025, h.17). This analysis was chosen because of the model's complexity, which involves several latent constructs

4. Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Score Range	Students	%	Category
1-5	11 students	11%	Low reading comprehension
6-10	17 students	16%	Middle reading comprehension
11-15	76 students	73%	High reading comprehension
Total	104 students	100%	



Source: Processed data

Table 6. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Literacy achievement at this vocational high school is above the national education report's target, which is set at a minimum of 70%. The reading comprehension scores of students in the SMK Phase F program significantly improved to a proficient literacy level of 73% following an intervention using the Understanding by Design (UbD) approach. Teacher competence in teaching using the UbD approach is a strategic approach in teaching reading. The Understanding by Design (UbD) approach positions teachers not only to teach what to read but also to guide students in developing their literacy skills by honing their understanding and interpretation of information.

4.2 Hypothesis Testing

	Original Sample	P Values	Interpretation
Verbal Linguistic Intelligence (X1)→Learning Motivation(Z)	0.309	0.000	Positive effect as $p < 0.05$
Teacher Competence (X2) → Learning Motivation (Z)	0.462	0.000	Positive effect as $p < 0.05$
Verbal Linguistic Intelligence (X1) → Reading Comprehension (Y)	0.390	0.062	Positive effect approaching significance ($p=0.062$)
Teacher Competence (X2) → Reading Comprehension (Y)	0.279	0.070	Positive effect approaching significance ($p=0.070$)

Source: SmartPLS 3 processed results

Table 7. Direct Effects

The Effect of Verbal-Linguistic Intelligence (X1) on Learning Motivation (Z)

The results presented in Table 7 indicate that Verbal-Linguistic Intelligence (X1) has a positive and significant effect on Learning Motivation (Z), with a path coefficient of 0.309 and a p-value of 0.000. This finding suggests that the higher the students' verbal-linguistic abilities, the greater their motivation to engage in the learning process. Students with high verbal-linguistic intelligence tend to be curious about language structures and enjoy reading, discussing, writing, and interpreting information. This strengthens their intrinsic motivation, as the learning process becomes a fun and meaningful experience.

The Effect of Teacher Competence (X2) on Learning Motivation (Z)

Teacher Competence (X2), when applied through the Understanding by Design (UbD) approach, also shows a positive and significant effect on Learning Motivation (Z), as reflected by a coefficient of 0.462 and a p-value of 0.000. This implies that the stronger the teacher's competence, the greater the encouragement and willingness of students to participate actively in learning. Teachers with high competence not only understand the teaching material, but are also able to manage the learning experience by fostering a supportive and motivating classroom atmosphere, where students feel valued as thinking individuals, not just recipients of information.

The Effect of Verbal-Linguistic Intelligence (X1) on Reading Comprehension (Y)

Furthermore, Verbal-Linguistic Intelligence (X1) was found to have a direct and positive effect on Reading Comprehension (Y), with a path coefficient of 0.390 and approaching significance ($p=0.062$). This result indicates that the ability to process language is related to students' level of reading comprehension. Students with high linguistic abilities tend to have a rich vocabulary with reflective reading strategies and are even able to understand the implied meaning of various sources of information.

The Effect of Teacher Competence (X2) on Reading Comprehension (Y)

Teacher Competence (X2), implemented through the UbD approach, also demonstrated a positive influence on Reading Comprehension (Y), with a coefficient of 0.279 approaching significance ($p = 0.070$). A competent teacher is able to transform the reading experience into more than just a word recognition activity, but also one that guides students to understand, evaluate, and apply information in real-life contexts.

Overall, this analysis highlights that verbal-linguistic intelligence and teacher competence are crucial in fostering students' learning motivation, although their influence is not as strong as their impact on overall academic performance. The analysis above aligns with the findings of Adirestuty (2017) who emphasized that teachers play a significant role in enhancing students' motivation and academic achievement. Similarly, a case study conducted at an international school by Widyasari (2016) revealed that efforts to improve English proficiency were carried out by optimizing linguistic intelligence. These efforts involved designing a supportive curriculum, providing

relevant learning materials, strengthening human resources, and implementing instructional processes characterized by interactive, creative, and enjoyable activities.

Path	Original Sample	P Values	Interpretation
Verbal Linguistic Intelligence (X1) → Learning Motivation (Z) → Reading Comprehension (Y)	0.719	0.005	Positive effect as $p < 0.05$
Teacher Competence (X2) → Learning Motivation (Z) → Reading Comprehension (Y)	0.508	0.042	Positive effect as $p < 0.05$

Source: SmartPLS 3 processed results

Table 8. Indirect Effects

The Effect of Verbal-Linguistic Intelligence (X1) on Reading Comprehension (Y) Mediated by Learning Motivation

The analysis presented in Table 8 indicates that Verbal-Linguistic Intelligence (X1) has a positive and significant effect on Reading Comprehension (Y) through Learning Motivation (Z), with a coefficient value of 0.719 and a p-value of 0.005. This result suggests that the higher the students' verbal-linguistic ability, the stronger their motivation to learn, which in turn leads to an improvement in reading comprehension.

The Effect of Teacher Competence (X2) on Reading Comprehension (Y) Mediated by Learning Motivation

Furthermore, Teacher Competence (X2), particularly within the UbD approach, also shows a positive and significant influence on Reading Comprehension (Y) through Learning Motivation (Z). This is evidenced by a coefficient value of 0.508 with a p-value of 0.042, which is below the 5% significance threshold. These findings highlight that teacher competence not only directly affects students' learning motivation but also indirectly contributes to the enhancement of reading comprehension through the increase in motivation.

Overall, the results emphasize that learning motivation serves as a crucial mediating variable in bridging the influence of teacher competence and verbal-linguistic intelligence on reading comprehension. In other words, the impact of these two factors becomes more effective when students possess a high level of learning motivation. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Lei et al (2021), which highlighted that learning motivation plays a significant role in mediating the relationship between multiple-intelligence-based teaching strategies and academic achievement.

5. Conclusion

Teacher competence through the implementation of the UbD approach in teaching successfully improved the reading comprehension of vocational high school students (Phase F), with 73% of students achieving a good literacy level. Verbal-Linguistic Intelligence (X1) and Teacher Competence (X2) partially had a positive and significant direct influence on students' Learning Motivation (Z). Verbal-Linguistic Intelligence (X1) and Teacher Competence (X2), when combined with the UbD approach, also showed a positive influence although with a low level of significance

($p > 0.05$). However, this relationship became significant when learning motivation was added as a mediating variable that bridged the influence of teacher competence and verbal-linguistic intelligence on students' reading comprehension. In other words, the impact of these two factors becomes more effective when students have high learning motivation.

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FELICITY CONDITIONS AS A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING INCOMPETENT DISCOURSE: BRIDGING THE CONCEPTS OF *RUWAIBIDAH* AND *THE DUNNING–KRUGER EFFECT*

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Abstract

This study investigates how felicity conditions—a fundamental concept in speech act theory—serve as an analytical framework for understanding incompetent discourse, particularly at the intersection of *Ruwaibidah* (a prophetic term referring to unqualified individuals who speak on public affairs) and the Dunning–Kruger Effect (a psychological bias in which people with limited ability overestimate their competence). By integrating insights from Islamic ethics, pragmatics, and cognitive psychology, the research examines how violations of key felicity conditions—sincerity, authority, appropriateness, and truthfulness—manifest as epistemic and moral failures in public communication. Drawing on case studies from Indonesian political discourse, the study reveals how such violations distort meaning, erode public trust, and contribute to the normalization of incompetent speech. Ultimately, the paper proposes that felicity conditions offer a comprehensive normative lens for evaluating the ethical legitimacy and epistemic integrity of speech acts, fostering a deeper interdisciplinary understanding of responsible discourse and communicative competence within social and political contexts.

Keywords: *Dunning Kruger Effect; felicity condition; Ruwaibidah,*

1. Introduction

Language is not merely a tool for conveying information; it is a reflection of cognition, ethics, and authority. In the Indonesian political context, public statements often reveal how linguistic acts intersect with moral consciousness. As Elbah (2022) notes, the force of an utterance within the broader realm of human action lies in its capacity to accomplish things—words are not passive, but performative. Language thus serves as an instrument of power, persuasion, and social construction. Within the field of pragmatics, speech acts do not merely describe reality but actively shape it. Political and public discourse, in particular, demonstrates how language functions performatively—shaping ideology, influencing perception, and negotiating authority. This dynamic is especially visible in contemporary Indonesia, where the ethical and cognitive dimensions of speech frequently converge.

This study examines three representative cases in Indonesian public discourse: (1) Sri Mulyani's statement on zakat and taxation, (2) Adies Kadir's critique of parliamentary salaries, and (3) Ade Armando's controversial remark that "the voice of God is not Arab." These utterances provide valuable data for exploring how linguistic performance reflects sincerity, legitimacy, and awareness—concepts central to both Austin's speech act theory and Islamic ethical philosophy.

From a pragmatic standpoint, speech acts rely on *felicity conditions*—namely sincerity, authority, appropriateness, and propositional truthfulness (Searle, 1969). When these conditions are violated, an utterance becomes *illocutionarily defective*, producing miscommunication, ethical tension, or public outrage. For instance, Sri Mulyani's analogy between zakat and taxation was criticized for conflating theological and fiscal concepts. Adies Kadir's defense of legislative allowances appeared insensitive to social inequality, while Ade Armando's statement on divine language provoked theological objections rooted in the Islamic principle of *tanzīh* (the transcendence of God).

Beyond pragmatics, these utterances can also be interpreted through the lens of psychology, particularly the Dunning–Kruger Effect (Kruger & Dunning, 1999), which describes how individuals with limited expertise often overestimate their understanding of complex issues. Politicians or public intellectuals may unintentionally display this bias when they speak authoritatively outside their domains of competence. The prophetic concept of *Ruwaibidah*—referring to unqualified individuals who speak on public affairs—offers a theological parallel to this cognitive bias, enriching both the ethical and psychological analysis of incompetent discourse.

The concept of *Ruwaibidah* thus provides a moral and theological foundation for understanding the dangers of unqualified speech, while the Dunning–Kruger Effect explains the cognitive mechanisms underlying overconfidence and epistemic failure (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). By applying felicity conditions as an analytical framework, this study bridges these two perspectives to evaluate the appropriateness and legitimacy of speech acts. It argues that sincerity, authority, contextual relevance, and truthfulness are not only linguistic requirements but also ethical imperatives. Integrating theological, psychological, and pragmatic frameworks offers a more comprehensive understanding of epistemic responsibility and communicative ethics.

The problem of unqualified individuals assuming authority in speech and decision-making is hardly new. Islamic tradition has long warned, through the notion of *Ruwaibidah*, against the perils of incompetence masquerading as expertise. Similarly, modern psychology identifies the tendency of the unskilled to exhibit unwarranted confidence. Together, these perspectives expose the social and epistemic dangers posed by misinformation, superficial authority, and the erosion of public trust. Within the framework of felicity conditions, these challenges involve violations of sincerity, authority, and truthfulness in speech acts across various contexts.

Although the Dunning–Kruger Effect has been widely explored in psychology and education (Kruger & Dunning, 1999; Pennycook & Rand, 2017), few studies have connected this cognitive bias with theological constructs such as *Ruwaibidah*. Likewise, while felicity conditions (Searle, 1969) provide a powerful tool for analyzing communicative acts, their application to incompetent discourse remains underdeveloped. This study therefore situates itself at the intersection of theology, psychology, and linguistics to propose a more integrated model for understanding epistemic and ethical competence in communication.

The relevance of this research is heightened by the global proliferation of misinformation, populist rhetoric, and the misuse of authority by unqualified voices. In the digital era, individuals lacking expertise can easily attain visibility through social media, echoing dangers warned of in both prophetic traditions and cognitive studies. By examining *Ruwaibidah* through the lens of the Dunning–Kruger Effect and assessing it via felicity conditions, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of epistemic incompetence and the moral criteria for legitimate communication. Integrating linguistic pragmatics, Islamic ethics, and psychological insight, the research investigates the performative, ethical, and cognitive dimensions of public speech. It argues that speech acts—especially those by public figures—must be evaluated not only for communicative efficiency but also for their moral and epistemic integrity.

Public statements made by officials and disseminated through the media serve as a form of governmental communication that should ideally uphold truthfulness and impartiality to maintain public trust and democratic legitimacy. However, the politicization of such communication can undermine these principles and distort its civic function (DePaula, 2025).

Accordingly, this study positions felicity conditions as an analytical bridge between Western pragmatic theory and Islamic ethical discourse. The conditions of sincerity (*ikhhlāṣ*), authority (*amānah*), and truthfulness (*ṣidq*) correspond closely with the Islamic moral framework governing speech. Violations of these principles constitute not only pragmatic infelicities but also ethical transgressions. Through this interdisciplinary synthesis, the study underscores that linguistic competence must coexist with moral consciousness.

Consequently, this research addresses the following questions: How are felicity conditions—specifically sincerity, authority, appropriateness, and truthfulness—realized in the speech acts of public figures? In what ways do violations of these conditions lead to pragmatic failure, ethical distortion, and diminished communicative credibility? The objectives of the study are to identify the felicity conditions employed in public discourse, to analyze how their violations affect meaning and public perception, and to assess their broader implications for ethical and responsible communication.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Pragmatics and Felicity Conditions

From a linguistic perspective, the urgency of this research lies in the growing misuse of language by individuals who lack the competence to use it responsibly. Language does not merely transmit information—it constructs authority, legitimizes identity, and shapes public perception. When unqualified voices dominate public discourse, rhetorical strategies and lexical choices can become instruments of persuasion that mislead audiences into accepting false expertise. Linguistics, therefore, provides a powerful analytical framework for examining how incompetent speakers employ language to gain legitimacy despite their limited knowledge.

Speech act theory, particularly within the pragmatic tradition, views language as a form of action. As Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) explain, speech acts do not only convey meaning but also *perform* social functions—promising, ordering, advising, or declaring. However, when such acts are carried out by unqualified individuals—such as issuing political judgments or interpreting religious texts without sufficient expertise—the act itself becomes invalid. The form of communication may appear legitimate, but its substance fails ethically and pragmatically.

Performative speech acts, within the framework of dynamic semantics, demonstrate how language both updates meaning and modifies social context. The *locutionary act* expresses a proposition; the *illocutionary act* represents the intended action; and the *perlocutionary act* produces effects on the listener. The success of these acts depends on the fulfillment of *felicity conditions*—the contextual and psychological requirements that make a speech act valid. When these are violated, the act becomes *illocutionarily defective*, meaning that it fails to perform what it claims to do (Austin, 1962).

As Searle (1969) elaborates, felicity conditions encompass four key elements: (1) the *propositional content condition* (the utterance must have meaningful and truthful content), (2) the *preparatory condition* (the speaker must have the authority and context to perform the act), (3) the *sincerity condition* (the speaker must genuinely intend what they say), and (4) the *essential condition* (the act must be recognized as creating a commitment). Violations of any of these render the speech act defective. For instance, when a politician promises social welfare without genuine intention or legitimate authority, the act of “promising” becomes pragmatically and ethically hollow. Similarly, when someone without theological expertise comments on divine matters, the act violates the preparatory and sincerity conditions—an error that resonates with the Islamic concept of *Ruwaibidah*.

Felicity conditions, therefore, define the circumstances that make speech successful and meaningful (Azzahra, 2025). They require sincerity, authority, proper context, and truthfulness (Searle, 1969). In this sense, both *Ruwaibidah* and the Dunning–Kruger Effect exemplify violations of these conditions. Incompetent speakers often lack the recognized authority to speak, overestimate their knowledge, and present false propositions with unwarranted confidence.

Moreover, pragmatic competence depends on the speaker’s cultural and linguistic awareness. When this awareness is lacking, negative pragmatic transfer occurs—an error in appropriating social meaning. Developing *metapragmatic awareness*, or awareness of how language performs actions, enhances communicative appropriateness (Darong, 2024). Pragmatic motivation—the internal drive to communicate truthfully and respectfully—has been shown to improve speech act performance by aligning linguistic choices with social norms such as politeness, cooperation, and truthfulness (Hamzah & Nurdin, 2024).

Felicity conditions have long been used to evaluate the appropriateness of speech acts in linguistics (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969), but they have rarely been applied to analyze the intersection of religion, psychology, and ethics. This study fills that gap by synthesizing these perspectives into a unified analytical framework. As Dunning and Kruger (1999) demonstrated, individuals often fail to recognize their own incompetence and therefore overestimate their performance. This cognitive limitation aligns closely with pragmatic failure: the inability to recognize when one’s utterance lacks authority, sincerity, or contextual appropriateness.

In operational terms, felicity conditions can be evaluated across several dimensions: whether the speaker has legitimate authority to perform the act, whether the intent is honest, whether the propositional content is factually or epistemically adequate, and whether the context—such as time, audience, and medium—permits the act. These contextual constraints determine how effectively communication fulfills its pragmatic goals. As Fetzer (2022) argues, participation frameworks, genre, and media influence

the felicity of discourse acts by shaping the conditions under which utterances can be successfully performed or interpreted.

2.2 Cognitive Bias and the Dunning–Kruger Effect

Cognitive dimensions such as intentionality, cooperation, detachment, and intersubjectivity are central to understanding how people perform speech acts. These dimensions influence one's ability to engage effectively in communication and to coordinate meaning with others (Hagemark, 2025). However, individuals are not purely rational communicators. Cognitive biases—systematic patterns of deviation from logical reasoning—often distort perception and judgment, leading people to construct subjective versions of reality (Kahneman, 2011).

Among these, the Dunning–Kruger Effect (Kruger & Dunning, 1999) is particularly relevant. It describes how individuals with limited competence tend to overestimate their knowledge or skills, while highly competent individuals tend to underestimate their abilities (Yang, 2024). In public discourse, this bias becomes visible when speakers express confidence on complex issues they barely understand. Their rhetorical assurance masks epistemic inadequacy, resulting in the spread of misinformation and the erosion of intellectual credibility.

The Dunning–Kruger Effect offers a psychological explanation for why incompetence often coincides with overconfidence. Kruger and Dunning's (1999) foundational study revealed that people with lower competence not only perform poorly but also lack the metacognitive ability to recognize their limitations. Consequently, they assume they perform well. Later research confirmed this pattern across various fields, including medicine, education, and politics (Coutinho & Thomas, 2021).

The effect involves two distinct dimensions: *unknown unknowns* (ignorance of one's ignorance, leading to overestimation) and *unknown knowns* (underestimation of one's competence). The unskilled face a double challenge—they make more errors and lack awareness of those errors—while the skilled tend to assume that others share their level of understanding, a misjudgment known as the *false consensus effect* (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). Together, these mechanisms explain why incompetent discourse often appears with great confidence and persuasive energy, yet lacks epistemic substance.

2.3 Theological Parallels: *Ruwaibidah* in Hadith Studies

Islamic scholarship has long emphasized that authority in speech and governance should rest with those possessing competence and knowledge. The concept of *Ruwaibidah*, as narrated in prophetic traditions, symbolizes societal decline when the ignorant assume control of public affairs. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (1989) discusses the *hadith* on *Ruwaibidah* primarily in its moral and social implications, noting that it warns against the confusion of authority and ignorance. Although his analysis does not explicitly engage with psychology, the underlying concern aligns with modern understandings of cognitive bias—systematic and predictable deviations from rational judgment (Kahneman, 2011). Such biases are influenced by emotional states, framing effects, and environmental pressures (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008), all of which can lead to overconfidence and misjudgment (Kruger & Dunning, 1999).

Al-Nawawi (1996) similarly interprets *Ruwaibidah* as a warning against moral and intellectual irresponsibility, emphasizing the ethical dangers of allowing unqualified individuals to dominate public discourse. His interpretation highlights the relevance of competence in leadership, governance, and community life—concerns that mirror the

Dunning–Kruger finding that unskilled individuals tend to overestimate their competence.

From a pragmatic standpoint, the speech of *Ruwaibidah* fails to meet the felicity conditions of truthfulness, authority, and appropriateness, leading to illocutionary defectiveness. Theologically, it represents a moral transgression; pragmatically, it exemplifies failed communication. Modern pragmatics and psychology thus provide empirical and theoretical frameworks that complement the theological warning, offering a comprehensive understanding of epistemic incompetence that unites moral, cognitive, and linguistic dimensions.

Taken as a whole, discussions of *Ruwaibidah* in hadith commentary, especially those by Al-Nawawi (1996), serve as a timeless critique of epistemic arrogance and communicative irresponsibility. By juxtaposing this theological perspective with the Dunning–Kruger framework, the present study situates the ancient warning within contemporary cognitive science, demonstrating that the ethical failure of *Ruwaibidah* parallels the psychological mechanisms of overconfidence and ignorance identified by Dunning and Kruger (1999).

3. Research Method

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive design grounded in pragmatic analysis, particularly within the framework of speech act theory as proposed by Austin (1962) and further developed by Searle (1969). The qualitative approach is suited to the present study because it enables a nuanced exploration of language as social action, focusing on meaning, intention, and communicative ethics rather than on quantifiable patterns. Through this approach, the research examines how felicity conditions—sincerity, authority, appropriateness, and truthfulness—are realized or violated in public discourse.

3.1 Research Focus and Data Sources

The study focuses on the public utterances of three prominent Indonesian figures: Sri Mulyani (former Minister of Finance), Adies Kadir (legislator), and Ade Armando (politician and independent commissioner of PLN). These figures were selected using purposive sampling because their statements represent influential speech acts that generated public discussion and moral debate. Each case illustrates distinct dimensions of pragmatic and ethical tension in public communication—ranging from fiscal-religious analogies to moral justification and theological commentary.

The data consist of recorded and transcribed public statements, media interviews, and press releases disseminated through credible Indonesian news outlets. These sources were selected to ensure authenticity and public accessibility. Supplementary materials such as news reports, public reactions, and expert commentaries were reviewed to provide contextual background for each utterance.

3.2 Analytical Framework

The analysis is anchored in speech act theory, which interprets language as a form of performative action comprising three dimensions: locutionary (the act of saying something), illocutionary (the act performed through saying), and perlocutionary (the effect achieved on the listener). Within this framework, felicity conditions serve as diagnostic tools for determining whether a speech act is valid, appropriate, and

effective. The study evaluates the extent to which each utterance satisfies or violates these conditions, linking pragmatic performance to ethical and epistemic competence.

In addition, the study draws on cognitive psychology—particularly the Dunning–Kruger Effect (Kruger & Dunning, 1999)—and Islamic ethical concepts such as *Ruwaibidah*, to interpret the relationship between communicative confidence and actual competence. This interdisciplinary approach allows for a richer understanding of how linguistic, moral, and psychological factors intersect in public discourse.

3.3 Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2018), which involves three iterative stages:

1. Data Reduction: Relevant utterances were selected and categorized according to Searle’s (1969) four felicity conditions—sincerity, authority, appropriateness, and truthfulness. Redundant or contextually irrelevant statements were excluded.
2. Data Display: The categorized data were organized into thematic matrices and visual charts to illustrate relationships between types of felicity violations and their public effects (e.g., controversy, misinterpretation, ethical critique).
3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Interpretations were synthesized to construct theoretical insights, connecting pragmatic failure with epistemic and ethical irresponsibility. Verification involved reviewing consistency across cases and revisiting raw data to ensure interpretive accuracy.

To ensure trustworthiness, the study implemented triangulation across three levels:

1. Theoretical triangulation, by integrating frameworks from linguistics, psychology, and Islamic ethics;
2. Data triangulation, through the use of multiple media sources; and
3. Researcher triangulation, involving peer debriefing with linguistic and religious scholars to validate analytical interpretations.

3.4 Coding Process

Each utterance was coded according to key analytic markers—*felicitous act*, *illocutionary defect*, and *ethical implication*. For instance, statements that demonstrated valid authority and sincerity were marked as “felicitous,” while those lacking epistemic adequacy or moral awareness were coded as “defective.” The coding process was iterative and reflexive, allowing emerging themes to shape subsequent analysis. This systematic coding ensured internal consistency and transparency in identifying patterns of competent versus incompetent discourse.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Although this study analyzes statements made by public figures in open media, ethical responsibility remains essential. All data used were drawn from publicly available sources to protect privacy and avoid misrepresentation. Interpretations were made with academic objectivity and respect for differing perspectives. The analysis refrains from personal judgments and focuses on the *speech acts* as linguistic and cognitive phenomena rather than on individuals as moral subjects.

In summary, this methodology integrates linguistic pragmatics, psychological insight, and Islamic ethical reasoning within a qualitative framework to examine how felicity

conditions reveal epistemic competence—or its absence—in public speech. The approach combines rigorous textual analysis with ethical sensitivity, ensuring that findings are both theoretically grounded and socially meaningful.

4. Discussion

Public figures—including government officials, media personalities, and influencers—often make authoritative statements on subjects outside their professional expertise. Although their utterances may appear linguistically convincing, they frequently lack epistemic depth. From a pragmatic standpoint, such speech acts may fulfill the *locutionary* dimension (producing an apparently authoritative statement) and the *illocutionary* function (intending to persuade, justify, or reassure the public). However, they often fail at the *perlocutionary* level, producing unintended consequences such as public confusion, distrust, or misinformation. These instances reflect the intersection of pragmatic failure and ethical irresponsibility in public communication.

4.1 Sri Mulyani: Taxation and Zakat

In one of her public statements, Sri Mulyani, the former Indonesian Minister of Finance, declared:

“In every fortune and wealth you gain, there are other people’s rights. The way those rights are given is through zakat, waqf, or taxes, and taxes are returned to those in need.”

She further elaborated that taxes collected by the state are redistributed through social programs, education, subsidies, and public infrastructure—activities that, in her view, fulfill the ethical and social purpose of justice. Public reactions, however, were divided. Some commended her attempt to harmonize fiscal policy with Islamic values, while others criticized the statement for conflating two fundamentally distinct moral and legal domains: divine obligation (*zakat*) and state-imposed levy (*tax*).

From the perspective of speech act theory, Sri Mulyani’s statement can be interpreted as a *commissive act*—an utterance expressing commitment to a reformative social vision. Yet, from the lens of felicity conditions, the statement risks ethical tension by merging theological and fiscal discourse without appropriate authority or contextual sensitivity. While she possessed institutional authority in economic policy, she lacked the *religious authority* necessary to redefine the theological framework of *zakat*. This mismatch produces what Austin (1962) termed an *illocutionary defect*: the act is performed, but it fails to accomplish what it purports to do.

Religious scholars responded critically, urging clearer distinctions to prevent theological misunderstanding. They argued that *zakat* is an *‘ibādah maḥḍah*—a form of worship governed by strict jurisprudential rules (*fiqh*)—whereas taxation is a civil obligation instituted by the state. Confusing the two could mislead the public and potentially erode trust in both fiscal and religious systems. Some critics, such as Ubaidillah Amin (as cited in *detik.com*, August 2025), emphasized that *zakat* and taxation differ not only in purpose and origin but also in the nature of their recipients. *Zakat* is a divinely mandated duty defined by *niṣāb* (minimum threshold), *ḥawl* (time period), and designated beneficiaries (*mustahiq*), while taxation is a legal construct subject to state policy and secular law.

From the perspective of felicity conditions (Searle, 1969), Sri Mulyani's utterance partially fulfilled the *authority condition*—she spoke as a government official within an institutional context—but failed to satisfy the *sincerity* and *propositional* conditions. The statement disregarded the theological and emotional sensitivity of equating two systems with divergent epistemic and moral foundations. This semantic distortion and contextual insensitivity rendered the utterance pragmatically *infelicitous*, leading to widespread public rejection.

Although Sri Mulyani's intention may have been to emphasize shared ethical principles—such as social justice and redistribution—her analogy blurred the boundaries between spiritual obligation and civic duty. The conflation suggests an overextension of administrative authority into religious discourse, inadvertently aligning with the Dunning–Kruger framework (Kruger & Dunning, 1999), in which individuals overestimate their competence in areas beyond their specialization. While the context of a “Sharia Economy” forum may have encouraged the integration of fiscal and moral narratives, the statement's theological implications exceeded her epistemic domain, risking misinterpretation among both economists and religious scholars.

The controversy surrounding this statement thus reveals a conflict between religious and state discourses. From a pragmatic standpoint, it represents an act that is *institutionally authoritative* yet *semantically defective*. The proposition's failure lies not in linguistic inaccuracy but in its ethical and epistemic imbalance. It underscores how violations of felicity conditions—particularly those of truthfulness and sincerity—can erode the credibility of speech acts and destabilize public trust.

In essence, Sri Mulyani's case exemplifies the broader challenge faced by public figures in navigating interdisciplinary boundaries. The attempt to merge theological symbolism with fiscal rationality, while rhetorically appealing, becomes ethically precarious when the speaker's authority does not encompass both domains. Such cases affirm the need for epistemic humility in public discourse and demonstrate how felicity conditions can serve as a framework for diagnosing communicative competence and ethical integrity in political communication.

4.2. Kadir: Parliamentary Salary and Moral Accountability

In another illustrative case, Adies Kadir, a member of the Indonesian House of Representatives, publicly stated:

“Perhaps because the Minister of Finance felt sorry for the legislative members, the allowances were increased. The basic salary of DPR members has never increased—only the allowances have been adjusted, such as housing allowances, since DPR members no longer occupy official state residences” (Kontan Nasional, 2023).

At first glance, the utterance appears to be an attempt at justification, explaining an administrative decision regarding parliamentary compensation. However, when viewed through the framework of speech act theory, this statement functions as a *representative* and *expressive* act—an effort to express personal opinion and defend institutional decisions before the public. From the standpoint of felicity conditions (Searle, 1969), while Adies Kadir's institutional position grants him the *authority* to comment on internal parliamentary affairs, his utterance fails to fulfill the *appropriateness* and *sincerity* conditions required for communicative legitimacy.

The timing and context of the speech proved problematic. The statement was delivered amidst widespread public dissatisfaction over economic inequality, rising living costs, and concerns about political privilege. Consequently, the utterance was perceived not as transparent communication but as self-serving rationalization. It violated the *contextual appropriateness* condition by disregarding the emotional and social climate in which it was received. Although Kadir may have intended to clarify facts, his phrasing conveyed insensitivity toward the financial struggles of ordinary citizens, creating a dissonance between institutional authority and ethical awareness.

In pragmatic terms, the speech act fulfills the *illocutionary* intention of defending parliamentary policy but produces a negative *perlocutionary* effect—public anger, cynicism, and diminished trust in political elites. This gap between intention and outcome exemplifies what Austin (1962) describes as *infelicity*, where an utterance fails to achieve its intended force because the surrounding conditions undermine its moral and social acceptability.

Moreover, when examined through the psychological lens of the Dunning–Kruger Effect (Kruger & Dunning, 1999), the utterance reveals a cognitive distortion common among individuals in positions of authority: the overestimation of one's communicative adequacy. Adies Kadir appeared confident that his reasoning would be persuasive, but the reaction suggests a lack of metacognitive awareness regarding public sentiment—a form of epistemic miscalibration. As Coutinho and Thomas (2021) note, such overconfidence often leads to misjudgment in how messages are framed and perceived.

From an ethical standpoint, Kadir's statement also highlights a form of moral displacement—a situation in which the speaker's focus on institutional justification overshadows empathy and social accountability. His utterance can therefore be seen as *illocutionarily defective* because it prioritizes defense over truth-sharing and fails to engage in cooperative dialogue with the public. The act violates Gricean principles of relevance and sincerity, as the justification lacked acknowledgment of social realities and moral proportion.

Applying felicity conditions as an analytical lens reveals that Kadir's authority as a legislator fulfilled the *preparatory* condition but that the *sincerity* and *appropriateness* conditions were compromised. The utterance was not insincere in a deceptive sense but lacked moral resonance and contextual tact. By neglecting the audience's emotional and ethical expectations, the act became pragmatically hollow, its communicative force weakened by moral dissonance.

This case demonstrates how linguistic performance and ethical perception are intertwined. In public communication, authority alone does not guarantee felicity. A speech act achieves legitimacy only when it aligns institutional truth with social empathy and moral proportion. Adies Kadir's remarks, though institutionally sanctioned, failed the pragmatic test of *felicitous speech* because they disregarded the ethical obligation to communicate with sensitivity to the audience's lived experience.

Ultimately, the controversy surrounding Kadir's comments reinforces the importance of epistemic humility and contextual awareness in political discourse. When speech acts prioritize defense of status over acknowledgment of public hardship, they lose not only pragmatic efficacy but also moral credibility. Within the combined frameworks of felicity conditions, cognitive bias, and Islamic ethics, this case underscores that communicative competence in governance must rest on sincerity,

empathy, and social responsibility—principles that safeguard the moral integrity of public language.

4.3. Ade Armando: the voice of God is not Arab

Another case of epistemic and pragmatic tension appears in the public remarks of Ade Armando, a political figure and social commentator, who stated:

“God is not Arab. Of course, He is not bound by Arab culture or ethnicity. God would be pleased if His verses were recited in Minangkabau style, Ambonese style, hip-hop, or blues.”

Armando’s statement was intended to emphasize that divinity transcends ethnicity and cultural boundaries. His *illocutionary* act can be interpreted as *expressive*—conveying personal belief—and *declarative*, attempting to redefine a theological concept by asserting universality. On a surface level, the utterance advocates inclusivity and diversity within religious expression. However, from a pragmatic and ethical perspective, the speech violated several felicity conditions: it lacked the *authority* condition (as he is not a qualified theologian), breached *contextual appropriateness* by addressing a sensitive doctrinal issue outside his disciplinary scope, and risked *truthfulness* by oversimplifying theological nuance.

Linguistically, the statement challenges the *symbolic authority of sacred language*. In Islamic thought, Arabic is not considered sacred due to ethnicity but because it was divinely chosen as the linguistic vessel of revelation. The Qur’an’s Arabic form is both a communicative and theological medium—its linguistic precision and rhetorical power are intrinsic to its divine message. Classical scholars such as Al-Nawawi (1996) and Watt (1970) emphasize that the Qur’an’s Arabicness (*‘arabiyyah*) is not cultural chauvinism but a manifestation of divine wisdom. Similarly, Izutsu (1964) explains that Qur’anic Arabic evolved into a semantic system capable of expressing universal concepts, transcending its pre-Islamic tribal origins.

From this theological perspective, Ade Armando’s utterance commits a *category error*: it equates the language of revelation with ethnic identity, thereby misconstruing its theological function. His claim, though framed as liberal and pluralistic, neglects centuries of Islamic scholarship that distinguish between divine transcendence (*tanzīh*) and linguistic medium. As a result, his speech act, while rhetorically inclusive, becomes *illocutionarily defective*—performing a theological declaration without the felicity conditions of authority and epistemic grounding.

The *perlocutionary* effects of Armando’s statement were immediate and polarizing. Some audiences interpreted his words as a refreshing assertion of Islam’s universality, resonating with multicultural ideals. Others, particularly religious scholars and conservative communities, condemned the statement as disrespectful and theologically misleading. The controversy demonstrates how cognitive and cultural biases can distort speech acts, especially when speakers overestimate their competence in complex theological discourse—a pattern consistent with the Dunning–Kruger Effect (Kruger & Dunning, 1999).

Psychologically, Ade Armando’s confidence in making theological assertions without formal training reflects *epistemic overreach*: a misalignment between self-assessed understanding and actual expertise. This bias often leads to communicative arrogance, where rhetorical conviction substitutes for scholarly precision. As Kahneman (2011) notes, such biases are not random but systematic, emerging from intuitive

judgments that bypass reflective reasoning. In this sense, Armando’s statement exemplifies how intellectual overconfidence, when expressed through public speech, becomes both a cognitive and ethical hazard.

From the lens of felicity conditions, the utterance fails the *authority condition*—since theological interpretation traditionally belongs to scholars trained in Qur’anic exegesis (*tafsīr*) and theology (*‘aqidah*). It also fails the *sincerity condition* if the act was intended more as provocation or ideological critique than as a sincere contribution to religious discourse. Furthermore, the *propositional condition* is compromised because the statement conflates linguistic vehicle with divine essence, resulting in semantic distortion. Collectively, these violations render the speech act pragmatically infelicitous and ethically questionable.

However, Armando’s remark also provides a valuable case for exploring the interplay between cultural modernity and religious authority. In a pluralistic society like Indonesia, public intellectuals often seek to reconcile faith with modern expression. Yet, as this case shows, such efforts must balance intellectual creativity with epistemic humility. Without grounding in appropriate domains of authority, inclusive rhetoric risks becoming *Ruwaibidah*—uninformed speech about public or sacred matters.

In summary, Ade Armando’s statement “God is not Arab” illustrates how an utterance can appear progressive yet remain pragmatically defective when it transgresses the boundaries of expertise and theological propriety. From a linguistic standpoint, it challenges the felicity of religious speech; from a psychological standpoint, it reveals overconfidence characteristic of the Dunning–Kruger Effect; and from an ethical standpoint, it echoes the prophetic warning against *Ruwaibidah*. The controversy surrounding his words underscores the necessity of epistemic awareness, contextual sensitivity, and sincerity in public communication—virtues that sustain both the moral and intellectual integrity of discourse in a plural society.

4.4. Cognitive Bias and Dunning Kruger Effect

The preceding cases—Sri Mulyani’s analogy between *zakat* and taxation, Adies Kadir’s justification of parliamentary salaries, and Ade Armando’s statement on divine language—demonstrate a recurring communicative pattern: confident but incompetent discourse. Each case reveals how individuals occupying positions of authority or public visibility can inadvertently reproduce epistemic errors through speech acts that *appear* persuasive yet fail pragmatic and ethical scrutiny. This phenomenon can be illuminated through the lens of cognitive bias, particularly the Dunning–Kruger Effect.

Cognitive biases are systematic deviations from rational judgment that shape how people perceive, interpret, and respond to information. Rather than reasoning objectively, individuals frequently rely on intuitive heuristics that distort self-assessment and decision-making (Kahneman, 2011). Among these, the Dunning–Kruger Effect (Kruger & Dunning, 1999) captures a paradox of modern communication: the less a person knows, the more confidently they may speak. This bias arises because the same cognitive limitations that lead to poor performance also hinder self-awareness of that inadequacy.

In Sri Mulyani’s case, her attempt to align taxation with *zakat* reflected technocratic reductionism—a bias in which complex theological obligations are reframed as policy instruments. By translating spiritual duty into fiscal language, she exhibited a cognitive framing bias that privileges administrative logic over religious nuance. This overextension of domain competence illustrates the Dunning–Kruger

pattern: expertise in one field (economics) fostering misplaced confidence in another (theology). The result was a pragmatic failure where institutional authority replaced epistemic legitimacy, violating the felicity conditions of *truthfulness* and *appropriateness*.

Similarly, Adies Kadir's defense of increased legislative allowances displayed what might be termed elite empathy bias—a moral distortion where identification with one's privileged group impairs sensitivity to broader social suffering. His remarks were shaped by an overestimation of public understanding and acceptance, a form of metacognitive blindness consistent with Dunning and Kruger's (1999) findings. Kadir's speech satisfied the *authority* condition but violated the *sincerity* and *contextual appropriateness* conditions, producing an illocutionary defect rooted in ethical dissonance.

In the case of Ade Armando, the Dunning–Kruger mechanism is more explicitly cognitive. His statement, “God is not Arab,” exemplifies epistemic overreach—a cognitive bias in which individuals misjudge the depth of their understanding and make confident assertions outside their area of expertise. Psychologically, such bias combines *confirmation bias* (favoring ideas that align with one's worldview) and *illusory superiority* (believing one's interpretation is more accurate or enlightened than others'). Armando's linguistic creativity became overshadowed by the ethical and epistemic risks of theological simplification, rendering his speech act *infelicitous* under the conditions of *authority* and *truthfulness*.

Across these cases, the Dunning–Kruger Effect functions as an explanatory bridge between *psychological misjudgment* and *pragmatic failure*. The speakers' cognitive biases distort their perception of communicative competence, leading to public statements that breach felicity conditions even when intentions are ostensibly sincere. The resulting discourse—confident yet deficient—exemplifies what this study identifies as epistemic arrogance: the tendency to speak with conviction unsupported by genuine understanding.

From a broader ethical perspective, such discourse aligns with the prophetic concept of *Ruwaibidah*, in which unqualified individuals assume authority over public affairs. Both frameworks—the psychological and the theological—warn against the societal harm caused by uninformed speech presented as authoritative. When amplified by media and digital platforms, this bias not only misleads audiences but also undermines public trust in legitimate expertise.

As Coutinho and Thomas (2021) and Pennycook and Rand (2017) note, overconfidence and miscalibration are particularly dangerous in an era of rapid information exchange, where persuasive language often eclipses verified knowledge. In political and religious contexts, the Dunning–Kruger Effect magnifies the ethical stakes of communication: epistemic incompetence becomes not merely an individual flaw but a public risk.

Thus, analyzing these cases through felicity conditions reveals how cognitive bias transforms into communicative infelicity. Sincerity without truthfulness, authority without competence, and confidence without humility collectively produce defective speech acts—utterances that appear valid in form but fail in epistemic substance. Integrating the insights of cognitive psychology with the moral and pragmatic frameworks of linguistics and Islamic ethics allows for a more comprehensive understanding of why such failures persist.

In essence, the Dunning–Kruger Effect serves as a modern psychological parallel to the theological warning against *Ruwaibidah*. Both underscore the ethical imperative of epistemic humility—the awareness of one’s limits in knowledge and the restraint to speak only within the bounds of competence. In public discourse, this humility becomes a prerequisite for felicity, ensuring that speech acts not only communicate effectively but also uphold integrity, truth, and moral responsibility.

4.5. Theological Parallels: *Ruwaibidah* in Hadith Studies

The phenomenon of unqualified individuals assuming authority in public discourse finds a striking theological parallel in the Islamic concept of *Ruwaibidah*. Rooted in a Prophetic narration, the term refers to those who speak on public matters without knowledge, moral integrity, or legitimate authority. The *hadith* warns that such a condition signals a decline in societal order, where ignorance replaces wisdom and the incompetent govern collective affairs.

Classical scholars, including Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī (1989) and al-Nawawī (1996), interpret the *Ruwaibidah* narration as a moral and social admonition rather than a mere eschatological sign. Ibn Hajar emphasizes that the rise of *Ruwaibidah* reflects a collapse of ethical governance and epistemic discipline, where individuals lacking the proper *‘ilm* (knowledge) and *amānah* (trustworthiness) gain influence. Al-Nawawī further elaborates that this phenomenon corrupts both public reasoning and moral order, as it blurs the line between truth and personal opinion. While these interpretations do not explicitly address modern psychology, they reveal profound concern with the same epistemic failures that contemporary science identifies as cognitive bias.

Cognitive biases, as discussed by Kahneman (2011) and Thaler and Sunstein (2008), are systematic deviations from rationality that lead individuals to overestimate their understanding or moral rightness. The Dunning–Kruger Effect (Kruger & Dunning, 1999) provides a modern psychological framework for this same behavioral pattern. In essence, both concepts—*Ruwaibidah* in theology and the Dunning–Kruger Effect in psychology—describe an inversion of competence: those least equipped to speak are often the most confident and vocal.

The *Ruwaibidah* thus represents not merely intellectual incompetence but also moral irresponsibility. The unqualified speaker’s failure is twofold: an epistemic failure (ignorance of what is true) and an ethical one (arrogance in proclaiming what one does not know). In linguistic terms, their speech acts violate felicity conditions at every level—*authority* (they lack recognized legitimacy), *sincerity* (their intention is not grounded in genuine understanding), *truthfulness* (their propositions lack epistemic adequacy), and *appropriateness* (their context of speech exceeds their domain). Such violations render their utterances *illocutionarily defective*, echoing both Austin’s (1962) account of infelicity and the Islamic view of unethical speech.

As al-Nawawī (1996) explains, the Prophet’s warning against *Ruwaibidah* is not limited to theological discourse but extends to governance, law, and public decision-making—domains in which speech shapes reality. In this sense, the *Ruwaibidah* functions as a moral archetype of epistemic arrogance, endangering both communal wisdom and institutional trust. The *hadith* calls for a restoration of qualified authority (ahl al-‘ilm) and ethical restraint (wara‘) in speech—principles deeply resonant with the felicity conditions of *authority* and *sincerity* in speech act theory.

From a comparative perspective, *Ruwaibidah* offers a theological mirror to the psychological mechanisms underlying the Dunning–Kruger Effect. Both expose how

ignorance, when amplified by overconfidence, leads to communicative and moral corruption. Yet the *Ruwaibidah* concept adds a crucial ethical dimension often absent in cognitive models: it situates epistemic failure within a framework of moral accountability before God and society. Knowledge, in this sense, is not merely cognitive accuracy but a trust (*amānah*) that demands humility and responsibility in its expression.

This theological insight enriches the interdisciplinary framework of the present study. By aligning *Ruwaibidah* with felicity conditions and cognitive psychology, we gain a holistic understanding of incompetent discourse as both a linguistic infelicity and a moral transgression. The unqualified speech act becomes a site where pragmatic theory, ethical philosophy, and theological tradition converge. The *Ruwaibidah* embodies the failure to meet the very standards that ensure meaningful communication: sincerity, authority, appropriateness, and truthfulness.

In contemporary public discourse—particularly in digital and political arenas—the reemergence of *Ruwaibidah*-like behavior is unmistakable. Social media has democratized speech but also magnified epistemic arrogance, allowing uninformed voices to shape public opinion. The prophetic warning thus finds renewed relevance: the danger of the ignorant speaking in the name of truth remains both timeless and universal.

By revisiting the *Ruwaibidah* through modern analytical frameworks, this research underscores that the ethical integrity of speech is inseparable from epistemic competence. Whether viewed through Islamic moral philosophy or pragmatic linguistics, the solution lies in reclaiming humility as a communicative virtue—recognizing that speech, to be felicitous, must align not only with truth but also with the speaker's rightful domain of authority.

5. Conclusion

This study has examined how the intersection of linguistic pragmatics, cognitive psychology, and Islamic ethical thought provides a multidimensional understanding of incompetent discourse in contemporary public communication. Drawing on speech act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969), the analysis revealed that violations of felicity conditions—specifically *sincerity*, *authority*, *appropriateness*, and *truthfulness*—not only constitute pragmatic infelicities but also reflect deeper epistemic and moral failures.

Through the case studies of Sri Mulyani, Adies Kadir, and Ade Armando, the research demonstrated that speech acts performed outside the speaker's domain of expertise can produce defective or harmful communicative outcomes. Sri Mulyani's conflation of *zakat* and taxation exemplified an overextension of institutional authority into theological discourse, while Adies Kadir's justification of parliamentary allowances exposed a lack of contextual sensitivity and moral resonance. Ade Armando's statement on divine language revealed epistemic overconfidence—a linguistic act performed without theological legitimacy. In each case, the intended illocutionary force—to persuade, inform, or enlighten—was undermined by the failure to meet necessary felicity conditions, resulting in pragmatic breakdowns and public controversy.

These communicative failures can be interpreted as manifestations of the Dunning-Kruger Effect (Kruger & Dunning, 1999), in which individuals with limited competence overestimate their understanding and express unwarranted confidence. This cognitive bias not only distorts self-perception but also leads to epistemic arrogance in

public speech. When amplified by media visibility and institutional power, such overconfidence becomes socially consequential, producing discourse that is rhetorically persuasive yet epistemically hollow.

From a theological perspective, this pattern mirrors the Prophetic warning against *Ruwaibidah*—the ignorant who speak on public affairs without qualification. Both frameworks, psychological and theological, converge on a shared ethical insight: speech divorced from knowledge and sincerity endangers both truth and society. The *Ruwaibidah* concept introduces a moral dimension absent in psychological theories—it treats the misuse of speech not only as cognitive error but as a spiritual and ethical failure that disrupts justice, trust, and communal order.

By integrating these perspectives, the study advances felicity conditions as a normative framework for evaluating the legitimacy of public discourse. In this synthesis, *sincerity* corresponds to moral integrity, *authority* to epistemic competence, *appropriateness* to contextual sensitivity, and *truthfulness* to factual and ethical responsibility. Together, they provide an evaluative model for determining when speech is both pragmatically effective and ethically legitimate.

In the broader context of digital communication and populist rhetoric, this framework acquires renewed urgency. The democratization of media has blurred boundaries between expertise and opinion, enabling the *Ruwaibidah* phenomenon to reemerge in modern form—uninformed individuals exerting disproportionate influence through confident but baseless claims. As Kahneman (2011) and Pennycook and Rand (2017) observe, such cognitive distortions flourish in information-saturated environments where confidence often substitutes for competence.

Ultimately, this research affirms that effective communication requires more than linguistic skill; it demands epistemic humility, ethical sincerity, and awareness of one's communicative boundaries. When felicity conditions are upheld, speech acts become vehicles of understanding and trust; when violated, they become instruments of confusion and moral erosion.

The findings thus contribute to three key areas of scholarship:

1. Pragmatics — by extending felicity conditions into the evaluation of ethical and epistemic competence;
2. Cognitive psychology — by linking linguistic infelicity to cognitive bias and self-deception; and
3. Islamic ethics — by demonstrating how the *Ruwaibidah* concept anticipates modern concerns about misinformation and unqualified authority.

In conclusion, the study underscores that the integrity of public discourse depends not only on what is said but on who speaks, why they speak, and how responsibly they speak. Felicity in communication is therefore not merely a linguistic achievement—it is a moral and intellectual discipline. Upholding sincerity, authority, appropriateness, and truthfulness in public speech is essential for safeguarding the epistemic and ethical fabric of society.

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INTERSECTING FORMS OF VIOLENCE AND TRAUMA IN KATHLEEN GLASGOW'S *GIRL IN PIECES*: A LITERARY-SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF FEMALE MENTAL HEALTH

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Abstract

This article analyzes the complex representation of violence and trauma in Kathleen Glasgow's *Girl in Pieces*, focusing on the protagonist Charlie Davis. Through Johan Galtung's violence typology—direct, structural, and symbolic—the study reveals how Glasgow constructs an emotionally resonant narrative of trauma that is deeply rooted in systemic and interpersonal failures. Charlie's self-harm, institutional neglect, and internalized shame illustrate how violence is experienced not only through physical abuse but also through social and cultural mechanisms. The research applies a sociological approach to literature and trauma theory, situating the novel within the broader context of Young Adult (YA) fiction that foregrounds psychological suffering. This approach reveals that *Girl in Pieces* is not merely a coming-of-age story but a social critique of how institutions respond to marginalized female trauma. Using qualitative content analysis, the article contributes to discussions in trauma-informed literary pedagogy and young adult mental health literature. Findings suggest that literature, when interpreted through a sociological and trauma-sensitive lens, holds critical potential for reshaping understandings of mental illness, recovery, and gendered pain. The study supports the integration of trauma narratives into educational spaces as a means to foster empathy, awareness, and policy reform around youth mental health.

Keywords: *female trauma; sociological criticism; symbolic violence; trauma fiction; trauma theory; young adult literature*

1. Introduction

In recent years, Young Adult (YA) literature has become an important platform for exploring themes of adolescent mental health, trauma, and identity. Contemporary YA fiction has moved beyond traditional coming-of-age narratives to address urgent psychological and social realities, including depression, self-harm, abuse, substance use, and systemic neglect. This shift reflects a growing demand for emotionally authentic and psychologically nuanced storytelling that speaks to the lived experiences of young

readers. As noted by Salt-Raper (2023) and Boyd and Darragh (2019), this evolution in YA literature corresponds with broader cultural movements advocating for greater visibility, empathy, and destigmatization of mental illness and emotional vulnerability in youth populations.

Among the most impactful contributions to this emerging field is Kathleen Glasgow's 2016 novel, *Girl in Pieces*. The narrative follows Charlie Davis, a seventeen-year-old girl recovering from a suicide attempt and navigating the aftermath of trauma that includes abandonment, physical and sexual abuse, poverty, and homelessness. Glasgow's portrayal of Charlie's interior life is rendered in fragmented, poetic prose that mirrors the disorientation and chaos of trauma itself. The novel does not offer easy resolutions or romanticized healing arcs; instead, it presents a complex and often painful depiction of survival in a society where support systems frequently fail to protect the most vulnerable. *Girl in Pieces* therefore functions as both an intimate account of personal trauma and a broader social commentary on the institutional and cultural mechanisms that perpetuate youth suffering.

This article analyzes the experiences of Charlie Davis using Johan Galtung's (1990) typology of violence, which distinguishes between direct, structural, and symbolic forms of harm. Galtung's model provides a valuable framework for examining how violence operates not only through overt acts such as physical abuse, but also through systemic exclusion and cultural silencing. By applying this tripartite model, the study illustrates how Charlie's pain is sustained by a convergence of interpersonal brutality, institutional failure, and ideological domination. Her self-harm and silence are not solely products of individual pathology but are informed by deeper societal dynamics that condition her to internalize blame and suppress her voice.

In addition to Galtung's framework, the article draws on trauma theory, particularly the work of Judith Herman (2015) and Bessel van der Kolk (2014). Herman's theory of complex trauma emphasizes the cumulative effects of chronic interpersonal violence, particularly when compounded by betrayal and abandonment. Van der Kolk's work on the somatic dimensions of trauma—how the body “remembers” and reenacts unprocessed pain—provides crucial insight into Charlie's self-injury, emotional dissociation, and fragmented narrative voice. These theoretical approaches help elucidate how trauma in *Girl in Pieces* is both embodied and structurally embedded, highlighting the interplay between psychological damage and social injustice.

By examining *Girl in Pieces* through the lens of sociological and trauma-centered criticism, this article aims to contribute to a growing body of scholarship that recognizes YA literature as a critical site for understanding how young people experience and survive violence. It argues that literary texts such as Glasgow's do more than reflect trauma; they expose the cultural and institutional systems that normalize it. In doing so, they call for trauma-informed readings that foreground the interconnectedness of emotional, social, and ideological harm.

2. Literature Review

Young Adult (YA) literature has undergone a notable transformation over the past two decades, becoming increasingly engaged with the psychological, social, and cultural realities faced by adolescents. In particular, recent works have embraced themes of trauma, mental illness, identity crises, and systemic inequality, acknowledging that contemporary youth often confront deeply embedded emotional and institutional

challenges. Scholars such as Salt-Raper (2023), Boyd and Darragh (2019), and Malo-Juvera and Greathouse (2020) have emphasized that trauma narratives in YA fiction do more than depict suffering—they enable readers to identify with characters, process their own experiences, and challenge the stigmatization of mental health issues. These scholars argue that literature can function as both a mirror and a window: a mirror in which readers see their internal struggles reflected, and a window through which they gain insight into others' pain.

At the theoretical core of this study is Johan Galtung's theory of violence (1990, 2013), which proposes that violence occurs not only in its visible, physical form (direct violence), but also through systemic inequalities (structural violence) and cultural mechanisms that legitimize or conceal harm (symbolic violence). Galtung's model has proven especially useful in analyzing texts that deal with marginalized identities, as it enables a layered reading of harm that goes beyond individual perpetrators to consider institutional and ideological contributors. In the context of YA literature, this framework reveals how trauma is not solely a personal affliction but a consequence of broader social failures.

In studies directly related to *Girl in Pieces*, several scholars have highlighted the novel's thematic focus on trauma, abandonment, and self-destruction. Purwarno and Surayya (2022), Sitepu (2020), and Bounefla (2024) analyze the text through psychological and feminist lenses, identifying recurring motifs of cutting, homelessness, and relational betrayal as central to Charlie Davis's journey. These works underscore how Glasgow's protagonist is shaped by repeated exposure to direct trauma—often inflicted by family, romantic partners, and caregivers. Imraini and Harianto (2021) extend this analysis by exploring how gender intensifies Charlie's marginalization, arguing that her emotional expression and vulnerability are penalized in ways that reflect patriarchal norms. The intersection of trauma with gendered expectations illustrates how certain identities are more likely to be rendered voiceless, misdiagnosed, or dismissed.

Trauma theorists such as Judith Herman (2015) and Bessel van der Kolk (2014) provide critical insights into the psychological and embodied impact of long-term trauma, particularly among young people. Herman's concept of complex trauma—sustained and repeated exposure to interpersonal violence—aligns with Charlie's experience of chronic abandonment, instability, and emotional suppression. Van der Kolk's work further explains how unprocessed trauma can be stored in the body and expressed through physical symptoms, dissociation, or self-harming behaviors. This understanding is particularly useful for interpreting Charlie's non-verbal coping mechanisms, including her cutting and emotional withdrawal.

Additionally, Pierre Bourdieu's (2001) theory of symbolic violence offers a framework for understanding how Charlie internalizes her suffering. Symbolic violence refers to the subtle, often invisible, ways in which power is exercised through cultural norms and language, leading individuals to accept their own subjugation as natural or deserved. In *Girl in Pieces*, Charlie often blames herself for the abuse she endures, a response that can be read as a direct consequence of internalized ideological messages about worth, silence, and survival. Bourdieu's theory thus helps explain the deeper, unseen forms of violence that shape Charlie's psychological reality and sense of identity.

More broadly, the field of literary trauma studies has offered significant contributions to understanding how texts represent and interrogate experiences of pain.

Scholars such as Piątek (2014), Armie and Membrive (2023), and Chrisman (2024) contend that trauma narratives in literature serve not only as artistic renderings of psychological states but also as interventions into social discourse. These scholars emphasize that trauma literature dismantles dominant narratives that suppress or simplify emotional complexity, especially in female characters. By highlighting fragmented narrative structures, disrupted chronologies, and stylistic silences, these works illustrate how trauma disrupts traditional storytelling and requires new forms of literary expression.

Taken together, these theoretical and critical perspectives provide a robust foundation for examining *Girl in Pieces* as both a psychological and sociopolitical narrative. The novel does not isolate trauma as an individual affliction; rather, it situates it within a matrix of interpersonal betrayal, institutional failure, and cultural silencing. This literature review establishes the interdisciplinary grounding necessary to analyze the multiple dimensions of violence in the novel, and to explore how YA fiction can serve as a powerful site for trauma-informed critique.

3. Research Method

This study adopts a qualitative content analysis approach to investigate the representation of violence and trauma in Kathleen Glasgow's *Girl in Pieces* (2016), with particular attention to the experiences of the protagonist, Charlie Davis. The aim is to identify, categorize, and interpret how various forms of violence—direct, structural, and symbolic—manifest within the narrative and contribute to the construction of adolescent trauma. This methodology allows for a nuanced reading of literary texts where both form and content are essential to meaning-making (Krippendorff, 2013; Schreier, 2012).

3.1 Theoretical Framework and Analytical Tools

The analysis is grounded in Johan Galtung's (1990) Triangle of Violence, which conceptualizes violence as operating across three interrelated dimensions:

- Direct violence (physical or behavioral harm),
- Structural violence (institutional or systemic harm),
- Symbolic violence (ideological or internalized harm).

This model was selected due to its versatility in analyzing both visible and invisible forms of violence in sociocultural narratives. It enables an intersectional reading of Charlie's experiences, allowing the study to trace how institutional and cultural forces compound individual trauma.

Complementing Galtung's framework, the study employs insights from trauma theory (Herman, 2015; van der Kolk, 2014), which focus on the psychological, embodied, and narratological consequences of trauma. These perspectives inform the interpretation of Charlie's self-harm, fragmented identity, and struggles with memory and voice.

Lastly, the study draws upon sociological literary criticism, particularly Bourdieu's (2001) theory of symbolic power, to understand how cultural norms and language shape the internalization of violence and marginality. Together, these theories form an interdisciplinary lens that situates *Girl in Pieces* as both a psychological and sociopolitical text.

3.2 Data Source and Sampling

The primary data source for this research is the full text of *Girl in Pieces* (Delacorte Press, 2016). The novel was read multiple times to ensure familiarity with its language, character arcs, thematic patterns, and narrative structure.

Purposive sampling was used to select key textual elements, including:

- Narrative events (e.g., hospitalization, homelessness, abuse scenes),
- Character interactions (e.g., Charlie and her mother, Riley, Blue, Casper),
- Interior monologues and stream-of-consciousness passages (e.g., moments of self-harm, reflection, or silence).

These selections were chosen for their thematic density and potential to illuminate how violence operates on multiple levels.

3.3 Coding and Analysis Procedure

The analysis proceeded through several stages:

1. Initial Reading and Memoing

During the first two readings, analytical memos were generated to document initial impressions, recurring motifs (e.g., silence, scars, blood, isolation), and thematic triggers related to trauma and violence.

2. Category Formation

A coding framework was developed using a hybrid approach—both deductive categories based on Galtung’s typology (e.g., direct, structural, symbolic violence), and inductive subcategories derived from the text (e.g., "shelter compliance," "shame and silence," "scars as narrative").

3. Textual Coding

Each selected excerpt was coded and annotated within these categories. For instance, the line “I came here with no clothes... blood seeping through the flowered sheet” was coded as both direct violence (abandonment) and symbolic violence (shaming through exposure and helplessness).

4. Thematic Synthesis

Coded segments were grouped to form larger thematic constructs that illustrate how violence converges. Attention was paid to the cumulative effect of trauma, how various systems (family, education, mental health care) reinforce harm, and how internalized narratives of worthlessness emerge.

5. Theory Integration

In the final phase, findings were mapped back onto the theoretical frameworks. Trauma theory provided interpretive depth for Charlie’s emotional fragmentation and coping mechanisms, while sociological criticism contextualized the systemic dimensions of her suffering.

4. Discussion

4.1 Direct Violence

Direct violence in Kathleen Glasgow’s *Girl in Pieces* functions as both a literal and symbolic force that shapes the protagonist’s psyche, identity, and relationships.

Charlie Davis's world is punctuated by repeated experiences of physical assault, emotional rejection, verbal degradation, and ultimately, self-directed violence. While some aggressors are external—such as her abusive mother and exploitative partners—Charlie's self-harm emerges as an inward manifestation of these unresolved external traumas. The violence is relentless, cyclical, and immersive, conveyed through raw, visceral language that reflects the embodied experience of trauma.

The novel opens with a visceral image of abandonment:

“Like an orphan, I came here with no clothes. Like an orphan, I was wrapped in a bedsheet and left on the lawn of Regions Hospital in the freezing sleet and snow, blood seeping through the flowered sheet.”
(*Glasgow*, 2016, p. 8)

This chilling scene encapsulates the convergence of physical vulnerability and emotional abandonment. The floral sheet, an object typically associated with comfort or domesticity, becomes soaked with Charlie's blood—a potent symbol of how spaces and objects meant to provide safety have instead become complicit in harm. The repetition of “like an orphan” emphasizes her severed familial ties and heightens the image of a child rejected not only by her caregivers but by the very institutions tasked with her protection.

This act of abandonment is an instance of direct neglect, often overlooked in broader discussions of violence. It represents an ultimate disavowal of responsibility by her family and society. It is important to note that the neglect is not passive; it is enacted and intentional—placing a wounded girl in freezing weather without medical assistance is a clear act of direct harm, regardless of its non-physical expression in that moment.

As the narrative unfolds, Charlie's acts of self-harm emerge as an extension of this early external violence. Her body becomes a battleground on which trauma is re-enacted and re-inscribed:

“You could drink, slice, do meth, snort coke, burn, cut, stab, slash, rip out your eyelashes, or fuck till you bleed, and it's all the same thing: self-harm.” (*Glasgow*, 2016, p. 33)

The deliberate use of anaphora (“you could...”) and the extensive list of damaging behaviors normalize and echo the chaotic, compulsive nature of trauma responses. Glasgow's prose is relentless here—breathless, rhythmic, overwhelming—mirroring Charlie's internal state. Each verb conveys immediacy and danger, and their cumulative effect collapses the boundaries between external action and internal intention, showing how trauma can be compulsively re-enacted through the body.

This aligns closely with Bessel van der Kolk's (2014) concept of *the body keeping the score*, whereby trauma that is not processed cognitively is stored somatically. Charlie's body becomes a text written in scars, burns, and bruises—a silent archive of violence that cannot be articulated verbally. Her compulsion to self-injure is not irrational but rather a method of regulation—a perverse attempt at equilibrium.

She articulates this need explicitly:

“My body is on fire all the time, burning me away day and night. I have to cut the black heat out... When I clean myself... I feel better. Cooler inside and calm.” (*Glasgow*, 2016, p. 29)

This metaphor of *fire* suggests intense, unrelenting emotional pain that cannot be extinguished through conventional means. The phrase “cut the black heat out” is particularly evocative—it presents cutting not as violence but as surgery, a desperate, self-administered form of emotional triage. “Cleaning” becomes a ritual of temporary relief, akin to purification—a need to rid herself of psychological toxins.

These acts are rooted in deeper feelings of worthlessness, guilt, and shame, often conditioned by long-standing abuse. Charlie is not simply acting out; she is reenacting what has been done to her. Self-harm becomes a way to assert control over a life marked by powerlessness, where even basic safety has been denied. It is a form of communication when all other avenues have failed, and a method of survival when survival seems undeserved.

Glasgow does not romanticize self-harm but demystifies it. Through unflinching depictions and unsanitized language, she makes readers confront its origins—not as a choice or flaw—but as the culmination of compounding violence. Direct violence, then, is not merely a narrative theme in *Girl in Pieces*, but a foundational condition from which all else—emotional numbness, institutional abandonment, symbolic silencing—emerges.

Overall, direct violence in *Girl in Pieces*: a. Begins externally through parental abuse, neglect, and exploitation, b. Continues internally through cutting, substance abuse, and emotional withdrawal, c. Functions symbolically through language and imagery of fire, blood, and erasure, and d. ultimately reflects a broader societal failure to interrupt cycles of trauma.

This unrelenting portrayal invites not pity but radical empathy—a call for readers to recognize trauma not as a flaw in character, but as a logical consequence of enduring violence and the absence of safety.

4.2 Structural Violence

Structural violence, as defined by Johan Galtung (1990), refers to harm embedded within the very architecture of social systems—where institutions such as healthcare, education, shelter services, and family mechanisms fail to meet human needs or actively marginalize individuals. In *Girl in Pieces*, Charlie Davis’s suffering is not merely the result of interpersonal cruelty but also of systemic dysfunction that prevents her from accessing safety, healing, and dignity. Structural violence in her life is invisible yet omnipresent, revealed through seemingly mundane interactions with schools, hospitals, and shelters.

One scene that powerfully illustrates this occurs when Charlie reflects on her place in the school ecosystem:

“You can spot the girls who will get by because they’re tough, or athletic. And then there’s me... that disheveled kid... who gets shoved in the hallway and called names, because that’s her slot.” (Glasgow, 2016, p. 66)

The term “slot” is damning—it implies a pre-assigned social role, rigid and limiting. Charlie is not just bullied; she is institutionally cast as the expendable, silent sufferer. Schools, ostensibly designed for support and development, become breeding grounds for social exclusion, where certain students—especially those with trauma, poverty, or visible vulnerability—are shunted into roles that reflect broader societal hierarchies.

This echoes Pierre Bourdieu's (2001) theory of symbolic power, in which institutions use implicit rules and classifications to reinforce social divisions. Charlie is aware of her "disheveled" appearance and the labels attached to her, and rather than receiving intervention or empathy, she is relegated to structural invisibility.

The novel also demonstrates how institutional "care" often comes at the cost of personal agency, especially in shelters and transitional homes. Consider this reflection:

"I'm inside and warm and I can do this if it means I get to stay. That's what matters right now: following the rules so I can stay inside."

(Glasgow, 2016, p. 28)

This line speaks volumes about conditional survival. Basic human needs—shelter, warmth, protection—are made contingent upon docility and compliance. Charlie's survival is not a right but a privilege she must earn through silence and conformity. The rules are not designed with trauma sensitivity; instead, they are rigid, paternalistic, and often insensitive to the psychological volatility of trauma survivors.

Shelters in the novel become disciplinary spaces rather than healing ones. These spaces surveil and regulate behavior, reinforcing the notion that victims must "perform" recovery in acceptable ways to be deemed worthy of care. This reinforces a cycle of dependence and voicelessness, where Charlie's need for safety silences her self-expression.

Further highlighting the erosion of relational trust is a moment from group therapy, when Casper, the counselor, asks:

"Who keeps your secrets?"

This deceptively simple question lays bare a foundational absence in Charlie's world. She has no confidant, no consistent source of emotional safety. Her secrets—representing her trauma, fears, and truth—are unshared and unprocessed. This failure is not just personal; it is structural, rooted in a society that stigmatizes vulnerability and fails to create environments for disclosure and healing.

In trauma-informed frameworks, the absence of "a safe other" is considered one of the most damaging aspects of chronic trauma (Herman, 2015). Charlie's isolation is both an effect and a cause of structural violence. Her family, school, state, and care institutions all abdicate their responsibility, forcing her into a precarious emotional survival mode. As a result, she internalizes mistrust and shame, which compounds her self-destructive behavior.

Importantly, *Girl in Pieces* does not portray institutions as neutral or merely ineffective—it reveals them as active participants in Charlie's continued suffering. Even when she seeks help, the bureaucratic or impersonal nature of these systems alienates her further. Their "help" often resembles containment more than compassion.

Structural violence in *Girl in Pieces* does not occur in isolation. Rather, it: Reinforces direct violence by failing to intervene when abuse is visible, Precedes symbolic violence by embedding shame in the very structures that claim to offer support, and Perpetuates silence by making expression risky and costly.

It is through these systems—education, shelters, and health care—that Charlie learns her suffering must be quiet, compliant, and hidden to earn the bare minimum of subsistence.

4.3 Symbolic Violence

Symbolic violence, as theorized by Pierre Bourdieu (2001), refers to the invisible, internalized harm caused by dominant ideologies—where people come to accept and normalize their own subordination. Unlike direct or structural violence, symbolic violence does not require a visible aggressor; it operates through language, norms, silence, and the internalization of social hierarchies. In *Girl in Pieces*, symbolic violence saturates Charlie Davis's self-perception, shaping not only how she views herself but also what she believes she deserves.

A pivotal expression of this internalized narrative occurs when Charlie reflects:
“Girls like me don’t get better. We don’t get the best friend, the boy, the new life. We get pills and jail.” (Glasgow, 2016, p. 248)

This statement exposes a deeply rooted cultural script about broken girls—those who self-harm, live in poverty, or struggle with trauma. Charlie's internal monologue shows that she has absorbed the belief that healing and happiness are for “others.” Her identity is confined to socially ascribed roles: *the broken one, the burden, the liability*. This is symbolic violence in its purest form—when oppression is no longer enforced externally because it is policed from within.

Further, Glasgow draws attention to the gendered double standards embedded in trauma discourse:

“There are stories of boys who break, but people forgive them. There are stories of girls who break, but people hate them.” (Glasgow, 2016, p. 259)

This sharp contrast illustrates how cultural sympathy is unequally distributed. Boys are seen as tragic, misunderstood; girls are treated as problems to be silenced or erased. Glasgow here indicts the misogynistic framing of trauma, where feminine pain is often pathologized or punished rather than healed. The result is that girls like Charlie are not just suffering—they are stigmatized for suffering.

Charlie's response to this is not rebellion but silence—a trauma-adapted strategy of invisibility:

“When you’re a girl like me, silence is safer. Words are dangerous—they get you noticed. And when you get noticed, you get hurt.” (Glasgow, 2016, p. 203)

Symbolic violence teaches Charlie that *visibility is vulnerability*. Her silence is not a lack of voice but a conditioned behavior: she has learned that speaking results in disbelief, punishment, or abandonment. Judith Herman (2015) notes that one of the first casualties of trauma is voice—survivors lose the sense that their story matters, or that anyone will listen.

The novel's style also embodies symbolic fragmentation. Glasgow's fragmented syntax, poetic prose, and white space mirror the broken narrative of trauma. These stylistic choices are not merely aesthetic—they are structural representations of Charlie's fractured consciousness. Language itself becomes uncertain, unstable—reflecting not only trauma's disruption of linear memory (van der Kolk, 2014) but also a cultural system that denies coherence to female pain.

Furthermore, the shaming of female emotion is an insidious force of symbolic violence. Charlie frequently censors her own emotional responses, fearing they will be

interpreted as weakness, instability, or manipulation. Even when she begins to heal, her progress is clouded by guilt over taking up space, over needing care. These beliefs are not irrational—they are learned behaviors, acquired through years of cultural messaging and social rejection. The symbolic tells her she is unworthy before she ever opens her mouth.

4.4 Interrelation of Violence Types

While Johan Galtung's model of violence distinguishes between direct, structural, and symbolic forms, *Girl in Pieces* demonstrates that these categories are deeply entangled, functioning less like isolated modes of harm and more like interlocking systems. For Charlie Davis, these layers of violence form a self-reinforcing matrix, where each form not only causes pain but legitimizes and sustains the others. Her trauma cannot be understood through any single lens—only through the convergence of personal, institutional, and ideological injury.

Charlie's self-harm (direct violence) cannot be reduced to a symptom of mental illness or individual dysfunction. Instead, it emerges from the failure of external systems (structural violence) to offer protection, stability, or care, and from her internalized belief that she is unworthy of healing (symbolic violence).

This entanglement is exemplified when Charlie reflects on her abandonment and lack of connection: "*Who keeps your secrets?*" – a recurring question posed by her counselor, Casper.

Charlie's inability to answer reveals relational trauma: no family member, institution, or peer has ever provided a safe container for her truth. The trauma is not only in what happened to her, but in the absence of witnesses—people who could have seen and responded, but didn't. This absence is not accidental. It reflects a broader social logic that invisibilizes the pain of girls like Charlie—those who are poor, damaged, and nonconforming.

Her trauma, then, is not only chronic but culturally sanctioned:

- Cultural narratives normalize institutional failures: Girls who self-harm are often labeled "attention-seeking" or unstable, reducing the urgency to offer them meaningful support.
- Institutions neglect those culturally framed as troubled: If Charlie is already viewed as deviant, her needs are deprioritized or dismissed by the very systems meant to help her.
- Direct abuse is overlooked because symbolic and structural frameworks have already declared her life marginal.

This is what Bourdieu (2001) calls the "misrecognition of violence"—where systemic harm is rendered invisible because its targets are deemed unworthy of protection. Charlie's story becomes emblematic of how girls in pain are not only silenced but held responsible for their own suffering.

The novel offers repeated evidence of how this convergence breeds chronic emotional instability. Charlie's trauma is not healed over time—it is sustained by an environment that constantly echoes her perceived disposability. Each time she tries to reach out—to Blue, to Riley, to her mother—she is met with betrayal, indifference, or further harm. This repeated cycle of retraumatization underscores Herman's (2015) claim that recovery cannot begin in an unsafe environment.

More profoundly, this convergence makes Charlie feel as though her pain is not only expected but deserved: *"I'm not worth the effort. I know it."* Such statements reveal the ultimate victory of symbolic violence: when the subject of oppression not only accepts their dehumanization but self-polices their need for help.

Despite the pervasive entrapment of Galtung's triangle, *Girl in Pieces* does not resign itself to despair. Glasgow threads the narrative with subtle but powerful moments of resistance—acts that, though small, signal the possibility of breaking the cycle.

Charlie's return to drawing and mural painting marks her first attempt to reclaim her narrative. Art functions not only as therapy but as counter-speech—a language she controls. It becomes a site where she is not reduced to diagnoses or files, but allowed to create, to assert presence.

Relationships with characters like Blue and Linus, though imperfect, offer glimpses of non-extractive care. They allow Charlie to exist without needing to justify her pain. These connections demonstrate the importance of relational repair in trauma recovery—a key component in Herman's (2015) model of healing through reconnection.

The novel's final chapters show Charlie speaking more openly in group sessions, confronting past relationships, and setting boundaries. While these acts are not dramatic, they mark a shift from passive survival to active agency. Her voice, once stifled by symbolic violence, begins to re-emerge—not loud, but deliberate: *"Maybe I don't have to be that girl anymore. Maybe I can be something else."* (Glasgow, 2016, p. 314) This moment of self-reflection is not a full resolution—but a refusal of determinism. It signals that healing is not a destination, but a subversive act: a refusal to remain defined by the violence done to you.

5. Conclusion

Kathleen Glasgow's *Girl in Pieces* powerfully dramatizes how trauma in a young woman's life is never singular. It is direct and interpersonal, but also structural and systemic—and most dangerously, symbolic and internalized. Charlie Davis does not merely endure harm; she lives in a social world that repeatedly affirms that her pain is inevitable, her voice irrelevant, and her future foreclosed.

By using Galtung's model of violence as a critical lens, we uncover a matrix of mutually reinforcing harms that helps explain why trauma, particularly for marginalized girls, is so difficult to escape. The novel's literary choices—fragmented prose, symbolic imagery, and fluid temporalities—are not just stylistic flourishes but narrative enactments of trauma's chaos and recurrence.

Yet Glasgow insists that while trauma may fracture identity, it does not erase the possibility of rebuilding. In portraying Charlie's slow, halting journey toward recovery—through art, community, and language—*Girl in Pieces* becomes not just a narrative of suffering, but also of subversion. It offers readers a profound insight: that violence can be structural, but so can resistance.

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THE USE OF VIRTUAL REALITY (VR) IN ENHANCING PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS IN RECEPTIVE ORAL LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract

This study aims to examine how Virtual Reality (VR) can enhance students' public speaking skills in Receptive Oral Language Learning. VR provides a realistic and interactive environment that allows learners to practice speaking without the pressure of a real audience. Through VR, students can engage in various scenarios, receive immediate feedback, and improve their confidence and fluency in public speaking. This research employed a mixed-method approach involving interviews, documentation, and questionnaires. The findings indicate that VR is an effective tool for improving both verbal and non-verbal communication. Quantitative results show that 80% of students strongly agreed and 20% agreed that VR enhances their public speaking performance. Qualitative feedback further revealed that VR practice reduced anxiety and increased learners' motivation. However, challenges such as the high cost of VR equipment, limited accessibility, and health-related comfort issues were also identified. Overall, VR is proven to be a valuable pedagogical tool for improving students' public speaking competence and receptive oral language learning outcomes.

Keywords: *Public Speaking; Receptive Oral Language Learning; Speaking Simulation; Virtual Reality (VR)*

1. Introduction

Public speaking remains a persistent challenge for many language learners, often hindered by anxiety, limited access to realistic practice, and insufficient exposure to authentic audience feedback. Traditional pedagogical approaches—such as classroom presentations, peer evaluations, and instructor feedback—have long served as the primary methods of instruction. However, these approaches exhibit notable limitations. Speaking before classmates does not always replicate real-world communicative settings, restricting learners' ability to adapt to diverse audiences and contexts. Furthermore, large classroom environments often reduce individual speaking opportunities, thereby limiting meaningful practice and improvement. Such circumstances may even heighten speech anxiety, as students frequently feel judged or self-conscious under peer observation.

In contrast, virtual reality (VR) offers a safe, immersive, and repeatable environment in which learners can engage in authentic speaking experiences without the pressure of real audiences. Recent studies demonstrate that VR can substantially enhance engagement and provide embodied learning experiences that traditional methods fail to deliver (Cai, 2022, meta-analysis of VR-assisted language learning). For instance, Rissman et al. (2022) found that learners in VR environments retained more vocabulary than those in non-immersive conditions, suggesting that immersion—or the sense of “presence” in a virtual world—is a critical factor in effective learning outcomes.

In the context of language education, a growing body of research from 2020 to 2024 has further underscored the pedagogical value of VR. Cai’s (2022) meta-analysis reported that VR-assisted language learning produced moderate effects on both linguistic (Hedges’ $g = 0.662$) and affective gains (Hedges’ $g = 0.570$) across 21 quantitative studies. Similarly, Ozgun and Sadik (2023) conducted a systematic review of 32 studies and concluded that VR enhances learner motivation and interactivity, though challenges such as technical constraints and reduced teacher–student interaction remain. Kaplan-Rakowski and Gruber (2023) also found that high-immersion VR significantly reduced foreign language anxiety (FLA) during public speaking tasks compared with video-conferencing tools like Zoom, further validating VR’s role as a supportive platform for oral communication training. Moreover, Le, Prabjandee, and Kewara (2024) examined the use of VR in an English as a Lingua Franca context and reported that a ten-week mixed-methods intervention improved university students’ self-efficacy in both listening and speaking skills. Collectively, these findings suggest that VR contributes not only to linguistic development but also to communicative competence and confidence in public speaking contexts.

Given these demonstrated benefits, VR represents a promising pedagogical innovation for enhancing public speaking performance within the framework of *Receptive Oral Language Skills* (ROLS)—a course that emphasizes the integrated development of speaking and listening fluency. Through VR-based learning, students can participate in simulated communicative scenarios such as presentations, interviews, or large-audience speeches. These activities allow for repetitive, low-pressure practice, immediate feedback, and gradual confidence-building. Such design principles are consistent with the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006), which advocates for the meaningful integration of content, pedagogy, and technology to create effective learning experiences.

Accordingly, this study aims to explore how VR-based learning environments can support the development of key components of effective public speaking—namely audience engagement, speech clarity, and responsiveness to listener cues—within a Receptive Oral Language Skills course. In addition, the study investigates learners’ perceptions, encountered challenges, and the overall effectiveness of VR-based interventions in enhancing confidence and communicative performance.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)

The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework is a model that describes the essential types of knowledge teachers need to effectively integrate technology into their teaching. It developed by Mishra and Koehler (2006) that TPACK emphasizes the intersection of three core components, they are: Content

Knowledge (CK), which refers to a teacher's understanding of the subject matter; Pedagogical Knowledge (PK), which involves knowing how to teach and manage learning effectively and Technological Knowledge (TK), which includes the ability to use and adapt various digital tools and platforms. The strength of the TPACK framework lies in how these knowledge areas overlap, guiding teachers to design meaningful and technology enhanced learning experiences. For instance, in teaching public speaking through virtual reality (VR), TPACK would require a teacher to understand the content of public speaking (CK), apply effective teaching methods such as practice and feedback (PK), and skilfully use VR tools to simulate realistic speaking environments (TK). By integrating all three domains, TPACK helps educators ensure that technology use is purposeful, pedagogically sound, and aligned with learning goals. According to Wahdi (2023) the development of VR based on learning media to build TPACK for prospective physics teachers. The prospective physics teachers need more support and tools to integrate VR (or similar immersive tech) into their instruction design that aligns content knowledge and pedagogy.

2.2 Virtual Reality (VR)

Conversation simulation is a training method that mimics real-life interactions between two or more people for educational or training purposes. This technique is widely used in language learning, job training, and customer service contexts to help participants develop communication skills, build confidence, and prepare for real social situations.

Meanwhile, according to Cowie (2025) VR is described as technology that can create three dimensional, immersive environments in which users can interact. These environments may use head mounted displays (HMDs), fully immersive setups, or less immersive but still interactive platforms (PCs, mobile devices). The level of immersion (how much the virtual environment feels "real") is an important distinguishing factor.

In the learning of Receptive Oral Language Skills, VR is used to create interactive experiences in which students can practice speaking in various realistic scenarios such as presentations, discussions, or interviews. This technology supports the development of both verbal and non-verbal communication, including facial expressions and body language. Davis (2015) argues that Virtual Reality (VR) serves as an innovative teaching tool that provides realistic and interactive learning experiences. Through VR simulation, learners can practice in safe, controlled environments that mirror real-world situations, thereby enhancing engagement, confidence, and professional readiness. Davis highlights that VR supports experiential learning by allowing students to develop practical skills more effectively. Students are also given the opportunity for repeated practice, vocabulary building, pronunciation improvement, and receiving feedback tailored to their individual abilities, making the learning process more personalized and effective.

Many studies note that VR can increase student motivation, engagement, and reduce anxiety, for example foreign language anxiety because VR offers safe practice environments. Students seem more willing to take risks (Kaplan-Rakowski & Gruber, 2023).

Various types of VR devices support immersive learning experiences, starting with VR headsets such as the Meta Quest, Oculus Rift, and HTC, which serve as primary tools for entering virtual environments. VR controllers like the Oculus Touch and Vive Controllers allow users to interact directly within virtual spaces, supported by

motion sensors and trackers that accurately map body movements. For a more realistic experience, VR gloves such as Manus VR Gloves provide tactile sensations, while VR suits and haptic devices like the Tesla suit and haptic vests deliver physical feedback to the user's body. In addition, VR simulators are used for specialized training, such as driving or flight simulations. According to Siahaan (2015) All these devices work in conjunction with VR applications and software including educational apps and interactive games which enrich the learning experience in an engaging and interactive way.

Overall, the use of VR in education offers an innovative approach to enhancing students' public speaking skills in a fun, interactive, and effective manner. This technology holds the potential to become a powerful educational tool, provided that it is used wisely and according to learners' needs.

2.3 Public Speaking

Public speaking is more than just speaking in front of people. Some experts define it as a structured activity involving clear communication, audience engagement, effective verbal and non-verbal strategies, and the speaker's ability to organize and present ideas meaningfully. According to Khoirunisa & Pratama (2024), found that public speaking skills are central in 21st-century education due to their role in fostering students' self-confidence, critical thinking, and communicative competence.

According to Jasuli, Hartatik, and Astuti (2024) the components of effective public speaking are:

- a. Nonverbal communication / body language: Gestures, facial expressions, posture, eye contact. These nonverbal cues increase perceived credibility, clarity, and audience engagement particularly for English language learners.
- b. Self-confidence & self-concept: show a strong, positive relationship between a speaker's self-esteem and their public speaking performance.
For example, "The Relationship of Self-Esteem and Public Speaking Skills among Humanities and Social Sciences Students" showed that students with higher self-esteem handled nervousness better and engaged more confidently.
- c. Speech organization and clarity: Effective public speaking demands good structure introduction, well-developed arguments or main ideas, transitions, and a strong conclusion. Also, clarity in language, logical flow, and content relevance are repeatedly noted.
- d. Handling anxiety / communication apprehension: Many studies report that public speaking anxiety is a major barrier for learners. The degree of apprehension can negatively influence fluency, performance, and willingness to participate.
- e. Enabling better interaction with audiences, persuasion, and clarity in communication. Nonverbal behaviour and audience-sensitive delivery are repeatedly cited.

One of the most benefits of VR in communication training is its ability to provide low stakes practice environments that help learners gradually build speaking confidence. Kaplan-Rakowski and Gruber (2023) found that learners using high immersion VR reported significantly reduced foreign language anxiety compared to those using video conferencing platforms. This supports the idea that immersive practice buffers the psychological stress associated with real-time communication.

In another study, Enkin (2022) emphasized that learners using VR for language practice appreciated the non-judgmental environment, which helped them feel more comfortable experimenting with new vocabulary and sentence structures. These findings reinforce VR's value as a “safe space” for communicative experimentation, particularly for learners with high communication apprehension.

2.4 Receptive Oral Language Skills

Receptive Oral Language Skills is a course that covers listening and speaking skills, with a focus on enhancing students' English-speaking proficiency. Consistent practice helps students achieve greater fluency in the language. To support effective learning, appropriate media and methods are needed to develop key aspects such as pronunciation, fluency, intonation, and expression. The integration of 4C skills critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity in this course is expected to enhance students' overall English language competence.

Abdushukurova (2024) said that exploring effective teaching of receptive skills in reading & listening highlights the importance of integrating technology, culturally relevant materials, differentiated instruction, and methods that encourage learner autonomy. These help address learners' varying prior experiences, abilities, and needs. Overall, current literature supports the use of VR as a valid and effective medium for conversation simulation and public speaking training. The immersive nature of VR helps learners build confidence, improve fluency, and develop both verbal and non-verbal communicative competence. While technical and pedagogical limitations exist, ongoing advancements in VR interactivity, audience realism, and feedback mechanisms are gradually addressing these gaps. The reviewed studies underscore VR's potential to serve as a scalable, engaging, and effective supplement or even alternative to traditional public speaking instruction.

3. Research Method

This study implemented the use of Virtual Reality (VR) in teaching Receptive Oral Language Skills through a mixed-methods approach. A mixed-methods design combines quantitative and qualitative procedures within a single investigation to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem. It involves the collection of numerical data (e.g., test scores, surveys) alongside qualitative evidence (e.g., interview responses, observations), which are then integrated during analysis and interpretation. According to Zhou, Zhou, and Machtmes (2024), mixed-methods research in education employs innovative integration strategies—such as combining structured surveys with open-ended items and using side-by-side narrative reporting—to address the limitations of relying solely on either quantitative or qualitative methods.

3.1 Participants

The study involved 24 students from the English Department at the State University of Medan who were enrolled in the Receptive Oral Language Skills course. These participants were selected based on their enrollment in the course and their willingness to participate in the study.

3.2 Instruments

Several instruments were used to collect data. Questionnaires and interview sheets were designed to assess students' public speaking performance, focusing on

fluency, clarity, pronunciation, confidence, and comprehension. Additionally, an observation checklist and a speaking rubric were employed to evaluate students' performances during both classroom and VR-based activities. A five-point Likert-scale questionnaire was also distributed to gather students' perceptions of VR as a learning tool.

3.3 Procedure

The study was conducted over a six-week period. In the first week, both the experimental and control groups completed a pre-test to determine their baseline speaking proficiency. Over the next four weeks, the experimental group participated in VR-based speaking sessions using applications such as Virtual Speech or similar platforms. These platforms simulated realistic public speaking environments—such as classrooms, auditoriums, and job interviews—providing an immersive and interactive context for practice. Meanwhile, the control group continued with traditional instruction through classroom presentations and peer feedback activities. During the final week, both groups completed a post-test to measure their progress. Afterward, the experimental group responded to a reflective questionnaire regarding their experiences with VR-based learning.

3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data from pre-tests and post-tests were analyzed to compare improvements in public speaking performance between the experimental and control groups. Qualitative data from interviews and open-ended questionnaire items were examined thematically to identify students' perceptions, challenges, and attitudes toward VR use in oral language learning. The integration of both data types provided a richer and more balanced interpretation of the effectiveness of VR in enhancing receptive oral language skills.

4. Discussion

The use of Virtual Reality (VR) in Receptive oral language skills learning requires a set of devices to create an immersive and interactive learning experience. The primary device is a VR headset such as the Bobo VR Z6 used in this study which relies on a smartphone to display the virtual environment. In addition, VR controllers are used to interact with the virtual space, allowing users to select, move objects, or navigate through simulations.

The learning process began with an opening activity, during which the lecturer initiated the class by presenting the topic, basic competencies, and learning indicators, and invited students to discuss personal appearances. In the main activity, the lecturer explained the preparation stages of public speaking and played a sample presentation video, which students analysed in terms of content, body language, and vocal intonation. Students were then divided into groups to provide feedback and design speaking activities based on various types of presentations, such as auditorium presentations, research presentations, interviews, and group discussions. This activity fostered the development of the 4C skills: communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creative thinking. Students were also encouraged to give peer feedback using the provided platforms. The session concluded with students summarizing what they had learned, while the lecturer recapped the material and provided assignments and information on the topic for the next meeting.

a. Auditorium Presentation

An auditorium presentation in public speaking refers to the delivery of material or a speech in front of a larger audience, typically conducted in spacious venues such as auditoriums or large halls. The VR-based speech presentation was implemented through several stages as follows:

1) Content Preparation

Before delivering their speech presentations, students prepared a script to ensure that their presentation was well-structured and tailored to the audience's needs. In this stage, the lecturer also guided the students and ensured that the message to be conveyed was clear and understandable to a broader audience.

2) Spatial Awareness

During the auditorium-style presentation, speakers were encouraged to utilize the space strategically, moving across different areas to capture the attention of the audience in various corners of the room. Students did not remain in one spot but engaged the audience through purposeful body movement.

3) Opening Stage of the Presentation

As the presentation took place in a large space, speakers had to use their voice effectively. During the practice session, they were trained to project their voice to reach the entire audience, apply engaging intonation, and maintain clarity in their speech to ensure a strong and effective opening.

4) Delivery Stage of the Presentation

Although the presentation was conducted virtually, speakers were instructed to stay focused and maintain virtual “eye contact” with different sections of the audience, simulating real-world engagement. This helped establish an emotional connection with the audience. During the practice, students were able to deliver their messages fluently, and the presentation content was conveyed clearly.

5) Closing Stage of the Presentation

Speakers demonstrated an understanding of audience characteristics and adjusted their delivery style to resonate with the listeners. In the closing stage, students successfully captured the audience's attention and ended their speech presentations effectively and memorably.

b. Research Presentation

A research presentation in public speaking is the process of delivering information, ideas, or messages orally to an audience, with the aim of informing, persuading, inspiring, or entertaining. In this type of presentation, speakers use various communication techniques verbal (spoken words), non-verbal (body language), and visual aids (such as slides, charts, or images) to strengthen the message being conveyed. Presentations may take place in different contexts, such as seminars, conferences, business meetings, lectures, or other public events. The primary goal is to ensure that the audience understands and is possibly inspired by the message. The implementation of research presentations using VR in this study was divided into three main phases: preparation, execution, and closure.

1) Preparation (Pre-Presentation)

In the initial stage, students determined the purpose of their presentation whether to inform, inspire, or persuade the audience. After writing their scripts, they practiced several times before using VR. These practice sessions helped build confidence, manage time, and ensure a smooth and coherent presentation flow.

2) Execution (During Presentation)

The use of VR in the training process revealed a high level of confidence among students. They demonstrated varied intonation, volume, and speaking pace to avoid monotony and maintain the audience's attention. They were also able to manage their time effectively, as they could view a timer during the presentation, allowing them to cover all content without rushing at the end.

3) Closure (Post-Presentation)

Students concluded their presentations by summarizing key points and reconnecting with the initial objective. They delivered strong closing remarks such as a call to action or an inspiring thought. Additionally, they were well-prepared for the Q&A session, asking for clarification when questions were unclear, responding confidently and respectfully, and ending their presentations with a polite thank-you.

4.1 The Use of Virtual Reality (VR) in Learning ROLS

The implementation of Public Speaking activities using Virtual Reality (VR) was carried out through the use of the Fondi and Big Talk applications. Receptive Oral Language Skills course, particularly the topic Describing People, was carried out through a series of activities involving audio, video, and Virtual Reality (VR) media.

The learning process began with an opening activity, during which the lecturer initiated the class by presenting the topic, basic competencies, and learning indicators, and invited students to discuss personal appearances. In the main activity, the lecturer explained the preparation stages of public speaking and played a sample presentation video, which students analysed in terms of content, body language, and vocal intonation. Students were then divided into groups to provide feedback and design speaking activities based on various types of presentations, such as auditorium presentations, research presentations, interviews, and group discussions. This activity fostered the development of the 4C skills. Students were also encouraged to give peer feedback using the provided platforms. The session concluded with students summarizing what they had learned, while the lecturer recapped the material and provided assignments and information on the topic for the next meeting.

The results of the study indicated a significant improvement in the public speaking performance of students who were exposed to Virtual Reality (VR) as part of the learning. Both the experimental and control groups were given a pre-test and post-test assessing several components of public speaking: fluency, pronunciation, clarity, confidence, eye contact (simulated in VR), and receptive oral comprehension.

The experimental group, which used VR simulations to practice public speaking in immersive environments, showed a notable increase in their mean post-test scores compared to their pre-test.

No	Group	The Average Score	
		Pre- Test	Post- Test
1	Experimental Group	68.4	85.2
2	Control Group	67.9	75.6

Table 1. The Average Score

The average score increased from 68.4 to 85.2, indicating substantial progress. Meanwhile, the control group, which practiced through traditional classroom presentations and peer feedback, also showed improvement, but to a lesser extent, with scores rising from 67.9 to 75.6 on average.

Statistical analysis using an independent samples t-test showed that the difference in the post-test scores between the two groups was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), confirming that the VR-based intervention had a positive effect on public speaking skills.

4.2 Students' Responses to Virtual Reality Conversation Simulations in Receptive Oral Language Skills (ROLS) Learning

This section presents the results of a questionnaire distributed to students after they received instruction in Receptive Oral Language Skills (ROLS) using Virtual Reality (VR) media. The questionnaire was designed to assess students' understanding, confidence, and perceptions regarding the use of VR in the learning process. Each item in the questionnaire explored key aspects such as their comprehension of the material, the relevance of VR in education, the digital skills acquired, and their motivation to use VR in future learning experiences. The results of the questionnaire are presented in the diagram below.

Question	Number	Percentages	Result
“The use of VR media boosts my confidence in speaking English,	16	53.3 %	Strongly Agree
	6	20 %	Agree
	7	23.3%	Uncertainty
	1	3.3 %	Disagree

Table 2. The percentages of the students' response 1

According to the percentage, for the students' responses the statement, “The use of VR media boosts my confidence in speaking English,” received strong agreement from 16 students (53.3%), agreement from 6 students (20%), uncertainty from 7 students (23.3%), and disagreement from 1 student (3.3%).

Question	Number	Percentages	Result
“Using VR media enhances my English language skills,”	24	80%	Strongly Agree
	6	20 %	Agree
	0	0%	Uncertainty
	0	0 %	Disagree

Table 3. The percentage of the student's response 2

For statement, “Using VR media enhances my English language skills,” 24 students (80%) strongly agreed, 6 students (20%).

Question	Number	Percentages	Result
“VR media is highly effective in Receptive Oral Language Skills Learning	28	93%	Strongly Agree
	2	7 %	Agree
	0	0%	Uncertainty
	0	0 %	Disagree

Table 4. The percentage of the student’s response 3

Lastly, for statement, “VR media is highly effective in ROLS instruction,” 28 students (93%) strongly agreed, 2 students (7%) agreed.

In addition to performance scores, qualitative feedback from students in the experimental group gathered through post-intervention questionnaires revealed that 80% of participants felt more confident speaking in front of an audience and 93 % strongly agreed that VR made the learning experience more engaging and realistic. Many students noted that the virtual audience helped simulate real-life pressure without the anxiety of actual peer judgment.

4.3 Challenges in Using Virtual Reality Conversation Simulations in Receptive Oral Language Skills (ROLS) Learning

The use of Virtual Reality (VR)-based conversation simulations in the teaching of Receptive Oral Language Skills (ROLS) holds significant potential for enhancing students’ listening comprehension and overall understanding of English conversations. However, several challenges must be addressed to ensure the effective and inclusive implementation of this technology. The following outlines some of the key obstacles:

1) Cost of Virtual Reality (VR) Equipment

The hardware required for VR such as headsets and compatible computers demands a significant financial investment.

2) Limited Access

Not all students have access to VR devices or a stable internet connection when using VR. As a result, some speaking activities may be disrupted, and audio quality may be unclear.

3) Health and User Comfort Issues

Prolonged use of VR headsets can lead to side effects such as eye strain and dizziness. These issues must be considered in the design of content and the duration of learning sessions to ensure student comfort and safety.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Virtual Reality (VR) holds substantial potential for enhancing students’ public speaking skills, particularly within the context of Receptive Oral Language Learning. The immersive and interactive qualities of VR create authentic speaking environments that allow learners to practice with reduced anxiety and greater engagement. Such experiences foster confidence, fluency, listening comprehension, and overall communicative competence. Moreover, the learner-centered and low-stress atmosphere of VR-based practice aligns closely with contemporary pedagogical frameworks such as Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), which emphasizes the meaningful integration of technology, pedagogy, and content.

For language educators, integrating VR technology into public speaking or oral communication courses can serve as an effective complement to conventional teaching methods. VR can simulate real-life speaking contexts—such as presentations, interviews, or debates—providing students with safe, repeatable spaces to practice and refine their skills. To maximize its educational impact, teachers should receive proper training to ensure that VR is applied purposefully and pedagogically, not merely as a technological novelty.

Future research should investigate the long-term influence of VR on learners' oral communication skills across varying proficiency levels and educational settings. Larger and more diverse participant samples, along with longitudinal designs, are needed to examine the sustainability and retention of communicative gains achieved through VR-based learning. Additionally, comparative studies between immersive VR, semi-immersive systems, and augmented reality (AR) platforms could reveal the differential benefits of these technologies. Exploring learners' affective dimensions—such as anxiety, motivation, and self-efficacy—would further contribute to a holistic understanding of how immersive technologies shape the experience of language learning.

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INHERITED SHAME AND IDENTITY FRAGMENTATION IN KENZABURŌ ŌE'S *THE SILENT CRY*: A FREUDIAN PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH

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Abstract

This article examines the psychological disintegration of Takashi, the central character in Kenzaburō Ōe's *The Silent Cry*, through the lens of Freudian psychoanalysis. Drawing on Sigmund Freud's structural theory of the psyche—particularly the dynamics of the id, ego, and superego—this study explores how identity crisis, generational trauma, and defense mechanisms shape Takashi's internal conflict and destructive behavior. The analysis reveals that Takashi's revolutionary actions are not driven by coherent political ideology, but by inherited shame, repressed grief, and the failure of ego mediation. His descent into violence and mania is interpreted as a symbolic enactment of psychological collapse, wherein inherited guilt and unresolved trauma override rationality and self-regulation. The superego, as portrayed in the novel, functions not only as a moral compass but as a punitive legacy passed through family and cultural memory. This study also highlights the interplay of defense mechanisms—such as projection, rationalization, denial, and sublimation—that ultimately fail to contain his psychic distress. By interpreting *The Silent Cry* as a narrative of personal and national trauma, this paper demonstrates how literature can serve as a site for exploring deep psychological wounds, especially those stemming from unspoken histories and familial burden.

Keywords: *Freudian psychoanalysis; Identity crisis; Intergenerational trauma; Ego defense mechanisms*

1. Introduction

Kenzaburō Ōe's *The Silent Cry* (1967) has been widely recognized as a landmark in Japanese postwar literature, exploring the intricacies of human psychology, family trauma, and national identity through dense narrative symbolism and philosophical introspection. Central to the novel is the psychological conflict between two brothers, Mitsusaburo and Takashi, whose divergent responses to inherited trauma evoke a deeper commentary on Japan's struggle with memory, guilt, and postwar identity. Scholars have increasingly turned to psychoanalytic criticism—especially Freudian theory—to decode the novel's complex representations of unconscious motivation, repression, and identity fragmentation (Bukhari, 2022; Nadjari, 2022).

Freudian psychoanalysis provides a compelling framework for understanding Takashi's erratic behavior, as it elucidates how unconscious drives and unresolved childhood trauma shape adult pathology. The triadic model of the psyche—id, ego, and superego—offers insights into the internal tension between instinctual impulses and socially conditioned repression. According to Freud (1961/1923), the ego functions as a mediator between the primitive drives of the id and the moral constraints of the superego. In Takashi's case, this mediation collapses under the weight of intergenerational guilt and suppressed historical memory, resulting in destructive behavior masked as rebellion.

More recent studies underscore the relevance of psychoanalysis in interpreting narratives of postwar dislocation and trauma. Nadjari (2022) emphasizes the role of repressed national trauma in shaping postwar Japanese protagonists, while Bukhari (2022) explores how identity crisis in modern fiction often emerges from the failure of psychic structures to contain inherited loss. In *The Silent Cry*, Takashi embodies such a failure; his actions reflect a symbolic reenactment of familial and cultural trauma transmitted through generations. Literature becomes a medium for exposing and reimagining the unconscious wounds of history.

This article investigates how Freudian psychoanalysis can be applied to Takashi's character, interpreting his identity crisis as a manifestation of unresolved trauma and the breakdown of ego defenses. By tracing the psychic mechanisms underlying his rebellion and collapse, this study aims to demonstrate how *The Silent Cry* dramatizes the psychological inheritance of shame, guilt, and memory—revealing literature's capacity to give voice to the silences of the unconscious.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Freud's Structural Theory and Literary Analysis

Sigmund Freud's structural model of the psyche—the id, ego, and superego—has long provided a critical framework for analyzing fictional characters in terms of their unconscious motivations and psychological conflicts. According to Freud (1961/1923), the ego functions as a mediator between the instinctual desires of the id and the moralistic demands of the superego, a tension often central to character development and narrative progression. In literature, this framework allows for deep exploration of internal struggles, particularly in texts where identity is fractured by trauma or repression.

Abdollahzadeh and Gholami (2022) argue that many postwar fictional characters, especially in trauma literature, exhibit a dysfunctional ego unable to reconcile primal drives and social expectations. This failure often manifests in erratic or self-destructive behavior—such as that displayed by Takashi in *The Silent Cry*. Freud's theory thus enables a nuanced reading of Takashi's rebellion as a psychological symptom rather than ideological resistance.

2.2 Trauma, Identity, and Ego Defense Mechanisms

Freudian concepts such as repression, denial, projection, and sublimation are essential in understanding how trauma distorts identity. Farahani and Derakhshan (2023) demonstrate that characters experiencing unresolved trauma often undergo psychic splitting or dissociation—phenomena in which the self is divided to shield the conscious mind from unbearable experiences. In Takashi's case, his adoption of a

revolutionary persona can be viewed as a defense mechanism—a sublimated expression of inherited grief and shame.

Takashi's identity fragmentation aligns with what Freud (1957) referred to as "repetition compulsion," where unresolved trauma is re-enacted through compulsive behaviors. His erratic leadership, violent tendencies, and antagonism toward social institutions reflect not just external rebellion but internal psychic disarray. This interpretation is supported by Fikri (2021), who explores how trauma shapes literary protagonists through symbolic violence and fractured narrative structures.

2.3 Transgenerational Trauma and Cultural Memory

A significant body of scholarship has addressed how trauma can be inherited through generations—what Abraham and Torok (1994) term "transgenerational hauntings." In *The Silent Cry*, the trauma of Takashi and Mitsusaburo's family—particularly the suicide of their older brother and the lingering memory of their ancestors' failures—acts as a psychological burden shaping their adult choices.

Hori (2020) highlights how Japanese postwar fiction, including Ōe's work, reflects cultural memory embedded in silence, guilt, and shame. This transgenerational transmission of trauma, often unspoken yet deeply felt, leads to the breakdown of identity and interpersonal relationships. Takashi's internalization of historical defeat and familial expectations reflects the weight of such memory, influencing his descent into delusion.

2.4 Literary Debates on Psychoanalytic Readings of Ōe

While psychoanalysis remains a powerful tool for literary interpretation, not all critics agree on its primacy. Sasaki (2018) contends that Ōe's fiction, including *The Silent Cry*, is deeply political and that reading it solely through a psychological lens risks overlooking its sociopolitical commentary. However, as Nadjari (2022) notes, psychoanalysis and politics are not mutually exclusive—indeed, trauma theory often bridges both by showing how political events leave psychic residues.

Recent scholars have embraced this integrative view. For instance, Bukhari (2022) argues that identity crises in literature often stem from intertwined personal and national traumas, which are best understood through a hybrid of psychoanalytic and historical lenses. In Takashi's case, his personal turmoil cannot be separated from the national context of postwar disillusionment and suppressed memory.

3. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative psychoanalytic literary analysis, **drawing on** Sigmund Freud's structural theory of the psyche—specifically the triad of id, ego, and superego—as a conceptual framework to interpret the psychological dynamics of Takashi in *The Silent Cry* by Kenzaburō Ōe. The purpose of this approach is to uncover the unconscious motivations, internal conflicts, and trauma mechanisms that inform the character's behavior, ideology, and identity formation.

3.1. Theoretical Framework

The psychoanalytic theory used in this research is grounded primarily in Freud's (1961/1923) *The Ego and the Id* and supplemented by additional Freudian concepts such as defense mechanisms (Freud, 1957) and repetition compulsion. The study also draws from Abraham and Torok's (1994) theory of transgenerational trauma and

psychic inheritance, which helps contextualize Takashi's behavior as a symptom of familial and cultural memory.

These theoretical tools allow for a detailed reading of literary symbols, character actions, narrative structures, and internal monologues, aiming to decode the psychological processes that are often embedded beneath the surface of the text.

3.2 Textual Selection and Analysis Procedure

The analysis focuses on key scenes from *The Silent Cry* (Ōe, 1996), especially those involving Takashi's interactions with his brother Mitsusaburo, his revolutionary posturing, and his recollections of past trauma. Passages are selected based on their relevance to:

1. Identity formation and crisis
2. Expression of trauma (individual and transgenerational)
3. Manifestations of Freudian defense mechanisms
4. Conflicts between id, ego, and superego

The selected excerpts are subjected to close reading, paying attention to language, symbolism, dialogue, and character psychology. Each passage is analyzed to interpret how Freudian principles are dramatized within the character's internal and external worlds.

3.3 Justification for Methodology

The psychoanalytic approach is appropriate for this study because *The Silent Cry* is deeply introspective and rich in psychological depth, dealing with themes such as shame, guilt, repression, and familial legacy. Previous scholarship (e.g., Nadjari, 2022; Farahani & Derakhshan, 2023) has demonstrated the efficacy of applying Freudian analysis to postwar literature as a means to access latent content related to trauma and identity.

Furthermore, qualitative textual analysis offers the flexibility and depth required to interpret the nuanced inner life of characters, especially when the narrative resists straightforward interpretation. Rather than generalizing findings across multiple texts, this study aims for depth over breadth, providing a focused analysis of a single complex character.

4. Discussion

This section examines Takashi's psychological unraveling through the Freudian lens of ego dynamics and trauma inheritance. The selected passages from *The Silent Cry* are analyzed to reveal how Takashi's rebellion masks deeper psychic ruptures related to shame, repression, and unresolved family trauma.

4.1. The Collapse of Ego Mediation

Freud (1961) conceptualized the ego as the rational structure mediating between the primitive drives of the id and the prohibitive demands of the superego. Ideally, the ego maintains psychological balance by negotiating between internal desires and external social expectations. In *The Silent Cry*, however, Takashi's psychological development increasingly reveals a collapse of ego mediation, as his behavior becomes more impulsive, erratic, and governed by unconscious drives.

This breakdown is evident in Takashi's open disdain for introspection and preference for action: "I'm not interested in being an intellectual who just remembers things. I want to act. I want to change things." (Ōe, 1996, p. 79) At first glance, Takashi's declaration appears to promote agency and transformation. However, from a Freudian perspective, it reflects the ego's surrender to the id—a relinquishment of rational control in favor of instinctual release. Freud (1961/1923) theorized that the id operates according to the pleasure principle, demanding immediate satisfaction without regard for consequence. Takashi's need to "act" emerges not from clear political conviction, but from an underlying psychic compulsion to relieve internal tension. He substitutes external upheaval for inner reflection, demonstrating the failure of the ego to filter and redirect his impulses constructively.

Takashi's preference for myth over reason further exposes the id's dominance: "You bury yourself in history books. But the villagers have myths—living things, not fossils." (Ōe, 1996, p. 86). Here, myth represents the unconscious, symbolic realm, while history embodies structured knowledge and ego-based interpretation. Takashi's dismissal of history in favor of myth suggests a psychological regression—a retreat from ego-anchored reasoning into fantasy-laden unconscious material. This resonates with Freud's (1957) concept of regression, where the individual reverts to earlier developmental modes to avoid present conflict.

A more extreme indication of the ego's collapse appears in Takashi's projection of emasculation onto society: "We've all been castrated by this decaying country. That's why I have to act—somebody has to." (Ōe, 1996, p. 123) This metaphor of castration—a cornerstone of Freudian theory—symbolizes the perceived loss of potency, authority, or agency. Takashi attributes his internal sense of inadequacy to external political decay, displacing inner anxiety onto the collective. His "need to act" is thus not a rational political initiative but a defense mechanism, enabling him to avoid confronting his own psychic wounds.

His descent into delusion is described in visceral terms: "His eyes were shining like a madman's, as if something was burning inside him that had nothing to do with the others." (Ōe, 1996, p. 145) This moment vividly portrays psychic fragmentation. Takashi is no longer in control of his behavior; he is consumed by unresolved emotion—likely guilt and grief—that the ego can no longer repress. Freud (1915/1957) described this phenomenon as the return of the repressed, where previously buried trauma re-emerges in distorted, pathological forms. In Takashi, this return manifests not through healing, but through grandiosity and destruction.

These examples illustrate Freud's nightmare scenario: a psyche in which the ego fails to regulate, the id dominates behavior, and the superego acts as a haunting force of judgment. Takashi's trajectory—from philosophical critique to manic instability—suggests that his revolutionary ideals are not conscious political choices but unconscious expressions of psychological disintegration. He becomes not an agent of change, but a vessel for ancestral guilt, unacknowledged shame, and repressed pain.

4.2. Projection and Idealized Rebellion

One of Freud's fundamental defense mechanisms is projection, a process in which repressed or unwanted feelings—such as guilt, shame, or fear—are displaced onto others, allowing the individual to avoid direct confrontation with internal conflict (Freud, 1957). In *The Silent Cry*, Takashi's revolutionary zeal is not rooted in genuine

ideological clarity, but in psychological displacement. He externalizes his private feelings of emasculation and inadequacy by framing them as a collective crisis.

This process is evident in one of Takashi's most ideologically charged statements: "They have turned us into eunuchs. We've lost the ability to act like men. That's why this uprising matters." (Ōe, 1996, p. 103) Takashi's invocation of emasculation here is deeply symbolic. The metaphor of castration—central in Freudian theory—typically represents a perceived loss of power, control, or identity. Rather than confronting his own wounded masculinity and personal failures, Takashi reinterprets his internal vulnerability as a shared historical injury. By doing so, he projects his private emotional anguish onto society, transforming psychological distress into a political crusade.

This act of projection serves several psychic functions. It provides Takashi with an outlet for repressed rage and shame, reframing these affects as righteous anger. It also allows him to construct a narrative of victimhood that implicates the entire village, thus legitimizing his desire for upheaval. As Freud (1957) argued, projection is a defense mechanism that protects the ego from inner threat by casting unacceptable emotions onto external sources.

Takashi's projection is further illustrated by his use of mythic and militaristic language: "They're sheep. Trained to bow their heads, not raise their fists. But we will wake them up. We will lead them into the new age." (Ōe, 1996, p. 108) In this passage, Takashi dissociates from his own paralysis by creating a messianic persona—one who leads others to reclaim agency. Yet ironically, his "leadership" is rooted not in coherent strategy but in deep-seated emotional confusion. The revolutionary rhetoric masks internal fragmentation. His rebellion is not directed outward from a stable self, but arises from psychic collapse.

In Freudian terms, Takashi's actions are not guided by a healthy ego ideal but by unresolved conflicts reconstituted as moral imperatives. His identification with heroic myth, and his insistence that others share in his vision, indicate an unconscious need to validate his internal chaos through external affirmation.

Thus, Takashi's idealized rebellion is less a political movement than a defense mechanism—one that channels psychic pain into collective narrative. By projecting his fears and insecurities onto the village and cloaking them in the language of resistance, Takashi avoids confronting the deeper emotional truths buried within his fractured identity.

4.3 Sublimation and Failed Transformation

In Freudian theory, sublimation refers to the psychological process by which socially unacceptable impulses—such as aggression or sexual desire—are redirected into acceptable, often culturally valued forms of expression (Freud, 1920/1957). This defense mechanism allows the individual to transform raw instinct into art, politics, or moral achievement. However, in *The Silent Cry*, Takashi's attempt to sublimate his inner aggression into political activism fails. Instead of mastering his psychological pain through meaningful action, he channels it into delusional rebellion that ultimately exacerbates his instability.

This failure is dramatically expressed in Takashi's accusatory outburst toward his brother Mitsusaburo: "You think you're a sane man, hiding in your books and silence? You're the real coward. I'm the one facing the truth." (Ōe, 1996, p. 141) Takashi frames his rejection of reflection and dialogue as an act of bravery, contrasting

it with Mitsusaburo's supposed intellectual cowardice. Yet from a psychoanalytic standpoint, this statement illustrates a breakdown of sublimation. The aggression that should have been sublimated into reasoned leadership becomes personalized hostility. The "truth" Takashi claims to confront is not objective reality but a distorted psychological projection. His identification with revolution masks an unresolved trauma that resists symbolic integration.

Rather than processing his inner conflict through symbolic or socially productive means, Takashi externalizes it violently. His revolutionary fervor lacks ideological coherence and is propelled instead by personal disorientation. Freud (1957) described such cases as failures of sublimation, where repressed emotions re-emerge in distorted or compulsive behaviors—a phenomenon known as the return of the repressed.

Takashi's descent into increasingly erratic behavior demonstrates this principle. The narrator observes: "There was a moment when his voice cracked, and it was no longer a speech—it was a scream disguised as words." (Ōe, 1996, p. 143) This line reveals how Takashi's ideological posturing collapses under the weight of emotional excess. His speech ceases to function as rational communication and instead becomes a container for raw psychic discharge. The scream, masked in rhetoric, signifies the failure of sublimation to transform pain into purpose.

Takashi's political performance, then, is not evidence of higher transformation but of deeper fracture. His inability to sustain constructive sublimation turns the revolutionary stage into a theater of psychic breakdown. In Freudian terms, rather than elevating the instinctual into the ethical or aesthetic realm, he regresses into the chaotic and compulsive—a man undone not by political failure but by the unresolved ghosts within.

4.4 Trauma, Family Legacy, and the Superego

Freud (1961/1923) described the superego as the internalized voice of parental authority, cultural law, and moral regulation. In a balanced psyche, the superego helps guide ethical decision-making by integrating social norms and familial values. However, when the superego becomes rigid or punitive, it may transform into a source of internalized guilt and psychological distress. In *The Silent Cry*, the weight of family history—particularly the suicide of Takashi's older brother—triggers such a transformation, with the superego functioning less as a moral compass and more as an oppressive force.

This transformation is captured in a haunting recollection: "He died with his eyes wide open. Like he was accusing us. I can still see him, every time I close my eyes." (Ōe, 1996, p. 66)

This passage suggests that Takashi is haunted not simply by the event of his brother's suicide but by its ethical implications. The open eyes—symbolizing accusation and unresolved witnessing—become a permanent fixture in Takashi's psyche. From a Freudian perspective, the gaze of the dead brother becomes the internalized moral authority that Takashi cannot appease, forming a punitive superego.

In this context, the superego does not foster self-reflection or reconciliation but instills guilt, shame, and self-punishment. Takashi does not mourn his brother as a loss to be processed; instead, he internalizes him as an enduring command to act—to rebel, to avenge, to continue a tragic legacy. His radical behavior is less a form of justice and more a ritual enactment of inherited suffering.

This process aligns with Abraham and Torok's (1994) concept of the "crypt"—a psychic tomb constructed to house traumatic family secrets that are never properly mourned. The crypt doesn't simply store memory; it shapes identity by embedding the unspoken within the self. Takashi's relationship to the past becomes parasitic: his identity forms around an unmourned death that fuels rage, despair, and moral confusion.

Further evidence of the superego's tormenting role is revealed when Mitsusaburo reflects: "He wants to suffer. That's the only way he can prove to himself he's not like [our brother]. But in trying so hard, he's becoming exactly like him." (Ōe, 1996, p. 112) Here, the destructive legacy of the family continues through unconscious repetition. Takashi's rebellion is not truly his own; it is the product of an inherited moral wound. Freud (1961/1923) noted that when the superego becomes severe, it can overwhelm the ego, leading to self-destructive behavior that masquerades as moral action. Takashi's trajectory confirms this: he seeks absolution through sacrifice, but in doing so, he reenacts the very trauma he wishes to transcend.

Takashi does not rebel merely against external oppression but against the crushing internal command to suffer, inherited through blood and silence. His superego, distorted by ungrieved trauma and family myth, becomes an inner tyrant—demanding not ethical responsibility but psychic submission.

4.5 The Silent Cry as a Symbol of Repression

The title of the novel—*The Silent Cry*—invokes one of Freud's most enduring psychoanalytic concepts: repression. According to Freud (1915/1957), repression is the process through which intolerable thoughts, desires, and emotions are pushed into the unconscious, rendered inaccessible to conscious awareness but not erased. These repressed affects often return in disguised or symbolic forms—through symptoms, dreams, or neurotic behaviors. In Ōe's narrative, Takashi's final psychological collapse represents the catastrophic failure of repression: what has been buried returns, but stripped of language and clarity.

The novel expresses this failure of articulation in stark imagery: "He opened his mouth to scream, but no sound came out. Only a twisted grimace, as though the scream had been buried in his body long before." (Ōe, 1996, p. 173) This haunting image serves as a metaphor for the condition of repressed trauma. Takashi's body attempts to vocalize what the psyche cannot process, resulting in a "twisted grimace" rather than intelligible language. The *silent cry* is thus both literal and symbolic—a sign of the unspeakable suffering passed down through family, culture, and memory.

Freud maintained that repression never fully eliminates an affect but displaces it. The energy of repressed content continues to influence behavior, surfacing as anxiety, hysteria, or compulsive repetition (Freud, 1957). Takashi's silent scream is not merely a psychological reaction to an immediate crisis; it is the culmination of an intergenerational burden that has been denied articulation. His silence does not represent absence but the saturation of affect—pain that exceeds the capacity for expression.

Earlier in the novel, this motif is anticipated in Mitsusaburo's reflection: "There's a cry we've inherited—not from our mouths, but from those who died before us. It's always there, even when no one is speaking." (Ōe, 1996, p. 92) This passage suggests that the cry belongs to a deeper historical and psychic register—a transgenerational trauma that cannot be directly confronted. The inability to vocalize this pain reflects the Freudian idea that repression can be so deeply rooted that the ego loses access even to the content being repressed. Takashi's breakdown, marked by mute

expression, reflects not just his own trauma but that of the familial and cultural unconscious.

Thus, the title *The Silent Cry* emerges as a precise encapsulation of repressed pain: a grief too immense to be spoken, too buried to be healed, and yet too powerful to be fully silenced. In Takashi's final moment of voiceless expression, Ōe stages the inevitable return of the repressed—not in clarity, but in rupture.

5. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated how Takashi's character in *The Silent Cry* serves as a profound literary exploration of psychological disintegration, trauma, and the failure of ego mediation. Drawing on Freudian psychoanalysis—specifically the dynamics of the id, ego, and superego—this analysis reveals that Takashi's revolutionary rhetoric and erratic behavior are not ideologically coherent, but rather manifestations of deep-seated psychic distress.

Takashi's identity is shown to be fractured by intergenerational trauma, unresolved grief, and a punitive superego inherited through familial and cultural legacies. His compulsion to act, to rebel, and ultimately to destroy reflects not liberation, but the collapse of internal structures designed to manage primal urges and moral demands. Defense mechanisms such as projection, sublimation, and denial temporarily shield him from unbearable truths but ultimately fail, culminating in symbolic breakdown.

The novel's title itself—*The Silent Cry*—encapsulates the paradox of trauma: it is both buried and omnipresent. Takashi's voiceless scream becomes a symbol of the unconscious forces that shape human behavior when trauma is left unprocessed and unspoken.

This psychoanalytic reading not only deepens our understanding of Ōe's narrative craft but also illustrates literature's role as a mirror of the unconscious, a space where hidden wounds, inherited memories, and psychic struggles are made legible. Through Takashi, Ōe critiques not only personal pathology but the broader failures of postwar society to reckon with its own historical and emotional inheritance.

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THE REPRESENTATION OF TRUST VALUES IN RICK RIORDAN'S *THE SEA OF MONSTERS*

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Abstract

Trust is a fundamental value that shapes human interactions and relationships, providing the foundation for cooperation, loyalty, and moral responsibility. This study analyzes the representation of trust values in Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Sea of Monsters* (2006), focusing on three dimensions identified by Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995): ability, kindness, and integrity. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, the research examines how these values are embedded in the characters' relationships, particularly between Percy Jackson and Tyson. Primary data were collected through close reading of the novel, while secondary data were drawn from relevant scholarly literature on trust, psychology, and young adult fiction. The findings reveal that trust through ability is demonstrated by Tyson's physical strength and Annabeth's intelligence, which establish credibility and reliability. Trust through kindness is represented in Tyson's loyalty and sacrifice, which transform prejudice into acceptance and deepen emotional bonds. Finally, trust through integrity distinguishes loyal characters such as Tyson and Annabeth from betrayers like Luke, highlighting the fragility of moral consistency. These representations show that trust in young adult literature serves narrative and pedagogical functions, encouraging readers to reflect on empathy, inclusivity, and ethical responsibility. The study concludes that Riordan's novel not only entertains but also provides moral education, reinforcing the importance of trust as a transformative value in both literature and life.

Keywords: *ability; integrity; kindness; trust; young adult literature*

1. Introduction

Trust is a fundamental value in human relationships, shaping the way individuals interact, collaborate, and sustain meaningful connections. In both real life and literary works, trust provides a foundation for cooperation, loyalty, and mutual respect. Literature, as a mirror of human experience, often represents the challenges and complexities of building and maintaining trust in personal, social, and even political contexts. Among the many contemporary works of young adult fiction, Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Sea of Monsters* (2006) is particularly significant because it integrates mythological adventures with profound human values such as courage, friendship, and trust.

Rick Riordan, one of the most influential writers of modern children's and young adult fantasy literature, has captivated global readers by blending classical Greek mythology with contemporary teenage struggles. His works, which include the *Percy Jackson* series, *The Heroes of Olympus*, and *Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard*, not only provide entertainment but also function as educational narratives that explore universal values. In *The Sea of Monsters*, the second installment of the *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* series, the concept of trust emerges as a central theme. The novel narrates the journey of Percy Jackson and his companions as they embark on a dangerous quest to save Camp Half-Blood. Throughout their struggles, the characters—particularly Percy and Tyson—face moments of doubt, betrayal, forgiveness, and loyalty, all of which highlight the importance of trust as a moral and psychological foundation.

The significance of studying trust in literature lies in its capacity to humanize characters and resonate with readers' lived experiences. Trust, as Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) argue, is shaped by three essential factors: ability, kindness, and integrity. These dimensions are not only relevant in organizational studies but also apply to interpersonal relationships in fiction. In Riordan's novel, trust is tested in various forms: Percy's reluctance to accept Tyson as a brother, Annabeth's skepticism towards Cyclopes, Grover's reliance on Percy, and the betrayal of Luke, who shifts allegiance to Kronos. Each of these interactions illustrates how trust can be earned, broken, and repaired, reflecting broader questions about human nature and ethical responsibility.

Moreover, the relevance of this topic extends beyond literary criticism into the domains of psychology and education. Trust is vital in adolescent development, where friendships, family bonds, and social inclusion play a formative role in shaping identity (Moordiningsih, 2015). Young adult readers, who are the primary audience of Riordan's novels, encounter similar dilemmas of loyalty, prejudice, and acceptance in their own social lives. By analyzing how trust is represented in *The Sea of Monsters*, this study provides insights into the moral lessons embedded in literature and their implications for character education.

Recent scholarship has emphasized the role of literature in shaping trust, moral development, and social capital among young readers. For instance, Sandström (2025) demonstrates how young adult sports fiction provides narratives of mentorship that foster moral integrity and trust. Similarly, Lindo (2024) shows how participation in young adult book clubs helps adolescents—particularly marginalized groups—develop mutual trust and cultural understanding through shared reading experiences. Beyond literary settings, studies on youth education also highlight the importance of trust and values in building social capital (Ibrahim & Azizan, 2025), civic engagement (Genova & Tazzara, 2024), and resilience in school environments (Harte, 2023). These recent contributions confirm that trust is not only a psychological construct but also a cultural and educational force, underscoring the significance of analyzing its representation in Riordan's *The Sea of Monsters*.

Another reason this study is relevant is the cultural impact of Riordan's work. The adaptation of *The Sea of Monsters* into a Hollywood film in 2013 expanded its audience and highlighted the growing importance of fantasy literature in popular culture. The popularity of the Percy Jackson franchise shows that stories rooted in ancient mythology can still address modern social and moral issues. Trust, as one of those issues, is increasingly important in today's globalized world, where intercultural

communication, teamwork, and digital interactions depend heavily on credibility and reliability (Yousafzai, Pallister, & Foxall, 2003).

Thus, this article aims to analyze how trust values are represented in Rick Riordan's *The Sea of Monsters* by focusing on three major factors: ability, kindness, and integrity. The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the forms of trust values depicted in the novel.
2. To analyze how these trust values are reflected in the relationships between the characters, especially in the friendship between Percy and Tyson.

The scope of the research is limited to textual analysis of Riordan's novel, supported by theoretical frameworks on trust and selected studies from psychology, literature, and cultural studies. This research contributes to both literary scholarship and interdisciplinary discussions about values in young adult fiction, highlighting how narratives can cultivate moral reflection and empathy among readers.

By situating the analysis of trust within Riordan's novel, this study underscores the inseparability of literature and life: just as Percy learns to trust Tyson, readers are reminded of the essential role of trust in building inclusive, ethical, and resilient communities.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Concept of Trust in Human Relationships

Trust is widely regarded as one of the most essential components of interpersonal and social relationships. Yousafzai, Pallister, and Foxall (2003) argue that trust is a foundational principle for cooperation, whether in personal interactions or organizational contexts. In psychology, trust is often defined as a willingness to rely on another party under conditions of vulnerability and uncertainty (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). Trust involves not only confidence in another's reliability but also belief in their moral intentions and ethical conduct.

Moordiningsih (2015) emphasizes that trust is not merely an individual construct but rather a relational one, emerging through continuous interactions and mutual experiences. Trust develops in familial settings, is reinforced in friendships, and expands into community life, contributing to both individual well-being and collective harmony. This perspective is consistent with broader sociological research, which frames trust as a cornerstone of social capital (Ibrahim & Azizan, 2025). In both real and fictional contexts, trust operates as a cultural and emotional resource that enables collaboration, resilience, and identity formation.

2.2 Factors of Trust: Ability, Kindness, and Integrity

Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman's (1995) integrative model identifies three key dimensions of trust: ability, kindness (benevolence), and integrity. Ability refers to competence, skills, and knowledge that make an individual reliable in task performance. Benevolence concerns the extent to which a trustee is perceived to have genuine goodwill toward the trustor, while integrity relates to adherence to moral principles, honesty, and consistency between words and actions.

These three factors are crucial not only in organizational and interpersonal psychology but also in literature, where characters' trustworthiness often determines the dynamics of relationships. In *The Sea of Monsters*, for example, Percy's trust in Tyson is initially questioned due to Tyson's clumsiness and Cyclopean identity but gradually affirmed

through Tyson's demonstrated ability, acts of kindness, and moral integrity. This transformation illustrates the literary embodiment of Mayer et al.'s theoretical framework.

Recent studies have expanded on these concepts in youth and literary contexts. Sandström (2025) highlights how young adult sports fiction presents mentors who either affirm or undermine trust through their moral integrity, thereby shaping adolescents' ethical development. Similarly, Harte (2023) notes that in educational contexts, students' trust in teachers emerges not only from ability but also from fairness and moral consistency, echoing the integrity dimension. These findings strengthen the applicability of Mayer et al.'s model beyond psychology into narrative studies of young adult literature.

2.3 Trust in Young Adult Literature

Young adult literature (YAL) often engages directly with themes of trust, betrayal, and reconciliation as adolescents navigate identity, belonging, and moral development. According to Lindo (2024), participation in young adult book clubs allows marginalized students, particularly Asian American and Pacific Islander girls, to build trust and self-confidence through shared literary experiences. This demonstrates that YAL is not only a site of storytelling but also a medium of social and cultural trust-building.

Riordan's *The Sea of Monsters* is a prime example of how trust values are embedded in narrative form. Characters such as Percy, Tyson, Annabeth, and Luke embody different trust dynamics: from the betrayal of Luke to the loyalty of Tyson, the novel dramatizes how trust can be gained, broken, and restored. This aligns with earlier research that emphasizes the role of literature in promoting moral education (Hakim, Thontowi, Yuniarti, & Kim, 2010). Furthermore, contemporary scholarship on youth activism suggests that trust values in fiction can encourage real-life civic engagement and ethical participation among young readers (Genova & Tazzara, 2024).

2.4 Trust as Social Capital and Moral Education

Trust in literature is also inseparable from its role in cultivating social capital and moral education. As Ibrahim and Azizan (2025) argue, trust functions as a bridge that connects family, school, and community, contributing to the educational success of young people. This insight reinforces the pedagogical potential of young adult novels like Riordan's, which not only entertain but also model the social dynamics of trust.

In educational psychology, trust is linked to resilience, emotional intelligence, and well-being (Harte, 2023). For adolescent readers, encountering narratives where characters navigate issues of prejudice, loyalty, and reconciliation provides opportunities for reflection on their own social relationships. Riordan's portrayal of Percy's eventual acceptance of Tyson as his brother offers a powerful allegory for overcoming stereotypes and building inclusive friendships.

Taken together, earlier theories (Mayer et al., 1995; Yousafzai et al., 2003; Moordiningsih, 2015) and recent research (Sandström, 2025; Lindo, 2024; Ibrahim & Azizan, 2025; Harte, 2023; Genova & Tazzara, 2024) demonstrate that trust is both a psychological dimension and a cultural phenomenon with broad implications. In the context of young adult literature, trust values such as ability, kindness, and integrity are not only narrative devices but also moral lessons for readers. By analyzing how these values are represented in *The Sea of Monsters*, this study contributes to an

interdisciplinary understanding of literature as a site for cultivating empathy, resilience, and ethical responsibility.

3. Research Method

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative research design, which is widely used in literary analysis to interpret and explain the meanings embedded in texts. According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), qualitative research is an inquiry process that explores social or human problems based on distinct methodological traditions. In the context of literature, this involves interpreting the text not only for its aesthetic qualities but also for its moral and social dimensions.

Descriptive qualitative research was chosen because it enables the researcher to describe and interpret the representation of trust values—ability, kindness, and integrity—as reflected in the characters of Rick Riordan’s *The Sea of Monsters*. Sukmadinata (2006) notes that descriptive research seeks to portray phenomena systematically, factually, and accurately. Thus, rather than quantifying data, the study seeks to uncover the richness of narrative elements that illustrate the dynamics of trust among the characters.

3.2 Data Source

The primary data source of this research is Rick Riordan’s novel *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Sea of Monsters* (2006). Passages, dialogues, and narrative descriptions were selected as textual evidence to illustrate how trust values are represented. The choice of this novel is justified by its wide readership among adolescents and its emphasis on themes of friendship, loyalty, and trust.

Secondary data were drawn from scholarly works on trust, values, and young adult literature. These include classical theories such as Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman’s (1995) integrative model of organizational trust, Yousafzai, Pallister, and Foxall’s (2003) perspectives on strategies of trust-building, and Moordiningsih’s (2015) psychological insights into relational trust. To strengthen the contemporary relevance of the study, recent works on moral development and trust in young adult literature and education (Sandström, 2025; Lindo, 2024; Ibrahim & Azizan, 2025; Harte, 2023; Genova & Tazzara, 2024) were also integrated.

3.3 Data Collection

Data were collected through close reading and textual analysis of the novel. The process consisted of several steps:

1. Identification: Carefully reading the novel to identify passages where trust values are explicitly or implicitly demonstrated.
2. Classification: Organizing textual evidence into three categories based on Mayer et al.’s (1995) framework—ability, kindness, and integrity.
3. Theoretical Mapping: Relating textual evidence to the theoretical perspectives on trust from both classical and contemporary scholarship.
4. Triangulation: Supporting interpretations with insights from secondary literature to ensure the analysis is academically grounded and credible.

This methodological approach ensures that the study remains faithful to the original text while situating it within broader theoretical discourses on trust.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the thematic analysis approach, which (Braun, V., & Clarke, 2006) describe as identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within data. In this research, themes were derived from the theoretical framework of trust values. Each textual excerpt was analyzed to determine how it exemplifies one or more dimensions of trust (ability, kindness, integrity).

The analysis proceeded in three steps:

1. Coding: Annotating the selected passages with preliminary codes (e.g., “ability—combat skill,” “kindness—sacrifice,” “integrity—promise keeping”).
2. Thematic Categorization: Grouping codes under the three overarching dimensions of trust.
3. Interpretation: Explaining how each instance of trust contributes to the narrative and what moral lessons it conveys to readers.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

To enhance the validity of findings, this study employed theoretical triangulation by drawing from multiple perspectives on trust (psychological, sociological, and literary). The reliability of interpretation was ensured by consistent application of Mayer et al.'s (1995) framework and by grounding all claims in direct textual evidence.

Additionally, the use of recent scholarship (e.g., Sandström, 2025; Lindo, 2024) serves as a form of contemporary triangulation, situating the analysis within current debates on trust, morality, and youth development.

4. Discussion

The theme of trust in Rick Riordan's *The Sea of Monsters* is central to both the narrative structure and character development. Trust is represented through three dimensions proposed by Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995): ability, kindness, and integrity. These values are embedded in the relationships between Percy, Tyson, Annabeth, Grover, and Luke, creating moments of loyalty, betrayal, and reconciliation that resonate with adolescent readers.

4.1 Trust through Ability

Ability, as defined by Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995), encompasses the competencies and skills that allow an individual to be perceived as trustworthy. In *The Sea of Monsters*, Tyson's physical power and bravery provide a dramatic example of this dimension. Initially marginalized because of his Cyclopean identity and clumsiness, Tyson is dismissed as a burden rather than an asset. Percy himself admits reluctance in acknowledging Tyson as a brother, reflecting the prejudices that often prevent recognition of others' abilities. Yet Riordan subverts this assumption by portraying Tyson's unexpected heroism.

When the bronze bulls attack Camp Half-Blood, Tyson intervenes:

“Tyson threw his hands in the air and yelled, ‘BAD COW!’ He grabbed the bull's horns as it charged and stopped it cold. He pushed with all his might, and the bull slid backward.” (Riordan, 2006, p. 52)

This episode highlights two critical dimensions of ability: unexpected competence and relational validation. Tyson's act is not simply about defeating a monster; it is a turning point that redefines his social standing among peers who had

dismissed him. As Sandström (2025) argues, the demonstration of skill in youth fiction often functions as a foundation for moral recognition, allowing marginalized characters to be reevaluated on the basis of competence rather than prejudice. Thus, Tyson's ability is both a narrative device and a moral lesson in the dismantling of stereotypes.

Riordan also complicates the concept of ability by extending it beyond physical strength. Annabeth embodies intellectual and strategic competence, qualities equally vital for survival. Her leadership is evident when she interprets the map and identifies the perilous route through the Sea of Monsters:

“Annabeth pointed at the map. ‘We have to sail through the Sea of Monsters. It’s the only way to find the Golden Fleece.’” (Riordan, 2006, p. 108)

Here, Annabeth's analytical ability inspires trust among her companions, demonstrating that intellectual competence is as essential as brute force. This balance between Tyson's physicality and Annabeth's intellect reflects Riordan's broader message: trust is established not through uniformity of ability but through complementary strengths that sustain collective survival.

Furthermore, the portrayal of ability in *The Sea of Monsters* resonates with educational psychology. Harte (2023) emphasizes that young people's trust in mentors or peers often hinges on demonstrated competence, whether in physical or intellectual domains. In the novel, Percy's reliance on Annabeth's wisdom and his eventual recognition of Tyson's bravery mirror how adolescents navigate trust in real-life contexts—testing, doubting, and ultimately affirming others' capacities.

Finally, ability in Riordan's narrative serves an identity-forming function. For Percy, recognizing Tyson's ability is part of his own maturation: learning to accept difference, value hidden strengths, and revise prejudiced assumptions. For Annabeth, ability reinforces her identity as a strategist and leader, qualities that earn her companions' respect. Thus, Riordan portrays ability as a multidimensional trust factor that both validates the individual and strengthens the collective.

4.2 Trust through Kindness

Kindness, or benevolence, is central to the development of trust because it reflects genuine goodwill and selfless concern for others. In *The Sea of Monsters*, Tyson embodies this dimension of trust most vividly. Despite being marginalized and ridiculed for his Cyclopean identity, Tyson consistently demonstrates unwavering loyalty and compassion toward Percy and his companions. His kindness culminates in one of the novel's most dramatic moments: “Tyson pushed me out of the way. He took the full force of the explosion and disappeared into the fire.” (Riordan, 2006, p. 146)

This sacrificial act transcends mere bravery—it represents benevolence in its purest form. Tyson willingly risks his life without hesitation, affirming that kindness is not passive sympathy but active self-giving. Importantly, this act also transforms Percy's perception of him. Percy's grief following Tyson's apparent death reveals the depth of his changed attitude: “I sobbed, realizing I had lost my brother. All the times I had wished Tyson wasn't my brother... now I wanted him back more than anything.” (Riordan, 2006, p. 148)

Here, kindness functions as a catalyst for relational transformation. Percy's earlier skepticism—rooted in social prejudice against Cyclopes—evolves into profound emotional trust, illustrating how acts of benevolence can dismantle stereotypes and

cultivate authentic connection. This aligns with Lindo's (2024) findings that narratives of empathy and loyalty in young adult literature encourage readers to reflect critically on their own capacity for kindness in interpersonal relationships.

Grover also demonstrates benevolence through his loyalty to Percy during his captivity by Polyphemus. Despite being in a position of vulnerability, Grover continues to send telepathic messages to Percy for help, a sign of trust rooted in selfless commitment. His endurance reinforces Moordiningsih's (2015) view that trust emerges through continuous, relational interactions rather than singular moments. In both Tyson and Grover, kindness is framed not as weakness but as strength that sustains bonds under adversity.

Moreover, kindness in Riordan's narrative resonates with broader discussions of youth moral development. Ibrahim and Azizan (2025) argue that social capital in communities is sustained by trust and benevolence, which mirror the microcosmic dynamics of Percy's friendships. Harte (2023) similarly emphasizes that adolescents learn to trust when they perceive genuine care and fairness in relationships. By embedding acts of benevolence in characters like Tyson and Grover, Riordan offers readers a moral pedagogy of kindness—a reminder that trust is built not only through competence but through compassion that bridges difference.

Finally, kindness in the novel serves as a corrective to power-driven models of trust. While ability (strength or intellect) can generate respect, it is benevolence that humanizes relationships and forges lasting bonds. Riordan suggests that in a world marked by betrayal and prejudice, kindness becomes the most radical form of resistance, enabling trust to flourish even where suspicion once prevailed.

4.3 Trust through Integrity

Integrity, defined as honesty, consistency, and adherence to moral principle, forms a cornerstone of trust. In *The Sea of Monsters*, Riordan highlights integrity not merely as an abstract virtue but as a practical determinant of whether relationships hold or fracture. Characters such as Tyson and Annabeth embody integrity through truthfulness and loyalty, whereas Luke demonstrates the corrosive effects of its absence.

Luke's betrayal remains one of the most striking illustrations of broken trust in the novel. As a respected counselor and mentor figure, Luke initially commands both authority and admiration. His decision to align with Kronos represents not only a personal shift but also a communal rupture, destabilizing the trust that bound him to Camp Half-Blood. His words—"The gods are so arrogant," Luke said. "They never should have left us with this mess. I'm taking Kronos's side. Together we'll overthrow Olympus" (Riordan, 2006, p. 198)—reveal how personal grievances and ambition override shared ethical commitments. Luke's disavowal epitomizes what Ibrahim and Azizan (2025) describe as the erosion of social capital: when individuals abandon collective norms, the trust network underpinning communities collapses. In this way, Riordan situates integrity not as an individual trait alone but as a social glue, binding members of a community to mutual responsibility.

In contrast, Tyson's unwavering integrity becomes a touchstone for resilience and reconciliation. Despite being marginalized and ridiculed for his identity as a Cyclops, Tyson embodies Mayer et al.'s (1995) conception of integrity as the alignment of actions with declared values. He refuses to mask his identity or manipulate others for acceptance, choosing instead to act with honesty and loyalty even in the face of prejudice. This persistent transparency creates the conditions for renewed trust.

Annabeth's gradual change of heart—"Annabeth's voice was shaky. 'Maybe I was wrong about Cyclopes. Maybe... Tyson is different'" (Riordan, 2006, p. 216)—underscores the transformative power of integrity to disrupt bias and foster genuine respect. Her acknowledgment suggests that integrity, when consistently enacted, can bridge divides and rebuild fractured trust.

The juxtaposition of Luke and Tyson also highlights integrity's double role: its absence accelerates betrayal and disintegration, while its presence cultivates forgiveness and community cohesion. Harte's (2023) findings that trust in educational contexts depends on fairness and honesty resonate here, as young readers witness characters navigating trust through these very principles. Integrity thus becomes more than a moral theme—it emerges as a relational force that shapes how characters, and by extension readers, understand loyalty, fairness, and belonging.

By exploring integrity through both its collapse and affirmation, Riordan invites readers to reflect on the fragility and resilience of trust. Luke's fall warns of the devastating consequences when ambition eclipses shared values, while Tyson's steadfastness illustrates how integrity, even from the margins, has the power to restore confidence and bind communities together.

4.4 The Interplay of Trust Values in Character Development

Riordan weaves ability, kindness, and integrity into a cohesive moral fabric where trust becomes the foundation of both heroism and friendship. The thesis findings highlight that Tyson embodies all three factors: his ability to protect Percy in battle earns admiration, his kindness manifests in sacrificial acts, and his integrity shines through promises kept and honest conduct. These values operate together, shaping not only Percy's evolving perception of Tyson but also the broader dynamics of character development.

For instance, Percy's initial reluctance to trust Tyson shifts after repeated demonstrations of ability in moments of peril:

"Tyson!" I screamed, but it was too late. Both balls slammed into him ... but no ... he'd caught them. Somehow Tyson, who was so clumsy... had caught two fiery metal balls speeding towards him at a zillion miles an hour. He sent them hurtling back towards their surprised owners" (Riordan, 2007, p. 25).

This moment reframes Tyson from an object of doubt to a figure of reliability, demonstrating how trust can grow through competence in action.

Kindness deepens this bond. Tyson persistently sacrifices himself for Percy, even enduring severe harm:

"I knew we were dead. Tyson couldn't deflect all those balls at once. His hands had to be seriously burned from blocking the first volley" (Riordan, 2007, p. 27).

Such willingness to suffer for another embodies what Mayer et al. (1995) describe as benevolence—a crucial trust factor. Percy's growing faith in Tyson is not merely pragmatic but emotional, rooted in recognition of loyalty and selflessness.

Finally, integrity solidifies this transformation. When mocked, Tyson refrains from retaliation, insisting: "'It's okay. I'll be a good monster. So you don't have to feel angry'" (Riordan, 2007, p. 90). Here, his consistency between words and actions

establishes a moral authority that transcends prejudice. Annabeth's eventual shift—admitting she may have been “wrong about Cyclopes”—reflects how integrity can dismantle bias and rebuild fractured trust.

These dynamics mirror what Genova and Tazzara (2024) describe as the civic function of trust: it sustains collective action and moral community. By embedding these trust values in his narrative, Riordan not only entertains but also educates, offering young readers a model of resilience, fairness, and empathy as essential components of character growth.

4.5 Implications for Young Adult Readers

For adolescent readers, *The Sea of Monsters* provides both identification and instruction, illustrating the formative power of trust in navigating friendship, prejudice, and betrayal. The thesis concludes that the value of trust is the most important thing in friendship, forming emotional bonds that endure despite conflict or distance.

Through Tyson's story, readers witness that trust can be built despite differences. His ability, kindness, and integrity work in concert to transform how others perceive him, offering a lesson in perseverance against stereotypes. His resilience embodies Ibrahim and Azizan's (2025) argument that trust fosters social capital and personal growth, teaching adolescents that relationships flourish when rooted in fairness and honesty.

Conversely, Luke's betrayal dramatizes the consequences of broken trust. As the thesis notes, once trust is lost, “it will be very difficult to restore”. This cautionary arc underscores that ambition without integrity corrodes relationships, leaving betrayal in its wake.

Ultimately, Riordan demonstrates that trust is not merely a narrative device but a vital human value. For young adult readers—who themselves are negotiating loyalty, fairness, and prejudice—these portrayals serve as both mirrors and guides. By showing how trust can be earned, tested, and lost, the novel cultivates not only empathy but also a deeper awareness of the responsibilities inherent in friendship.

5. Conclusion

The analysis of Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Sea of Monsters* reveals that trust values are central to the novel's narrative and moral framework. Drawing on Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman's (1995) model, the study demonstrates how trust is represented through three interrelated dimensions: ability, kindness, and integrity. First, trust through ability is reflected in Tyson's physical strength and Annabeth's strategic intelligence, both of which establish credibility and reliability within the group. These qualities enable characters to earn the confidence of others despite initial skepticism or prejudice. Second, trust through kindness is powerfully illustrated in Tyson's loyalty and sacrificial care for Percy and his companions. His acts of benevolence transform Percy's initial rejection into acceptance, underscoring the role of empathy in overcoming stereotypes. Grover's unwavering support further demonstrates that kindness nurtures trust in friendship, even under conditions of vulnerability. Third, trust through integrity distinguishes characters who remain faithful to their values, such as Tyson and Annabeth, from those who betray communal principles, like Luke. Integrity emerges as the most critical foundation of lasting trust, as honesty and moral consistency allow characters to repair broken relationships and foster reconciliation.

These findings affirm that Riordan's novel is more than a fantasy adventure—it is a moral narrative that encourages young adult readers to reflect on the importance of trust in their own lives. As Sandström (2025) and Lindo (2024) highlight, youth literature plays a formative role in shaping moral reasoning and social empathy. The representation of trust in *The Sea of Monsters* aligns with broader educational and cultural insights (Ibrahim & Azizan, 2025; Genova & Tazzara, 2024; Harte, 2023) that emphasize trust as both a psychological construct and a social capital necessary for resilience, cooperation, and civic participation.

The significance of this study lies in showing how literature can cultivate ethical awareness. By tracing Percy's journey from prejudice to acceptance, readers are reminded that trust is not static but must be earned, nurtured, and sustained through ability, kindness, and integrity. Luke's betrayal, conversely, serves as a cautionary tale about the destructive consequences of abandoning trust.

Taken as a whole, the representation of trust in *The Sea of Monsters* demonstrates that young adult literature has a vital pedagogical role in moral education. For readers, especially adolescents navigating their own social identities, Riordan's narrative offers lessons in empathy, inclusivity, and ethical responsibility. Future research may extend this study by examining how trust values operate in Riordan's other novels or comparing representations of trust across different young adult authors. Such comparative studies would deepen our understanding of how literature continues to serve as a moral compass in a rapidly changing world.

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REPRESENTATION OF NATIONALISM VALUES IN FAOZAN RIZAL'S *HABIBIE & AINUN* MOVIE SCRIPT

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Abstract

This research explores the nationalism values shown in the movie *Habibie & Ainun*, directed by Faozan Rizal. The story focuses on the life of Indonesia's third president, B.J. Habibie, and his wife, Ainun. The film also portrays nationalism through civic, romantic, and economic lenses. Using a qualitative method with content analysis, the research found various types of nationalism values in the movie, such as civic nationalism, romantic nationalism, cultural nationalism, and economic nationalism. These values are reflected in Habibie's dedication to building the nation, establishing Indonesia's airplane industry, and his deep love for his country. The research also identifies the purposes of nationalism in the movie, such as building national pride, unity, and a sense of responsibility to the country. This research demonstrates that movies can be powerful tools for promoting national values, particularly among the younger generation. This study contributes to film and cultural studies by revealing how cinematic narratives can construct national identity

Keywords: *Civic nationalism; film analysis; Habibie & Ainun; Indonesian identity; nationalism values*

1. Introduction

Indonesia is a great nation with many cultures, languages, tribes, religions, customs, and values. One such value is nationalism, which is very important for the Indonesians. The concept of nationalism in Indonesia is rooted in a love for the homeland and the country. The application of nationalism in Indonesia aims to promote the development of the nation, fostering a sense of love, obedience, and willingness to sacrifice among its citizens for the country. Nationalism has existed in Indonesia since the 19th century, and at that time, nationalism meant a struggle carried out by the Indonesian people to expel and fight against colonizers (Wulandari, 2018). Nationalism in Indonesia is an aspect of Pancasila's values. The inculcation of the nationalism value is very large for all groups of people, including the agencies or institutions included in it (Barker, 2008, as cited in Mutiani et al., 2023).

The movie *Habibie & Ainun* by Faozan Rizal is one of the movies based on the novel *Habibie & Ainun*, which tells about the life journey and true love story of former Indonesian President BJ Habibie and his wife Ainun Habibie. The movie narrates the true love story of Indonesia's third president, B.J. Habibie, and his wife, Ainun, which

unfolds like a modern-day fairy tale. *Habibie & Ainun* leave a message of Nationalism and nostalgia for our pride as Indonesians when Habibie and Indonesia successfully conducted the first test flight of the N250 airplane. This message is reinforced by the display of the original footage of the first flight.

Faozan Rizal is an Indonesian movie director and cinematographer, known for his work in movies such as *Habibie & Ainun* (2012), *Hujan Bulan Juni* (2017), and *Abracadabra* (2019). He started his career as a cinematographer before transitioning into directing. His directing style often includes a strong visual focus, and he has received several awards for cinematography. Faozan's movies usually explore personal sacrifice, love, and national identity, blending emotional storytelling with technical artistry.

The researcher chose this topic due to their interest in exploring how movies, as an audiovisual literary work, can be an effective medium for promoting and reflecting national values. The movie *Habibie & Ainun* not only presents a romantic biographical story, but also displays a strong spirit of patriotism and love for the country, especially through the figure of B.J. Habibie. In the era of globalization and the growing influence of individualism, understanding and embracing the nationalism value of nationalism is crucial for maintaining the identity and national spirit of the younger generation.

In addition, this research contributes to the development of literary criticism by including aspects of ideology, especially nationalism, in the interpretation of movie narratives. By analyzing values such as devotion to the nation, the spirit of self-sacrifice, and national pride reflected in movies, it is hoped that this research can inspire the younger generation to foster a sense of pride in the homeland and appreciate the sacrifices of national figures raised in popular culture. Thus, movies are not only entertainment, but also a tool for strengthening national identity that is relevant in the modern era.

This research centers on two primary research questions that are thoroughly examined. The first focuses on identifying the various types of nationalism depicted in the movie *Habibie & Ainun*, while the second investigates the underlying purposes of these nationalistic elements as portrayed through the characters, dialogues, and storyline. By analyzing these aspects, the research aims to uncover how nationalism is represented and what messages or intentions are conveyed through its inclusion in the movie.

The significance of this research can be viewed from both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it provides a valuable reference for future researchers interested in examining how nationalism is represented in literary and audiovisual media. It contributes to the field of literary criticism by offering insights into how ideological values, particularly nationalism, are expressed through elements such as narrative structure, character portrayal, and dialogue in movies. Furthermore, it enhances literary studies by incorporating the analysis of nationalism within the context of contemporary media. Practically, this research encourages viewers, especially the younger generation, to develop a stronger appreciation for national values as presented in movies. It serves as a tool to foster patriotism, promote national identity, and inspire love for the country through accessible and emotionally engaging storytelling. Additionally, it highlights the role of movies as cultural instruments that can influence civic awareness and reinforce unity within society.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Sociology of Literature

The sociology of literature views literary works not merely as works of art but as cultural products that are born and developed in a particular social context. Literature reflects various social dynamics, including ideology, conflict, and the process of societal change. Faruk (2017) mentions that literature is a social institution that emerges from interactions with the historical and cultural conditions that surround it. Literary works, in this case, become a medium between the author's expression and the collective consciousness of the society in which they are created.

The relationship between literature and society is reciprocal. Damono (2018) asserts that literary works are influenced by the author's social setting-such as the political situation, class structure, and dominant ideology-but on the other hand, literature is also able to shape the reader's perspective, feelings, and critical awareness of social reality. This dual role makes literature not only a mirror of society but also an agent of social change.

Griswold (2020) expands this understanding with the concept of the "cultural diamond", which places literature as an important node in the interaction between the social world, culture makers, and audiences. In this framework, literature serves to construct and disseminate meaning in society while absorbing changes in cultural attitudes, power relations, and identity construction.

In conclusion, literature not only functions as a work of art but also as a part of social life that mutually influences society. It is born out of certain social, political, and cultural conditions, and at the same time, can shape people's way of thinking, values, and consciousness. Literature serves as a bridge between the author's personal experience and the wider social reality, while also playing a role in creating social change and shaping cultural identity.

2.2 Nationalism Value

One of the nations with the biggest populations worldwide is Indonesia. Every one of these Indonesians is supposed to possess nationalistic principles that can be applied to protect the country if an internal or external threat materializes. The nationalism value is the belief that each person should have the utmost loyalty to their nation-state. People who exhibit loyalty, patriotism, and profound love for their nation and country exhibit nationalism in their thoughts and actions. In this regard, nationalism's worth motivates people to prioritize the needs of the country over their own or their group's interests and to develop a sense of pride in their nation's identity, culture, history, and accomplishments. Sacrifice is another aspect of nationalism when a person is prepared to contribute their everything to preserve the integrity and advancement of the country (Mustari, 2014).

Nationalism value is one of the most important values in the life of the nation and state. Given that nationalism is a manifestation of love and respect for the country and state, this virtue is particularly important for the younger generation. A sense of pride in one's national identity, an understanding of the value of preserving state sovereignty, and an obligation to support the advancement of the country are all components of nationalism. This value serves as the cornerstone for fostering a feeling of national cohesion, bolstering social cohesion, and teaching a service-oriented mindset in the next generation. The younger generation may take the lead in preserving the

integrity and stability of the country in the face of globalization's problems by being taught the importance of nationalism (Dwi, 2020).

Before independence, nationalism existed and developed through various movements, such as the Youth Pledge. In the era of globalization and individualism, the current generation has become increasingly disrespectful of national values, so understanding the history of nationalism is essential to enhance its spirit and contribution to national sovereignty. The article also discusses the difference between the concepts of "nation" and "state", as well as the role of Indian nationalism in fostering Indonesian identity (Alfaqi, 2016).

2.3 The Types of Nationalism

Many scholars argue that nationalism comes in many forms. Nationalism can manifest in aspects of citizenship, ethnicity, culture, religion, or ideology, and can emerge as a popular (non-state) movement or as an official part of state ideology. According to Sigit Sapto et al. (2021), various forms of nationalism are categorized based on the definitions used by the state.

The types of nationalism are :

a. Civic nationalism (or civil nationalism)

Civic nationalism is defined as a concept that emphasizes the importance of the active participation of all people in the life of the nation. Membership in a nation is not determined by ethnicity, religion, or cultural heritage, but rather by an individual's awareness of and commitment to universal values such as democracy, justice, equality, and human rights.

b. Ethnic Nationalism

Ethnic nationalism, or ethnonationalism, is a form of nationalism rooted in the cultural, historical, and ethnic identity of a people group. In this concept, the political legitimacy of a state comes from the cultural or ethnic similarities that form the basis of a nation's togetherness. Membership in the nation is hereditary, meaning that a person becomes part of a particular nation based on blood heritage, culture, or ancestral identity.

c. Romantic Nationalism

Romantic nationalism, also known as identity nationalism, is explained as a form of nationalism rooted in the idea that the state is a natural manifestation of the soul, identity, or spirit of a nation. This concept emphasizes that the nation is an organic entity that has a distinctive character, culture, and history that distinguishes it from other nations. Political legitimacy in romantic nationalism stems from the belief that the state is an authentic expression of the collective identity of a nation or race.

d. Cultural Nationalism

Cultural nationalism is defined as a form of nationalism that places a shared culture as the primary source of political legitimacy and national identity. Unlike ethnic nationalism, which is hereditary, cultural nationalism is more inclusive as it does not rely on biological attributes such as skin color, race, or lineage. Instead, national bonds are built through commonalities in language, traditions, values, and cultural practices shared by the people.

e. State Nationalism

State nationalism is described as a form of nationalism that is a variation of civic nationalism, but often combined with elements of ethnic nationalism. In this concept, the nation is considered a collective community responsible for contributing to the state's maintenance, stability, and strength. State nationalism emphasizes that the existence and survival of the state depend on the active participation of the people as a unit with emotional, social, and political ties.

f. Religious Nationalism

Religious nationalism is explained as a form of nationalism in which the political legitimacy of a state is based on the religious similarities among its citizens. In this concept, religion becomes the main foundation that unites people and builds the collective identity of a nation. The state is seen as a place to implement the values, teachings, and laws of the religion adhered to by the majority of the population.

According to Drew (2023), the concept of nationalism can take many forms, depending on the context, historical background, and socio-political dynamics. 14 different types of nationalism, each representing a unique way of understanding and expressing national identity.

Here is a brief explanation of the 14 types of nationalism:

a. Civic nationalism

A more liberal kind of nationalism, known as civic nationalism, defines the country not by race or bloodlines but by its shared principles and dedication to civic democracy. Ethnic nationalism, which maintained that a country should be defined by its racial or ethnic character, gave rise to this kind of nationalism in Europe throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.

Instead, civic nationalists maintained that if a person shared the nation's beliefs and customs, they may all be considered a part of it, regardless of their background. Since it guaranteed that every citizen would be treated equally under the law, this inclusive concept of nationality played a crucial role in the growth of contemporary democracy.

b. Cultural nationalism

A kind of nationalism known as cultural nationalism holds that a country's common culture, not its ethnic background, defines it. Cultural nationalists often work to uphold and maintain their country's culture, frequently by promoting the arts and traditional values. By encouraging pride in the country's past and accomplishments, cultural nationalists may also aim to strengthen a feeling of national identity.

c. Economic nationalism

Economic nationalism is a school of thought that supports protecting a country's economy over globalization. Proponents of economic nationalism believe that a country should focus on producing the goods and services it needs domestically, rather than importing them from other countries. This can help the country become more self-sufficient during times of war or other times of disruption. It is a form of defensive nationalism designed to protect the nation-state, rather than a belief in the country's superiority.

d. Ethnic nationalism

Of all nationalisms, ethnic nationalism is the most blatantly racist. It is the idea that a country ought to be homogeneous in terms of ethnicity. Ethnic nationalism's fundamental tenets include that one ethnic group is superior to all others, that ethnic groupings cannot coexist peacefully, and that a country would function best when it is made up of just one ethnic group.

e. Expansionist nationalism

According to expansionist nationalism, a country should use force to enlarge its borders. Through colonization, it promotes the annexation of nearby nations and the settlement of its citizens there. Otto von Bismarck, the German Chancellor of the 19th century, was the most prominent proponent of expansionist nationalism, which he employed to bring the German-speaking states together.

f. Linguistic nationalism

The belief that a nation should be identified by its shared language is known as linguistic nationalism. Other kinds of nationalism, on the other hand, could emphasize a common culture or ethnicity more than this. Linguistic nationalism frequently contends that a common language is an essential component of a country's identity and that it is required for social cohesiveness and communication.

Critics counter that linguistic oppression and prejudice can result from language nationalism. They also note that forced assimilation into a single language would be unfeasible and may be detrimental, given that many countries are already bilingual.

g. Left-wing nationalism

According to left-wing nationalism, a country's distinct identity must be protected from the capitalist and imperialist aspirations of other countries by embracing socialism and left-wing principles. The working class must take the lead in this fight, according to left-wing nationalists. Marxist groups and organizations have frequently been associated with left-wing nationalists.

h. Liberal nationalism

According to liberal nationalism, a nation-state should uphold Western ideals, such as democracy and liberalism, inside its boundaries. This is frequently accomplished by implementing illiberal policies. For instance, in the francophone world, liberal nationalists have passed legislation restricting people's ability to wear religious clothing in public places. Here, the underlying idea is that since religions are illiberal, they shouldn't be accepted in a liberal society.

This kind of liberalism is so violent that it has twisted into an illiberal ideology. Because they think the free market is the most effective means of fostering economic growth and development, liberal nationalists also frequently favor a small role for government in the economy.

i. Liberation nationalism

A political philosophy known as "liberation nationalism" arose in the middle of the 20th century in reaction to the process of decolonization. Liberation nationalists contend that every country should be free from foreign rule and have the right to self-determination. Liberation nationalists want to establish a sovereign state and gain

independence for their nation. Liberation nationalists have frequently aimed to advance autonomous social and economic development inside their nations.

j. National conservatism

National conservatism supports the preservation of traditional institutions and values, including the nation-state, the family, and religion. Additionally, they frequently want an assertive foreign policy and a powerful military. This kind of nationalism seeks to maintain a society's traditional culture and is very resistant to change.

It might show up as an anti-immigrant sentiment based on the notion that immigration brings about change and diversity. Since a globalized world results in the importation of many cultural ideals, it is also dubious of globalism. On the other hand, proponents of national conservatism contend that its focus on upholding traditional values can aid in preserving such traditions, which may safeguard their families and children.

k. National Socialism

Early in the 20th century, national socialism often abbreviated as Nazism became a popular political philosophy in Germany. The extreme type of nationalism known as national socialism is based on the idea that the Aryan people are destined to govern the globe and that they are superior to all other races. A fervent believer in racial purity, national socialists used anti-Semitism and eugenics to try to establish an Aryan society in Germany.

l. Pan-nationalism

Pan-nationalism is a type of nationalism that transcends national boundaries to envision nations based on ethnic background. It aims to undermine and redraw the boundaries of nations. This type of nationalism is particularly popular in colonized nations where superimposed boundaries were drawn against the will of local ethnic groups.

m. Religious nationalism

The belief that a common religion should define and unite a nation is known as religious nationalism. Religious nationalists may advocate for laws that actively uphold the prevailing faith and encourage non-Muslims to convert (or be expelled) from the nation.

n. Romantic nationalism

Romantic nationalism promoted a country's return to a fictitious past when it was ostensibly more idealistic than it is now. It frequently manifests as an emotional bond with recognizable icons, such as old buildings or traditional attire. Romantic nationalists frequently minimize the significance of other civilizations to advance their own culture, language, and ideals. This can occasionally result in racist or xenophobic sentiments toward people from different communities.

2.4 The Purpose of Nationalism

According to Permanto (2012, cited in Fauziah & Dewi, 2021), "Nationalism is defined as the knowledge that every Indonesian person is a member of the country and

must love and protect it. The ideology of the Indonesian nation, known as Pancasila, reflects the country's nationalism.”

In addition, Permanto (2012, cited in Fauziah & Dewi, 2021). also explains that the purposes of nationalism include:

a. To cultivate and strengthen affection for the homeland, state, and country.

This entails encouraging a strong feeling of national identity and emotional ties among the populace. Strong patriotism increases a person's likelihood of upholding national ideals, defending their nation's sovereignty, and making constructive contributions to national progress. Love for one's country entails respecting and preserving its history, customs, and culture. It also entails a readiness to defend the nation from both internal and external challenges and to assist in its advancement. By fostering a stronger sense of national identity, people are more likely to uphold their allegiance to their nation, respect its institutions and laws, and cooperate to bring about prosperity and unity.

b. To create a peaceful and harmonious interaction between people and society.

When everyone in society can build strong communication, recognize individual diversity, and promote the principles of unity, harmonious relationships may be formed. Tolerance and empathy must also be given top priority for all members of society to feel appreciated and welcomed. As a result, a social environment that is harmonious, wealthy, and united will be established, allowing everyone to live side by side in safety and comfort.

c. To foster and fortify a sense of fraternity among a nation's residents.

Regardless of differences in socioeconomic standing, religion, culture, or nationality, everyone in society has to be able to build positive connections with others. Furthermore, the most important factors in fostering brotherhood are empathy and tolerance for others. People may create a quiet and harmonious environment by encouraging a sense of compassion and unity. This will bolster a nation's sense of togetherness and promote social stability.

d. An endeavor to eradicate extremism and unreasonable demands made to the government by communities or citizens.

Ensure that people's wants and concerns are recognized and suitably handled, which involves encouraging open communication between the public and the government. Governments may stop citizens from feeling alienated and frustrated, which frequently results in extreme demands or actions, by enacting laws that support social justice, equality, and economic welfare.

e. An endeavor to cultivate an attitude of selflessness for the country, state, and homeland.

This entails motivating people to put their nation's development and well-being ahead of their interests. A profound awareness of the common good, in which people contribute to the security and development of society not just for their profit but also for the benefit of the community and country as a whole, is necessary to cultivate selflessness.

f. To defend a state, country, and homeland against assaults by adversaries who pose a threat to the state, both domestically and internationally.

This covers both non-physical defensive strategies, like fostering national unity, bolstering law enforcement, and maintaining social cohesion, and physical defense strategies like using armed troops. A nation needs to be ready to defend itself against dangers that might come from inside, like terrorism or civil disturbance, or from beyond, such as military attack.

One concept that fosters love, devotion, and pride in the country is nationalism. It is crucial for fostering solidarity among individuals from diverse origins and for constructing a sense of national identity. Nationalism encompasses both the spirit of independence and defense and the establishment of a sovereign, independent, and developed nation. According to Kusumawardani and Faturachman (2004), nationalism has several important purposes, including:

a. Providing National Identity

Nationalism is used to define a country's identity that sets it apart from other countries. Every nation has a distinct idea of what it means to be a nation, shaped by its values, history, and culture.

b. Uniting Various Elements of Society

Ethnic, cultural, and religious distinctions are all brought together by nationalism, which serves as a glue. This is crucial for fostering citizen solidarity and togetherness.

c. Protecting the Rights and Duties of Citizens

Nationalism seeks to safeguard citizens' rights and responsibilities while also making sure that no one is subjected to tyranny by the state or other people.

d. Promotes State Awareness

Prioritizing national interests over individual or collective interests is encouraged by nationalism, which cultivates civic pride and awareness.

e. Builds Broader Loyalty

Nationalism aims to shift people's allegiances from restricted ones (like religious or tribal) to more general ones toward the country.

f. Upholding Sovereignty and Freedom

Nationalism served as a driving factor during the independence movement to combat tyranny and defend national sovereignty.

g. Promoting Economic Development

Nationalism may also contribute to economic growth by enacting laws that safeguard the country's financial interests and guarantee the security and comfort of its people.

3. Research Method

This research employed a qualitative method as proposed by Busetto (2020), utilizing a content analysis approach to examine the movie *Habibie & Ainun*, directed

by Faozan Rizal. The research aimed to identify and analyze the values of nationalism portrayed within the narrative and characters of the movie. Data were collected through careful observation of the dialogues and interactions among characters that reflected nationalistic ideals. The content analysis approach was applied to explore both explicit and implicit messages conveyed throughout the movie. By examining various elements such as dialogue, characterization, plot development, and visual support, the research sought to uncover how the movie communicated messages of nationalism to its audience.

To support this objective, the researcher adapted thematic analysis steps based on the framework proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006). These steps enabled a deep engagement with the movie script to identify patterns and meanings related to the representation of nationalism. The process began with repeated readings of the script for familiarization, followed by the recording of initial impressions. Significant passages and quotations that indicated nationalistic values were then highlighted to serve as the basis for further interpretation and analysis.

In the next stage, the highlighted data were labeled and categorized according to general types and specific purposes of nationalism. The categorization process allowed the researcher to identify and group similar representations in the movie. These grouped data were then interpreted using relevant theoretical frameworks, which helped construct arguments related to the movie's portrayal of nationalism. A final review and refinement were conducted to ensure the coherence and accuracy of the categorization and interpretation, thereby strengthening the validity of the analysis.

4. Discussion

4.1 Nationalism Reflected in the Movie

The movie *Habibie & Ainun* portrays nationalism not only as a political ideology but also as a deeply personal value embodied by the main character, B.J. Habibie. His actions, words, and decisions throughout the movie reflect a strong sense of dedication to the nation, which is expressed in various forms. To gain a deeper understanding of how nationalism is represented in the movie, it is essential to explore both the types and the purposes of nationalism depicted through the character of Habibie. The following sections will provide a more detailed analysis of these aspects.

4.1.1 The Types of Nationalism

a. Civic Nationalism

In the movie *Habibie & Ainun*, this form of nationalism is reflected through the characters' devotion to the country, not as a result of ethnic or ancestral obligations, but as conscious and voluntary acts of service for the nation.

This is seen, for example, when Habibie chooses to return to Indonesia after completing his doctorate in Germany to serve the country through his expertise. He says:

“I, Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie, have just completed my doctorate degree. I would like to return to Indonesia and serve the country by creating airplanes for Indonesia (Choirul Reza, 2015: 17).”

This statement reflects his commitment to Indonesia based on a sense of responsibility as a citizen, aligning perfectly with the values of civic nationalism.

Another instance is when Habibie insists on fair and transparent procedures in national projects:

“If you want a project, you can participate in the bidding process. That’s how it is. That’s the procedure (Choirul Reza, 2015: 28).”

Here, his dedication to integrity and justice stands as a core value of civic nationalism, which prioritizes equality and the rule of law.

b. Romantic Nationalism

Romantic nationalism sees the nation as a spiritual and emotional entity, something sacred and soulful. In *Habibie & Ainun*, this concept is strongly reflected through Habibie's deep emotional attachment to his homeland, even depicting the country as a living, sacred entity.

“I have to come home. I want to build our country. I've made a promise (Choirul Reza, 2015: 12).”

Habibie's return to Indonesia was not out of formal obligation, but out of a calling of the soul and a sacred promise to his beloved homeland, an expression of national identity that is typical in romantic nationalism.

“Laid down. Fallen. In pain. Angry. Dear Motherland. You are my guide. An ancient and powerful vow. Ruined. I keep walking. This great and holy soul. Shall take me to you (Choirul Reza, 2015: 12).”

This quote strongly represents romantic nationalism. Habibie saw Indonesia as a “Deer Motherland”, something more than just a political territory; it was a spiritual entity that he loved and was passionate about.

c. Cultural Nationalism

Cultural nationalism defines national identity through shared cultural practices, traditions, and values. This is evident in the movie through the depiction of Indonesian traditions, such as celebrating Lebaran and maintaining cultural family values.

“Take this cake to Ranggamalela with Fanny. Pay a visit to the Besar as well (Choirul Reza, 2015: 4).”

This reflects the importance of Lebaran traditions and the culture of friendship, as part of Indonesia's national identity, which comes from culture, not race.

“The rhythm of Javanese culture instilled with Islamic values made us husband and wife (Choirul Reza, 2015: 46).”

Their marriage is bound by Javanese and Islamic cultural values, not by ethnicity. This shows that shared culture is the basis of shared life and inclusive nationalism.

d. State Nationalism

State nationalism is demonstrated by prioritizing the stability and sovereignty of the state above personal interests. This is reflected in Habibie’s decision to return to Indonesia and accept the presidency during a time of national crisis. His commitment to strategic national projects and his metaphorical view of the nation as a plane that must not crash underscore his dedication to the country. As he affirmed:

"I have to come home. I want to build our country. I've made a promise (Choirul Reza, 2015: 12)."

Habibie put the country's interests above his international career. He felt he had a responsibility to build the country's strength as a civic duty.

"We have to develop strategic industries. It's vital for the country. Airplanes, to connect the archipelago as a means of transportation. We also need trains for land transport. Large ships for commerce, containers, and product distribution between islands. All of these will be the work of proud Indonesians (Choirul Reza, 2015: 21)."

It shows that Habibie did not just dream of building an airplane, but saw it as a means to strengthen the country's integration, economy, and sovereignty.

e. Religious Nationalism

Although not dominant, religious nationalism appears in the movie through the characters' integration of religious values into national identity. The use of Islamic phrases in state functions, such as presidential oaths, and the portrayal of prayer in times of need, highlight the religious spirit interwoven with nationalism.

"Oath of office as the President of Indonesia. In the name of God, I swear to fulfill my obligations... (Choirul Reza, 2015: 33)"

The oath of office using the name of God signifies that the legitimacy of political power is associated with religious values, reflecting elements of religious nationalism.

f. Economic Nationalism

Economic nationalism emphasizes domestic production, economic self-reliance, and reduced dependence on foreign countries, especially in strategic sectors such as technology and transportation. In the movie *Habibie & Ainun*, this form of nationalism is vividly demonstrated through Habibie's vision and struggle to establish Indonesia's airplane industry.

"Indonesia now has its own airplane. We can prove to the world that the Indonesian people are capable of making their own planes (Choirul Reza, 2015: 32)."

Building our airplane is a symbol of economic independence, national pride, and a real effort to reduce dependence on other countries in the strategic industry sector.

"We have to develop strategic industries. It's vital for the country. Airplanes, to connect the archipelago as a means of transportation. We also need trains for land transport. Large ships for commerce, containers, and product distribution between islands. All of these will be the work of proud Indonesians (Choirul Reza, 2015: 21)."

Habibie envisioned Indonesia becoming self-sufficient in the technological and transportation sectors, which reflects the core values of economic nationalism, producing independently rather than relying on imports.

g. Linguistic Nationalism

Habibie discussed with other officials the importance of creating an airplane made by the nation's children. In his dialogue, he consistently used Indonesian, although he could have switched to English to convince them.

“Not to mention that this plane, I'm sure, will make Indonesia proud. Especially since it is the work of Indonesians (Choirul Reza, 2015: 22).”

Language is not only a means of communication, but also a representation of a nation. This shows that language remains the glue of national identity.

h. Liberation Nationalism

Although Indonesia had already achieved political independence at the time depicted in the movie, *Habibie & Ainun* demonstrates this spirit in its emphasis on technological and economic liberation from external influence.

“I would like to return to Indonesia and serve the country by creating airplanes for Indonesia (Choirul Reza, 2015: 17).”

Habibie turns down opportunities abroad and chooses to serve his homeland by building a national airplane industry, signaling a strong desire to liberate Indonesia from reliance on foreign technology.

“Then why are you busy helping a foreign country's industry? Aren't you ashamed that with all your intelligence, you've done nothing for your own country? (Choirul Reza, 2015: 20)”

This dialogue underlines the liberationist urge to redirect talent and effort toward national development rather than bolstering foreign powers.

4.1.2 The Purposes of Nationalism

a. To cultivate and strengthen affection for the homeland, state, and country

Habibie received a visit from representatives of the Indonesian government who said that President Soeharto's leadership needed him to build a national strategic industry.

“Our country is calling for you. Be grateful for that (Choirul Reza, 2015: 20).”

Habibie accepted the offer with full responsibility. Ainun also supported her husband's decision, even though it meant temporary separation and facing many challenges in the country.

b. To create a peaceful and harmonious interaction between people and society

Ainun felt tired and wanted to return to Indonesia because she felt lonely and burdened while living in Germany. She expressed her desire to return home to reduce Habibie's burden.

“You're a strong woman, Ainun. We're like train cars. Entering a tunnel, it's dark and long... But every tunnel has an end. And there is light at the end. I promise, I'll take you to that light (Choirul Reza, 2015: 16).”

Habibie encouraged Ainun with empathy and compassion. He did not blame or force, but strengthened Ainun's feelings with warm and soothing communication.

c. To foster and fortify a sense of fraternity among a nation's residents

In a moment of sincerity, Habibie revealed his ideals not only for himself but also for the nation's progress. He assured Ainun that his struggle would not stop abroad, but would return to his homeland to build Indonesia's future.

"I have to come home. I want to build our country. I've made a promise (Choirul Reza, 2015: 12)."

Habibie's statement shows that he has a strong determination to return and serve his homeland. He does not only think about his career abroad, but also wants to make a real contribution to nation-building. This spirit reflects the value of togetherness and the spirit of gotong royong as a form of brotherhood in the life of the nation.

d. To eradicate extremism and unreasonable demands made to the government by communities or citizens

In stressful situations, Habibie still upholds the principle of integrity. When offered a gift as a form of disguised bribery, he was not tempted in the slightest and instead emphasized the importance of transparency in the government process.

"If you want a project, you can participate in the bidding process. That's how it is. That's the procedure (Choirul Reza, 2015: 28)."

This firm response shows that Habibie rejected any form of irregularity that could undermine public trust. By upholding a fair and open system, he helped prevent the emergence of unhealthy practices that could develop into extreme demands or irrational pressure on the government.

e. To cultivate an attitude of selflessness for the country, state, and homeland

After living a well-established life in Germany with his family, Habibie realized that his service was not finished. He felt called to return to his homeland and realize his big dream for the Indonesian people.

"I, Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie, have just completed my doctorate degree. I would like to return to Indonesia and serve the country by creating airplanes for Indonesia (Choirul Reza, 2015: 17)."

This decision shows a very noble attitude. Habibie is willing to leave his comfort and glorious career abroad in order to realize the ideals of building the nation. This action is clear evidence of a selfless attitude for the progress of the country.

f. To defend a state, country, and homeland against assaults by adversaries who pose a threat to the state, both domestically and internationally

Habibie showed his passion and commitment to building the aviation industry in Indonesia. He believes that by developing the ability to produce its airplanes, Indonesia can achieve self-reliance and reduce dependence on other countries.

"I would like to return to Indonesia and serve the country by creating airplanes for Indonesia (Choirul Reza, 2015: 17)."

His commitment to building the country's independence and strength is in line with the theme of defense from domestic and international threats.

g. To provide national identity

When the N250 successfully took to the air for the first time, Habibie stood before the public and delivered a meaningful statement. For him, this moment was not just a technological achievement, but a symbol of national identity.

"Indonesia is capable of making airplanes. This is the proof. And the most important thing is all of you can see that this is the work of the Indonesian people (Choirul Reza, 2015: 30)."

Habibie emphasized that technological progress achieved by the nation's children is an important part of national identity. Not only does it show independence, but it also proves that Indonesia is able to compete and be recognized in the global arena through innovations and original works of its people.

h. To unite various elements of society

When asked to return home by government representatives, Habibie not only thought about the technical side of industrial development, but also saw it as a means to unite all elements of Indonesian society. He believed that technological progress should have a direct impact on people's lives.

"All of these will be the work of proud Indonesians. We'll utilize them, open their potential, as the young generation, to increase the quality of life for all Indonesians (Choirul Reza, 2015: 21)."

Habibie emphasized that industrial development is not just a matter of technology, but also an effort to unite various ethnic backgrounds, ages, and regions in one common goal: improving people's welfare. He sees the younger generation as the key to uniting the nation through real work and collaboration.

i. To protect the rights and duties of citizens

When faced with a disguised bribe offer from a businessman, Habibie remained firm on the principles of justice and transparency. He did not allow shortcuts that harmed the system and threatened the rights of the wider community.

"If you want a project, you can participate in the bidding process. That's how it is. That's the procedure (Choirul Reza, 2015: 28)."

With this firm stance, Habibie demonstrated his commitment to ensuring that all citizens are treated fairly. He ensured that obligations were adhered to and rights respected in the government system, without discrimination or abuse of power.

j. To promote state awareness

When Habibie began to hesitate between continuing his career abroad or returning to Indonesia, Ainun reminded him of the country's greater calling than personal ambition.

"Our country is calling for you. Be grateful for that (Choirul Reza, 2015: 20)."

Ainun's words touched my heart and made me realize that awareness as a citizen is not only about rights, but also about the responsibility to answer the nation's call. This is a deep and sincere form of patriotism.

k. To build broader loyalty

While at the peak of his career in Germany, Habibie received a stinging rebuke from an Indonesian government envoy who questioned where his loyalty lay.

"You are an Indonesian, right? Then why are you busy helping a foreign country's industry? Aren't you ashamed that with all your intelligence, you've done nothing for your own country? (Choirul Reza, 2015: 20)"

The question became a turning point that made Habibie realize that his knowledge and intelligence should be dedicated to the homeland. This was the moment that strengthened his loyalty to the nation and became the beginning of his long service in Indonesia.

l. To uphold sovereignty and freedom

After completing his doctoral education, Habibie was not tempted to settle abroad. Instead, he chose a more difficult path: returning to Indonesia to build the aerospace industry from scratch.

"I would like to return to Indonesia and serve the country by creating airplanes for Indonesia (Choirul Reza, 2015: 17)."

This choice is a tangible form of efforts to defend the nation's sovereignty, not through military power, but through technological excellence and industrial independence. Habibie proved that true freedom is born from the ability to stand on one's own feet.

m. To promoting economic development

In a strategic discussion with government representatives, Habibie explained the importance of building a national industry as the foundation for Indonesia's economic future.

"We have to develop strategic industries. It's vital for the country. Airplanes, to connect the archipelago... Large ships for commerce... All of these will be the work of proud Indonesians (Choirul Reza, 2015: 21)."

From this dialogue, it is clear that nationalism, according to Habibie, is not just a symbolic matter, but also concerns the welfare of the people. By developing strategic industries, he wants to strengthen connectivity, create jobs, and encourage economic equality throughout the country.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Faozan Rizal's *Habibie & Ainun* powerfully portrays nationalism, not just as a political ideology but as a lived value deeply embedded in the protagonist's character. The analysis reveals a multifaceted representation of nationalism, identifying eight distinct types manifested through B.J.

Habibie's actions and convictions. These range from civic and romantic nationalism to cultural, state, religious, economic, linguistic, and liberation nationalism. This spectrum shows that his devotion to Indonesia was expressed through a complex interplay of democratic principles, emotional attachment, cultural traditions, strategic state-building, religious values, economic self-sufficiency, linguistic pride, and technological independence.

Furthermore, the film illustrates the profound purposes that nationalism serves in nation-building. Through Habibie's narrative, nationalism is shown to foster love for the homeland, strengthen social harmony and unity, and cultivate a spirit of selflessness. It also functions to protect national sovereignty, shape a modern Indonesian identity, and promote justice and integrity in governance. Ultimately, the movie posits nationalism as an essential force for uniting a diverse population, defending independence, and driving economic development, presenting Habibie's life as a testament to how personal commitment can fuel national progress and pride.

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STUDENTS' MASTERY OF SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE IN VERBAL SENTENCES: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY AT SMP BANDAR KLIPPA

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Abstract

This study explores students' mastery of the simple present tense in verbal sentences, emphasizing their ability to construct positive, negative, and interrogative forms. The research was conducted at SMP Bandar Klippa, located in Kecamatan Percut Sei Tuan, Kabupaten Deli Serdang, North Sumatra, during the 2023/2024 academic year. Employing a descriptive quantitative design, the study utilized an objective multiple-choice test as its primary instrument. A purposive sample of 23 students was selected from a population of 142. The findings indicate that students' overall mastery of the simple present tense falls within the "fail" category, with a mean score of 49.56. Among the three forms assessed, Formula I (positive sentences) appeared as the most dominant, with a mean score of 0.52 or 37%. These results suggest that students struggle more with negative and interrogative sentence construction. Hence, adopting more contextualized and communicative grammar teaching methods is strongly recommended to enhance students' grammatical accuracy and practical use of English in real-life communication.

Keywords: *grammar instruction; simple present tense; students' mastery; verbal sentences*

1. Introduction

Language serves as the primary medium through which people communicate, build relationships, and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas. It is an essential element of human interaction and societal development. Oviogun and Veerdee (2020) describe language as a system of symbols that enables shared understanding within a community, implying that without language, communication would be nearly impossible. Similarly, McLendon (2017) emphasizes that language allows humans to exchange information, share experiences, and achieve mutual understanding. Among the many languages spoken globally, English holds a prominent role as an international language for education, business, science, and technology.

A key aspect of mastering English is grammar, which governs sentence construction and ensures clarity of meaning. Saengboon et al. (2022) underline that grammar provides the framework for word arrangement, sentence creation, and meaning accuracy. In the context of Indonesian education, grammar instruction forms the foundation for developing students' language competence across listening, speaking,

reading, and writing skills. The *Kurikulum Merdeka* and *Kurikulum 2013* both emphasize communicative competence, requiring students not only to understand grammatical rules but also to apply them meaningfully in communication.

One of the most fundamental components of English grammar is the simple present tense, which expresses daily habits, general truths, and timeless facts (Suhadi, 2016). Despite its basic nature, previous studies such as Herlina and Ramasari (2018) and Napratilora and Siagian (2019) show that students often struggle to apply correct verb forms in simple present sentences, particularly when distinguishing between singular and plural subjects or forming negative and interrogative structures. Such grammatical errors can hinder fluency and reduce students' confidence in using English effectively.

Preliminary observations and teacher reports at SMP Bandar Klippa, Kecamatan Percut Sei Tuan, Kabupaten Deli Serdang, North Sumatra, reveal that many students continue to make frequent mistakes when constructing verbal sentences in the simple present tense. These difficulties persist even after receiving formal instruction, suggesting a gap between curriculum expectations and actual classroom outcomes. Furthermore, limited use of contextual and communicative teaching strategies may contribute to students' low grammatical accuracy.

Given these conditions, it is essential to examine students' actual mastery of the simple present tense in verbal sentences to provide empirical data that can inform more effective teaching practices. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the level of students' ability in using the simple present tense in verbal sentences?
2. What is the most dominant formula used by the students in applying the simple present tense?

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Concept of Language Ability

Language ability refers to an individual's competence to understand and produce language appropriately within communicative contexts. Mulyaningrum (2019) defines ability as a person's capacity or potential, either innate or developed through learning, to perform specific tasks effectively. In the context of language learning, ability encompasses not only linguistic knowledge but also the cognitive and practical skills required to use language meaningfully. Hence, students' language ability is measured not merely by their understanding of grammatical rules but by their capacity to apply these rules accurately and fluently in real communication.

2.2 The Role of Grammar in Language Learning

Grammar serves as the structural backbone of any language, determining how words are combined to convey coherent meaning. Herlina and Ramasari (2018) emphasize that mastering grammar facilitates effective communication, as it supports accuracy and clarity in both written and spoken forms. Saengboon et al. (2022) further highlight that grammar functions as an organizing system that enables learners to construct syntactically correct sentences. In the context of English language teaching, grammatical competence is an integral component of communicative competence, as outlined in modern pedagogical frameworks such as the Communicative Approach and Task-Based Learning.

However, grammar learning among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students often faces pedagogical challenges. Traditional approaches focusing on rote memorization and isolated exercises tend to separate grammar from real-life communication, making students less engaged and more prone to errors. Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's (1982) **Interlanguage Error Analysis Theory** explains that such errors arise naturally as part of language development, reflecting learners' attempts to internalize and systematize grammatical rules. Recognizing these errors as a developmental stage rather than failure allows educators to design more effective, learner-centered instruction.

2.3 The Nature and Usage of Simple Present Tense

The simple present tense is one of the most fundamental yet essential grammatical structures in English. It is primarily used to express habitual actions, general truths, or ongoing facts (Suhadi, 2016). Common time expressions associated with this tense include always, usually, often, and every day. Despite its apparent simplicity, mastery of the simple present tense requires understanding subject-verb agreement, particularly in third-person singular forms (e.g., she goes, he plays), and recognizing when auxiliary verbs (do/does) are needed in negative and interrogative sentences. According to Napratilora and Siagian (2019), these structural rules are vital for learners to produce grammatically correct verbal sentences.

2.4 Common Difficulties in Mastering Tenses among EFL Learners

EFL learners frequently encounter difficulties in mastering English tenses due to structural differences between their first language and English. Previous studies (e.g., Herlina & Ramasari, 2018; Napratilora & Siagian, 2019) show that students often confuse verb forms, omit auxiliaries, or fail to adjust verb endings for subject agreement. These issues are consistent with Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's (1982) perspective that learner errors are systematic reflections of their evolving interlanguage. In Indonesia, where exposure to English is limited, such errors are intensified by limited communicative practice and a strong focus on written grammar drills. Consequently, students' understanding of tenses—especially the simple present tense—remains superficial, emphasizing form over function.

To address these challenges, grammar instruction should integrate contextual and communicative strategies that encourage students to use target structures meaningfully. Such approaches can help bridge the gap between grammatical knowledge and communicative application, fostering both accuracy and fluency in English language use.

3. Research Method

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design, aiming to systematically describe students' mastery of the simple present tense in verbal sentences. According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), descriptive research is designed to obtain factual and accurate information about existing conditions without manipulating variables. In this study, the researchers focused on analyzing students' ability to construct positive, negative, and interrogative sentences using the simple present tense. Quantitative data were collected through objective tests and analyzed statistically to determine levels of mastery.

3.2 Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of 142 students enrolled at SMP Bandar Klippa, Kecamatan Percut Sei Tuan, Kabupaten Deli Serdang, Sumatera Utara, during the 2023/2024 academic year. Given the scope of the study, a purposive sampling technique was applied to select 23 students as the sample. This sampling method was chosen based on the participants' accessibility and relevance to the research focus (Sudaryono, 2023). The selected students represented a range of proficiency levels, ensuring a balanced depiction of the population's grammatical competence.

3.3 Research Instrument

The main instrument used in this study was an objective multiple-choice test designed to measure students' ability to use the simple present tense in verbal sentences. The test consisted of 25 items, divided into three categories based on grammatical structure: Formula I (positive), Formula II (negative), and Formula III (interrogative). Each correct answer was scored 4 points, while incorrect responses received 0 points, following the principles of achievement testing as outlined by Widoyoko (2017).

To ensure the instrument's validity and reliability, the test underwent expert validation by two English language lecturers at Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara (UISU). The validity process focused on content validity, assessing whether each item adequately represented the learning objectives of the simple present tense as stated in the junior high school curriculum. Reliability testing was conducted using the Cronbach's Alpha method, which is commonly used to measure internal consistency. A coefficient value above 0.70 was considered acceptable, indicating that the test items were consistent and reliable (Arikunto, 2019; Sugiyono, 2022).

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected through a written test administered in a controlled classroom setting. Students were given 45 minutes to complete the test individually without external assistance. The researcher first explained the instructions clearly to avoid misinterpretation. After the test, students' answer sheets were scored according to predetermined criteria, and their raw scores were tabulated for statistical analysis.

3.5 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, including mean, minimum, maximum, and percentage calculations. The formula used to determine students' mastery level followed Widoyoko (2017), where:

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{\text{Total Score}}{\text{Number of Students}}$$

To interpret the results, students' scores were classified into five ability categories:

- 80–100: Very Good
- 70–79: Good
- 60–69: Enough
- 50–59: Less
- 0–49: Fail

These categories were adopted based on standard classification criteria used in educational assessment (Sugiyono, 2022). The interpretation allowed the researcher to describe the overall proficiency level and to determine the dominant grammatical formula used by students in constructing verbal sentences.

4. Discussion

4.1 Sub Topic 1

1. Finding

a. How is the student's ability to using simple present tense in verbal sentences?

The findings were analyzed by percentage formula. This research wanted to find the score level of the students' ability used simple present tense in positive, negative, and interrogative verbal sentences. The presentation of data is in the table below:

No	Students	Formula I	Formula II	Formula III	Total correct answer	Total incorrect answer
1.	ASN	5	2	3	10	15
2.	AZS	7	5	6	18	7
3.	AS	6	7	4	17	8
4.	DRS	4	2	3	7	18
5.	DAT	5	4	5	14	11
6.	DNG	4	3	3	10	15
7.	DTG	5	3	4	12	13
8.	INS	4	6	4	14	11
9.	JFR	3	3	4	10	15
10.	JCN	5	4	2	11	14
11.	KIW	5	4	5	14	11
12.	MA	5	4	5	14	11
13.	MP	6	3	5	14	11
14.	NP	5	4	5	14	11
15.	NS	5	4	6	15	10
16.	PW	4	5	3	12	13
17.	RA	5	3	2	10	15
18.	SZ	3	3	3	9	16
19.	SAH	4	5	3	12	13
20.	SK	4	4	2	10	15
21.	SA	4	4	5	13	12
22.	TPC	7	3	3	13	12
23.	YL	5	3	4	12	13
Total		110	88	89	285	290

Table 4.1. The Total of Students' Correct Answer

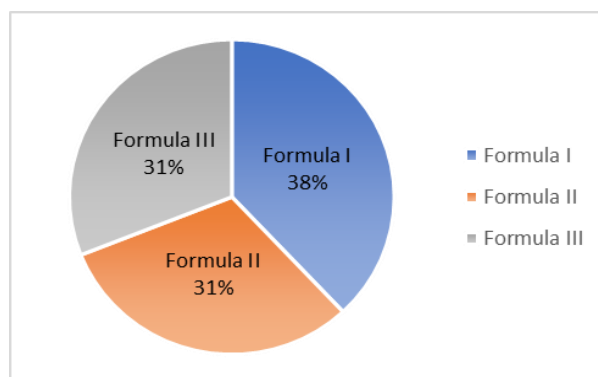


Chart 4.1. Percentage of Correct Answer

Based on the table above, the highest percentage of students' correct answers was found in Formula I (positive sentences), accounting for 38% of the total responses. In contrast, Formula II (negative sentences) and Formula III (interrogative sentences) each accounted for 30%. Furthermore, the researcher calculated the students' overall scores, assigning 4 points for each correct answer and 0 points for incorrect responses. The distribution of students' scores in mastering the simple present tense in verbal sentences is presented as follows.

No	Students	Score	Level of Ability
1.	ASN	40	Fail
2.	AZS	72	Good
3.	AS	68	Enough
4.	DRS	28	Fail
5.	DAT	56	Less
6.	DNG	40	Fail
7.	DTG	48	Fail
8.	INS	56	Less
9.	JFR	40	Fail
10.	JCN	44	Fail
11.	KIW	56	Less
12.	MA	56	Less
13.	MP	56	Less
14.	NP	56	Less
15.	NS	60	Enough
16.	PW	48	Fail
17.	RA	40	Fail
18.	SZ	36	Fail
19.	SAH	48	Fail
20.	SK	40	Fail
21.	SA	52	Less
22.	TPC	52	Less
23.	YL	48	Fail
Total		1.140	
Mean Score		49,56	Fail

Table 4.2. Students' Score of Simple Present Tense in Verbal Sentences

The writer also presented the frequency and percentage of the students' ability to use the simple present tense in verbal sentences, as summarized below.

No.	Score	Level of Ability	Frequency	Percentage %
1	80 – 100	Very Good	0	0
2	70 – 79	Good	1	4
3	60 – 69	Enough	2	9
4	50 – 59	Less	8	35
5	0 – 49	Fail	12	52
Total			23	100

Table 4.3. The Frequency and Percentage of Students' Ability used Simple Present Tense in Verbal Sentences

From the table above, it can be seen that there is no student at the “very good” level of ability. There is 1 student at the “good” level of ability, with the percentage of 1%. There are 2 students at “enough” level of ability, with the percentage of 9%. There are 8 students at “enough” level of ability, with the percentage of 35%. And there are 12 students at the level of ability “fail”, with the percentage of 52%.

Meanwhile, the writer presented the percentage of students' ability used simple present tense in verbal sentences score distribution as follows:

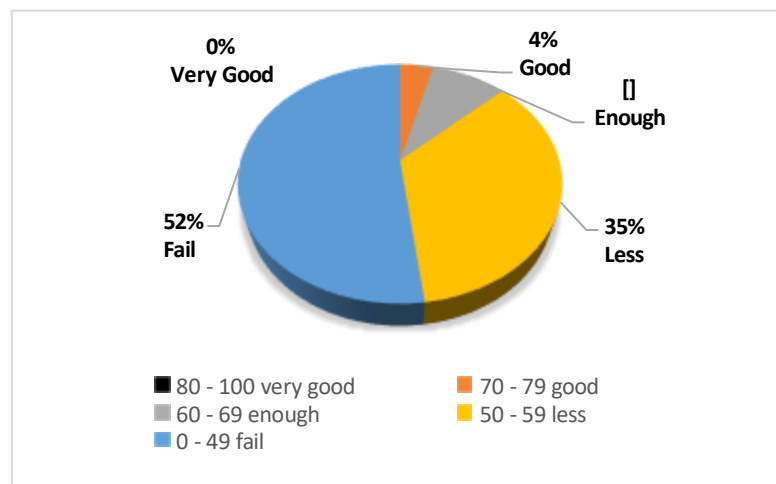


Chart 4.2 The Percentage of Students' Simple Present Tense Sentences Ability

From the chart above, it can be seen that there is 0% of student at the “very good” level of ability. There are 4% of students at the “good” level of ability, 9% of students at the level of ability “enough”, 35% of students at the level of ability “less” and 52% of students at the level of ability “fail”. For analyzing the data of students' ability to use simple present tense in verbal sentences, can be seen from the following table:

	N	Min.	Max.	Sum	Mean
Simple Present Tense Sentence Ability	23	28	72	1140	49.56

Table 4.4 Descriptive Statistics of Students' Ability to Use Simple Present Tense in Verbal Sentences

From the table, it can be seen that the mean of students' ability in using simple present tense in verbal sentences is 49.56, which means that the category for students' ability used simple present tense in verbal sentences is "fail". Next, the minimum score is 28, and the maximum score is 72.

b. What is the dominant formula of simple present tense in verbal sentences?

The writer analyzed the formula of simple present tense in verbal sentences. The analysis is explained as follows:

1. Formula I

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Sum	Mean
Item 1	23	21	0.91
Item 2	23	20	0.86
Item 9	23	13	0.56
Item 10	23	8	0.34
Item 15	23	16	0.69
Item 16	23	13	0.56
Item 17	23	5	0.21
Item 21	23	13	0.56
Item 23	23	0	0
Total	207	109	4.69
Total Mean Score			0.52

From the table above, it can be seen that the mean score of item 1 is 0.91, item 2 is 0.86, item 9 is 0.56, item 10 is 0.34, item 15 is 0.69, item 16 is 0.56, item 17 is 0.21, item 21 is 0.56, and item 23 is 0. In conclusion, the total mean score of simple present tense in verbal sentences type I is 0.52.

2. Formula II

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Sum	Mean
Item 3	23	13	0.56
Item 5	23	11	0.47
Item 8	23	14	0.60
Item 11	23	19	0.82
Item 14	23	18	0.78
Item 19	23	4	0.17
Item 20	23	2	0.08
Item 25	23	8	0.34
Total	184	89	3.83
Total Mean Score			0.48

From the table above, it can be seen that the mean score of item 3 is 0.56, item 5 is 0.47, item 8 is 0.60, item 11 is 0.82, item 14 is 0.78, item 19 is 0.17, item 20 is 0.08, and item 25 is 0.34. In conclusion, the total mean score of student's used simple present tense in verbal sentences type II is 0.48.

3. Formula III

	Descriptive Statistics		
	N	Sum	Mean
Item 4	23	13	0.56
Item 6	23	18	0.78
Item 7	23	10	0.43
Item 12	23	16	0.69
Item 13	23	20	0.86
Item 18	23	6	0.26
Item 22	23	3	0.13
Item 24	23	0	0
Total	184	86	3.17
Total Mean Score			0.40

From the table above, it can be seen that the mean score of item 4 is 0.56, item 6 is 0.78, item 7 is 0.43, item 12 is 0.69, item 13 is 0.86, item 18 is 0.26, item 22 is 0.13, and item 24 is 0. In conclusion, the total mean score of the simple present tense in verbal sentences type III is 0.40.

The writer also described the dominant formula of simple present tense in verbal sentences as follows:

No	Formulas	Mean Score
1	Formula I	0.52
2	Formula II	0.48
3	Formula III	0.40

Table 4.5 The Dominant Formulas of Simple Present Tense in Verbal Sentences

From the table above, it can be seen the dominant formula of simple present tense in verbal sentences mastered by students of SMP Bandar Klippa Academic Year 2023/2024 is formula I, the mean score is 0.52.

The writer also presented the percentage of the dominant type of simple present tense in verbal sentences as follows:

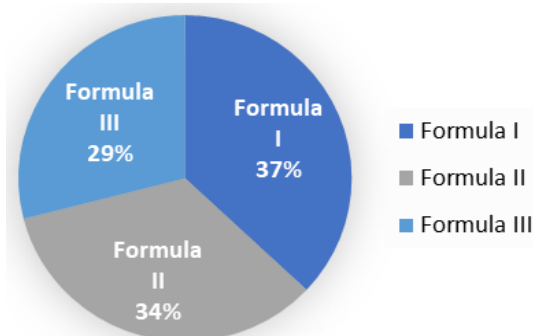


Chart 4.3 The Percentage of the Dominant Formula of Simple Present tense in Verbal Sentences

From the chart above, it can be seen that the percentage of formula I is 37%, formula II is 29%, and formula III is 34%. So, the dominant formula of students' ability in using simple present tense in verbal sentences at SMP Bandar Klippa Academic Year 2023/2024 is "formula I" with the percentage of 37%.

4.2. Sub Topic 2

This session discusses the findings presented in the previous section. It examines the results related to the two statements of the problem, comparing them with previous research and relevant literature on students' ability to use the simple present tense in verbal sentences.

a. How is the student's ability to using simple present tense in verbal sentences?

The findings reveal that students' ability used the simple present tense in verbal sentences falls into the "fail", where the mean of students' scores is 49,56. Although nearly half of them are rated at the "less" level of ability. This indicates that the teaching and learning process for simple present tense sentences at SMP Bandar Klippa during the 2023/2024 academic year is severely lacking.

b. What is the dominant formula of simple present tense in verbal sentences?

The data findings indicate that the dominant formula of simple present tense in verbal sentences by students at SMP Bandar Klippa is "Formula I," with the highest mean score is 0.52 or the percentage is 37%. In contrast, "Formula III" had the lowest mean score is 0.40 or the percentage is 29%.

5. Conclusion

This study examined students' mastery of the simple present tense in verbal sentences at SMP Bandar Klippa, Kecamatan Percut Sei Tuan, Kabupaten Deli Serdang, North Sumatra, during the 2023/2024 academic year. The research specifically focused on students' ability to construct positive, negative, and interrogative forms, as well as identifying the most dominant formula used.

The findings revealed that the students' overall mastery of the simple present tense falls into the "fail" category, with a mean score of 49.56. This result indicates that students' understanding and application of simple present tense structures remain below the expected competency level set by the national curriculum. Among the three grammatical forms analyzed, Formula I (positive sentences) was found to be the most dominant, with a mean score of 0.52 or 37%, suggesting that students perform better in constructing affirmative statements than in forming negative or interrogative sentences.

These findings highlight persistent challenges in grammar instruction, particularly in helping students internalize structural differences and apply them communicatively. Therefore, it is recommended that English teachers adopt more contextualized, interactive, and communicative approaches to teaching grammar. Incorporating real-life examples, peer interaction, and task-based learning activities may enhance students' grammatical competence and promote greater fluency in both written and spoken English.

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THE IMPACT OF DIFFERENT SOCIAL CLASSES IN LOUISA MAY ALCOTT'S NOVEL *LITTLE WOMEN*

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Abstract

This study examines how social class differences are portrayed and how they affect the protagonists in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*. Using Marxist literary theory, the analysis focuses on class distinctions between the upper and lower classes and explores their implications for social behavior and personal identity. The qualitative descriptive method is applied to textual data gathered from close reading of the novel and relevant critical sources. The findings indicate that social class has significant impacts on the characters' lives, manifested through experiences of bullying, jealousy, and internalized social inequality. The protagonists, particularly Meg and Amy March, face emotional conflict and social exclusion as consequences of their lower-class status. These experiences not only reveal structural injustices but also reflect broader capitalist social dynamics that define access to power, privilege, and self-worth. The study concludes that *Little Women* remains a valuable text for understanding how literature mirrors the enduring social hierarchies that shape human experience.

Keywords: *bullying; jealousy; lower class; struggle; upper class*

1. Introduction

There is a close connection between literature and social life because the social function of literature is how it involves itself in the midst of social life (Semi, 1989, p.56). Literature, then, is commonly divided into many kinds. One of them is a novel. Novels and social life are related to one another so that we cannot separate the novel from the cultural background of the society where the book was written. A novel is a story with a prose form in a long shape; this long shape means the story includes a complex plot, many characters and various settings (Doody, 1996, p.29).

In this study, the writer will analyze the novel *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott using Marxist theory. The theory is given in chapter II of this thesis. According to Woolf (1882-1941), women's writing should experience and not just draw comparisons with the situation in society. *Little Women* was released in two volumes, in 1868 and 1869. It is one of the best-selling novels in America. The story in this novel reflects life, so readers immerse themselves when reading it. Therefore, people grab it. The novel has sold many copies, that is, around more than 2 million copies, and one of the famous film producers also exited with her novel and hopes that the Story of Little Woman by Louisa May Alcott will become the best movie in America. This novel also

has a positive value for literature because it is such a classic novel which can be read by older generations and younger generations.

Little Women tells a story about the lives of the four girls of March, which are, Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy. They have different characters. Meg, the oldest, is beautiful and has a dream to become a queen who always wears a beautiful dress. Jo, the second, is tomboyish and tempered. Beth, the third, is shy and has a talent for playing piano. The novel describes a class struggle. This happens because of injustice like class distinction that exists in a society and it has a negative impact on the survival of the community, especially the lower or subordinate classes, and it provides opportunities for the dominant class to do whatever they want to oppress or exploit the subordinate class.

Based on the explanation above, the researchers assume that there are class distinctions and human exploitation in capitalist society. It describes the social condition in a capitalist society. Human exploitation is related to the action of the upper class to lower class in a cruel manner. It can make people feel bad. Therefore, the researchers will analyze the impact of the social class in the novel.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Social Class

Karl Marx (1973), in his theory of class, states that class is a set of people who play the same functions in the organization of a production. Classes in society are differentiated based on the position of economic structure, which is in mastery of production. This reveals that Karl Marx's conception of class is based on the economic side as the fundamental factor in human life problems. The other theoretical creator of class divisions is Max Weber (Dwipayana, Eko, & Wicaksono, 2003, p.28-30). He also has the same idea as Karl Marx. He defines the term class as a group of people in the same social class and the economic factor is one of the dimensions that determine the social class of people in society.

Generally, social class is divided into three classes. They are upper class, middle class, and lower class. It also happens in Britain. British society is also often considered to be divided into three main groups of classes. They are upper class, middle class, and lower class or working class. According to Kerbo (1996, p.13-14), there are some characteristics of class divisions that need to be known. They are the upper class, the middle class, and the lower class. Each of them can be described as clearly as possible through each of their explanations as given below.

a. The Upper Class

The upper class people constitute an elite group that occupies the top hierarchy of the social class of society. They have the greatest influence and dominance in society. Usually they are known as people who wallow in wealth, have high power, and dignity.

b. The Middle Class

This class is used to signify people less comfortably off than the upper class, and definitely less powerful, but respected nonetheless. They include shop owners, housekeepers, and industrialists.

c. The Lower Class

This class is used to signify those people that rarely have the requirements of life and are never considered by other classes, no matter how long or hard they work on

improving their circumstances. It also consists of people who have no property, who are often unemployed, and have no authority.

Class is based on heredity as the only factor to divide people into social groups. Therefore, there are the nobility, clergy and commoners (Day, 2001, p.2). Social class is sometimes presented as a description of how members of society have sorted themselves into varying positions of importance, influence, prestige, and compensation. In these models, certain occupations are considered to be desirable and influential, while others are considered to be menial, respectful, and unpleasant. In some cases, nonoccupational roles such as being a parent or volunteer mentor are also considered.

Generally, the higher ranking on such scales indicates higher skills and educational level. There are many modes of class struggle practiced by people of the lower class to reach higher social class. The most common ways are class struggle through violence, proletarian revolution, and dictatorship of the proletariat (Wilczynski, 1984). Horton also stated that social class can be defined as a stratum of people of similar position in the social status continuum. Aristotle observed that populations tended to be divided into three groups. They are very rich, very poor and those in between. The description of social class implies that money separates people into different groups. The members of particular social class often have about the same amount of money, but the most important thing is that they have the same attitudes, values, and way of life (Horton, 1980, p.313).

2.2 Marxist Theory

Marxist is a theory to depict social problems in literary work, especially dealing with the social changes occurring in industrial society in which the struggle of an oppressed working class to be free from capitalist oppression becomes the main point of literary analysis. Abcarian et al. (1998) writes that The Marxist critic analyzes literary works to show how, wittingly or unwittingly, they support the dominant social class, or how they, in some way, contribute to the struggle against oppression and exploitation. And since a critic views literature as just one of the variety of human activities that reflect power relations and class divisions, he or she is likely to be more interested in what a work says than in its formal structure.

Based on Karl Marx's writings above, it is claimed that literary works are essentially political because they either challenge or support economic oppression of the dominant social class. On the other hand, literary work is also the practice of human exploitation in the mode of production, distribution and exchange, which in turn gives great inspiration to the working class to struggle against the exploitation. Marxist theory focuses on the content and themes of literature rather than on its form. Besides, Marxist critics often look at literature and look for the "hidden" messages, especially as they reflect class struggle, reinforce ideas of a dominant class and illusions about reality.

Class struggle is one of the many theories postulated by Karl Marx. It arises originally from Marx's concept of a classless society. That concept is based on the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. Since Marx sees progress in society as coming about through the struggle for power between different social classes. Class struggle then becomes a class conflict which is caused by the exploitation of one class by another, especially in capitalist society (Barry, 1995, p.156-157).

There are a number of reasons why elaborating the concept of class in terms of exploitation has theoretical payoffs beyond the specific normative agenda of Marxist class analysis itself. These can be described below.

1. Linking Exchange and Production

The Marxist logic of class analysis affirms the intimate link between the way in which social relations are organized within exchange and within production. This is a substantive, not definitional, point: the social relations that organize the rights and powers of individuals with respect to productive resources systematically shape their location both within exchange relations and within the process of production itself.

2. Conflict

One of the standard claims about Marxist class analysis is that it foregrounds conflict within class relations. Indeed, a conventional way of describing Marxism in sociological textbooks is to see it as a variety of "conflict theory." This characterization, however, is not quite precise enough, for conflict is certainly a prominent feature of Weberian views of class as well. The distinctive feature of the Marxist account of class relations in these terms is not simply that it gives prominence to class conflict, but that it understands conflict as generated by inherent properties of those relations rather than simply contingent factors.

3. Power

At the very core of the Marxist construction of class analysis is not simply the claim that class relations generate deeply antagonistic interests, but that they also give people in subordinate class locations forms of power with which to struggle for their interests. Since exploitation rests on the extraction of labor effort, and since people always retain some measure of control over their own effort, they always confront their exploiters with capacities to resist exploitation. This is a crucial form of power reflected in the complex counter-strategies exploiting classes are forced to adopt through the elaboration of instruments of supervision, surveillance, monitoring, and sanctioning.

4. Coercion and Consent

Marxist class analysis contains the rudiments of what might be termed an endogenous theory of the formation of consent. The argument is basically that the extraction of labor effort in systems of exploitation is costly for exploiting classes because of the inherent capacity of people to resist their own exploitation. Purely coercively backed systems of exploitation will often tend to be suboptimal under many conditions. It is too easy for workers to withhold diligent performance of labor effort. Exploiting classes will, therefore, have a tendency to seek ways of reducing those costs. One of the ways of reducing the overhead costs of extracting labor effort is to do things which elicit the active consent of the exploited. These range from the development of internal labor markets, which strengthen the identification and loyalty of workers to the firms in which they work, to the support for ideological positions which proclaim the practical and moral desirability of capitalist institutions. Such consent-producing practices, however, also have costs attached to them, and thus systems of exploitation can be seen as always involving trade-offs between coercion and consent as Mechanisms for extracting labor effort.

5. Historical/Comparative Analysis

As originally conceived, Marxist class analysis was an integral part of a sweeping theory of the epochal structure and historical trajectory of social change. But even if one rejects historical materialism, the Marxist exploitation-centered strategy of class analysis still provides a rich menu of concepts for historical and comparative analysis. Different kinds of class relations are defined by the specific mechanisms through which exploitation is accomplished, and these differences in turn imply different problems faced by exploiting classes for the reproduction of their class advantage and different opportunities for exploited classes to resist. Variations in these mechanisms and in the specific ways in which they are combined in concrete societies provide an analytically powerful road map for comparative research. Weber's class concept also figures in an account of historical variation, and one of its strengths is the way in which his conceptual menu draws attention to the interplay of class and status and to historical variations in the forms of rationality governing life-chances. These are not issues brought into focus by the Marxist concept of class. On the other hand, the Weberian concept, by marginalizing the problem of exploitation, fails to bring to center stage the historical variability in forms of conflict linked to the central mechanisms of extraction and control over the social surplus.

2.3 Impact

According to the Oxford Dictionary (2000, p.678), impact is the powerful effect that something has on somebody or something. Based on this definition, it can be meant that everything absolutely has an impact on life. According to Lawang in Saptono, Sulasmono, and Suteng (2007) in their book, the negative impacts of social stratification can be described clearly as follows:

a. Conflict

Conflict is a struggle to acquire rare things such as values, status, power and many others. Conflict can also be defined as a social process in which two people or groups try to get rid of the other party by way of destroying or making it powerless.

b. Social Disintegration

Social disintegration is a perceived decline in integrity (unity and oneness) or the destruction of the unity of organization in society. The emergence of disintegration in society is a result of differences in roles and social status in the form of jealousy and prejudice.

3. Research Method

Creswell (2003, p.3) stated that research designs are plans and procedures for research that span decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis. In this research, the writer used a descriptive qualitative method with the Karl Marx theory. According to Gerard (2001), the qualitative method is usually not concerned with testing of hypotheses previously from the theory. While, according to Litosseliti (2010, p.52), qualitative description is concerned with structures and patterns, and how something is. Qualitative studies are inductive studies which derived from the results of our research. Further, it is explained that qualitative also tends to focus on how the research must follow concerning structures and patterns. There is an argument about qualitative methods that qualitative data are data in the form

of words. This method was intended to describe the social class and the impact on life that is reflected in the novel "Little Women" written by Louisa.

In collecting data, the writer used note-taking by using a piece of paper as instrument for research. After reading the novel *Little Women* and the other supporting references, the writer made some notes to classify the important units or sentences that were related to the problems of the research and read some book to get the theory. In this study, the writer applied some procedures of collecting data as follows:

1. Reading the novel carefully and understood the novel deeply.
2. Identifying social class and the impact in the novel.
3. Writing down the data from the novel on a piece of paper.
4. Classifying social class and the impact based on the theory.

The collected data are then analyzed by referring to the theory adopted in this research into some classifications about social class. Furthermore, the researchers give argument and further analysis about the effect of the differences in the social class in the novel.

4. Discussion

4.1 Social Conditions Between Lower Class and Upper Class

The first social condition depicted by the author in the novel is a portrayal of the differences in houses inhabited by the lower class and the upper class.

It was a comfortable room, though the carpet was faded and the furniture very plain, for a good picture or two hung on the walls, books filled the recesses, chrysanthemums and Christmas roses bloomed in the windows, and a pleasant atmosphere of home peace pervaded it. (Alcott, 2020, p.14)

The Moffats are very stylish. The humble Meg was initially afraid to see the splendor of their house and the elegant inhabitants. (Alcott, 2020, p.138)

Based on the quotation above, it can be seen how the condition of the house lived in by the March family, which is included in the Lower Class. Their house appears simple, and they only have old belongings that they have been using for years. In stark contrast, the house inhabited by the Moffat family belongs to the upper class. It is big and grand, making Meg feel intimidated and hesitant to enter the Moffat family's house.

Another social difference that can be highlighted from this novel is the lifestyle. The lower class has to work much harder than the upper class to meet their basic needs.

"All my life I will be forced to work hard, have little fun, and then become an ugly, sour-looking old woman, because I am poor and cannot enjoy life like other girl, too bad!" (Alcott, 2020, p.59)

At the Kings's house, Meg sees everything she wants everyday. The foster children's sister often went out, and Meg often saw the pretty dance dresses, flower bouquets, and heard great gossip about the theatre, concerts, sledding, and other fun stuff (Alcott, 2020, p. 63)."

From the quotations above, it is clear how the difference in life between the lower class and also the upper class are directly experienced by one of the protagonists, Meg. Meg is a sixteen-year-old girl who has to work hard to provide for herself by becoming the head babysitter. By becoming a nanny, Meg feels jealous of the life lives of the children she cares for. They can wear nice clothes and go out to do fun things, which are things that Meg desires deeply.

“That work, cultivating experience, and an early taste of independence will benefit the lives of these young girl” (Alcott, 2020, p.62)

He also saw how money was wasted on trifles, money that was so precious to Meg. Poor meg rarely complains, but there is a sense of injustice that sometimes makes her the envy of anyone. (Alcott, 2020: p.63)

From the quotes above, show that families in the lower class must spend their youth working hard to meet the daily needs of their family and must also learn to live independently at a young age. In contrast, at the same age, girls from upper-class families live by wasting money on things that are not really needed. Considering how hard she works, seeing these girls waste money that is so valuable to Meg certainly evokes feelings of envy in her heart.

Not only felt by the eldest Meg, the difference in social class conditions also caused jealousy for the youngest, Amy.

“I think it’s unfair that there are girls who have beatiful things, and there are girl who don’t have anything, (Alcott, 2020, p.9)”

“Susie Perkins come to school today wearing beautiful carnelian ring. I want it so badly, I wish I could be Susie.” (Alcott, 2020, p.71)

From the quotation, it can be seen that Amy feels envious of her friends and other girls who possess beautiful belongings while she does not. For example, when her school friend, Susie Perkins, wears a gem-studded ring to school. Seeing things like that makes Amy feel jealous and daydream about having similarly beautiful possessions as her friend.

Economic differences are not only evident in the community but also among School-children.

“You see, my friends always buy pickled limes, and unless you want to be seens as a cheapskate, you should buy them too. Everybody sucked on it in class, and traded it on pencils, bread rings, paper dolls, or whatever, at recess. If a child likes another child, he gives that child limwes. If he was angry, he ate one in front of the friend he didn’t like, and did’nt share any on it. They treat each other, and I’ve had so many, but haven’t returned any yet, but I have to, because owing limes is a debt.” (Alcott, 2020, p.108)

Pickled limes are quite expensive and that means not all students can afford to buy these pickled limes. This indirectly makes it a standard for the lives of these school children. When other children cannot afford to buy and bring the pickled limes, they

will ostracize the child, and they will assume that the child is stingy. They perceive the lime pickle as valuable due to its high price.

4.2 Impact of Social Class

The impact of the social class depicted in the novel is the emergence of conflicts such as bullying. This is experienced by one of the protagonists in the novel.

"I don't think your suffering is as heavy as mine. You don't have to go to school with arrogant girls, who make fun of me if I don't understand a lesson, laugh at my clothes, label me daddy because our dad isn't rich, and always make fun of me because I have an ugly nose."
(Alcott, 2020, p.11)

From the quotations above, you can see how Amy was treated by her schoolmates. Being part of the upper class makes her friends feel better than Amy. Anything related to Amy they make fun of. It wasn't enough to make fun of Amy's physique, they even made fun of her father just because his father was not a rich man.

"Mary Kingsley insisted Amy borrow her watch until recess, and Jenny Snow, the sharp-tongued young girl who had once taunted Amy for not having a lime, promptly shook off her hostility, and offered to correct Amy's answers in the additional questions. The hard one. But Amy did not forget Miss Snow's snarky remark about "some people whose noses are too flat to smell other people's limes, and stiff people, who are too proud to ask (Alcott, 2020, p.109)."

It can be seen from the quotation above that Amy was bullied by her school friends, because she never brought limes to school. Pickled limes were a popular snack among school children at that time, and they were quite expensive. Because the March family did not have enough money, therefore, Amy never bought and brought pickled limes to school to share with her friends, causing Amy to be said to be stingy by her schoolmates.

Social disintegration is another impact that arises from the existence of social class. This is described in the novel as the jealousy felt by the protagonist, who is part of the lower class, towards the upper class.

"We can't be lazy like now. But, it seems good to get a pretty lavish meal and a bouquet of flowers, go to a party, then ride the carriage home, read and relax, and not have to work so hard. Well, like everyone else. I've always envied girls who live like that; I like convenience (Alcott, 2020, p.58)."

"She tries hard not to feel jealous and is always grateful, but it's completely natural for a young girl to want beautiful things, interesting friends, accomplishments, and a happy life (Alcott, 2020, p.63)"

"Poor Meg rarely complains, but there is a sense of injustice that sometimes makes her the envy of everyone else, (Alcott, 2020, p.63)"

It can be seen from the quotation above that Meg feels jealous of the lifestyle that belongs to the upper class. She wants to do many things and also have the beautiful things that girls from the upper class have. The girls from the upper class spend their time having fun and also taking care of themselves. While the March girls cannot do these things, because most of the time they use to work hard.

5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the problem in the novel, the finding is found. That the social conditions between the upper and lower classes depicted in the novel have had several impacts on the life of the protagonist.

The social condition between the upper class and the lower class experienced by the protagonist is the existence of economic differences. The economic differences in the novel are described not only by the condition of the houses they live in, but also by the clothes they wear, what they own, as well as the way they spend their free time. Girls from the upper class filled their time with parties, hanging out, grooming themselves, going to theaters, concerts and doing other fun things. Meanwhile, the March girls, who come from the lower class, only spend their time working, and rarely do the fun things the other girls do.

Being part of the lower class has several impacts experienced by the protagonists. From the analysis, it can be found that there are two negative impacts experienced by the protagonists. The first is one of the protagonists who experiences bullying by his schoolmates because he does not have some of the things that other children have. The second is the jealousy felt by the protagonist towards the upper class. There are many things that can be done by the upper class, but not by the lower class like, taking care of yourself, having fun, and also beautiful things that only the upper class has.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL SELF-JUSTIFICATION OF CRUEL ACTS IN AGATHA CHRISTIE'S NOVEL *AND THEN THERE WERE NONE*

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Abstract

The study analyzes Judge Wargrave's psychological mechanisms of self-justification in Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None*. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the analysis identifies Wargrave's self-justification, defense mechanisms, and manipulative behaviors as strategies to rationalize his cruelty. His sadistic obsession and obsessive ambition reveal the complexity of moral reasoning behind his actions. The study contributes to understanding human rationalization of unethical behavior through a literary-psychological lens. The analysis was carried out by categorizing some information into two themes of discussion. The first theme is the protagonist's three actions to justify his cruel act: self-justification, self-defense mechanisms, and manipulation. Then, the second theme is the protagonist's two reasons to do cruel act: sadistic obsession and insane ambition. The results of this study indicate that Judge Wargrave uses various psychological mechanisms to justify his cruel actions. By looking at the psychological and literary context, this research provides an understanding of human nature and behavior, which shows the psychological complexity of the protagonist to uphold justice in an unethical way.

Keywords: *Behavior; cruel acts; psychology; self-defense; self-justification*

1. Introduction

Literary works are products of human creativity that are intimately linked to language. Humans and literature are related because human and environmental issues are essentially the origin of literature. Literary works that depict human existence are the product of the author's imagination. The author combines his idealized of life with the realities of it (Rahayu, 2022).

Novel is narrative work of literature or prose fiction that typically tell the story of the characters the author would like to portray, including their actions and daily lives. As a work of prose fiction, the novel presents a number of issues related to humans. People can enjoy and get a great deal of insight into human characters by reading a novel (Hanisa, 2016).

A literary work and the real world are closely related. Social connections, culture, religion, education, and the psychological aspects of people's personalities are all part of daily life. Literature and Psychology have a significant relationship because

both deal with humans, their behaviors, reactions, wishes, miseries, fears, desires, culture, individual differences, and social issues (Ayesha, 2022). Psychology teaches us about human actions and their reasons, whereas literature depicts human behavior through fiction.

The novel *And Then There Were None* by Agatha Christie is the most famous novel that retains the suspenseful and mysterious core of the story. The story begins with an invitation for ten strangers to spend time on a deserted island. When they arrive at the island, they realize that the owner is not there. The fear increases when they see a nursery rhyme called *Ten Little Soldiers*, which tells of how each of them will die. The rhyme visualizes how each character is killed, and they believe that the killer is one of them. Distrust and paranoia arise in an attempt to survive, and eventually each character reveals their dark secret.

Judge Lawrence Wargrave is the novel's primary character and the mastermind behind the murders. He is a former judge with intelligence, power, and a strong belief in justice. Wargrave believes that his cruel acts are the best way to ensure justice. He sees himself as a law enforcer, charged with punishing those who have avoided justice. This self-justification is what allows him to kill and perform terrible actions, since he believes he has the right to decide who should live or die.

By looking at the psychological and literary context, this research provides an understanding of human nature and behavior, where humans can lose their minds and morals when they feel they have the right to determine someone's life and death. Judge Wargrave abuses his position as a judge to punish others, even though he feels his actions are the right thing to judge the wrong, it is still unethical to kill in his own way. This study aims to identify and analyze the forms and motivations of self-justification in Judge Wargrave's character. Thus, this study is expected to provide an understanding of justice and morality in literature, and encourage researchers and readers to think critically about the motivations behind the actions of the characters in the story.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Self-Justification

According to Said (2024), self-justification is defined as rationalizing one's thoughts, feelings, or behaviors to align with personal beliefs, usually to protect self-image or avoid guilt. It is a defense mechanism that helps us maintain our self-esteem and honesty even when we act contrary to our principles. While it can provide some relief, it often causes long-term problems, such as creating conflict. Self-justification can cloud our judgment, making it difficult to know what we are doing. It hinders our spiritual and personal growth by preventing us from admitting our mistakes.

Said (2024) states that there are several factors that contribute to self-justification:

1. Fear of Judgment: We justify our wrong actions in order to avoid criticism from people.
2. Cognitive Dissonance: We justify our actions with our beliefs to reduce our mental discomfort.
3. Pride and Ego: Pride keeps us from admitting mistakes, which leads to self-justification.

Manifestations of self-justification can be done in various ways. These can include shifting blame, reducing the impact of our actions, or rationalizing unethical

behavior. While protective in the short term, these actions can lead to long-term effects, such as the destruction of relationships and the cessation of personal growth.

The concept of self-justification is closely related to the phenomenon of cognitive dissonance, which was introduced by Leon Festinger in 1957. However, Aronson has expanded and transformed this theory into self-justification theory. Aronson's experiments show that although dissonance is disruptive in any situation, it is most painful for people when an important element of their self-concept is threatened - usually when they do something that is incompatible with their view of themselves (Aronson, 1968). Since most people have a fairly positive self-concept by believing they are competent, moral, intelligent and good, their efforts to reduce dissonance will be designed to maintain a positive self-image - even when it perpetuates incompetent, unethical, stupid or cruel behavior.

2.2 Behavior

Behavior is how people act towards what they do, make things happen and maintain what they want. From a biological perspective, behavior consists of all human activities or activities, both directly and indirectly observed. In other words, human behavior includes all human activities or activities, both directly and indirectly observed (Notoatmodjo, 2003).

According to Rogers quoted by Notoatmodjo (2012), the behavioral process is all human activities that can be observed or cannot be observed directly. There is a process of adopting new behavior in the person, namely:

1. Awareness, that is, the person realizes or knows the stimulus (object) first.
2. Interest, that is, people begin to be interested in the stimulus (object).
3. Evaluation (consideration), namely weighing whether or not the stimulus is good for him.
4. Trial, people have started trying new behaviors. In this stage, the subject previously sought support from others regarding decisions made on the new idea or object in question.
5. Adoption, the subject has behaved to accept his attitude towards the stimulus.

2.3 Cognitive Dissonance

Cognitive dissonance theory provides an understanding of the mechanisms that may underlie the drive to self-justify. Cognitive dissonance refers to the mental discomfort a person feels when they have two or more conflicting beliefs, ideas or values, or when they are confronted with new information that does not align with their existing beliefs. There are often exceptions where these things are inconsistent. When such inconsistencies are found, they attract our attention mainly because they contrast strongly with the background of consistency (Festinger, 1957). In other words, we notice more easily when something does not fit in the way we think or act.

Interacting beliefs, attitudes, and values form a cognitive system, which is influenced and affected by behavior (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). Cognitive dissonance occurs when a person is faced with opposing thoughts or arguments and cannot choose which one is correct. Most people are aware of their belief system. However, when people realize that other people's perspectives and ideas may have a bit of truth, it conflicts with their cognitive beliefs. As a result, some of the emotions we can experience as a result of cognitive dissonance are fear, guilt, anger, frustration, anxiety, stress, and other psychosomatic conditions (Fontanari et al., 2012). It is possible that

cognitive dissonance causes many people to experience problematic behaviors. Vaughan and Hogg (2005) explain that people always want to act in a way that matches their beliefs to ensure that their beliefs and values are always correct. In other words, dissonance occurs when a person's beliefs conflict with their beliefs or when their behavior does not match their beliefs.

2.4 Defense Mechanism

Everyone has experienced something unpleasant in their lives. The problems that arise usually cause trauma and psychological impact, which takes time to recover from, and appears as an unconscious way to protect oneself. Everyone has a way of coping psychologically to make the pain subside, according to psychological processes (Cramer, 1987). Here, defensive actions refer to psychological defenses, also known as Defense Mechanisms. The response used to protect a person or object from attack is called a Defense Mechanism (Rezeki et al., 2023).

Zulfaisya and Hasra (2020) state that defense mechanisms are techniques that are unconsciously used to protect a person from anxiety that comes from unacceptable feelings or thoughts. Humans usually reduce tension to reduce anxiety and use defense mechanisms to protect themselves from anxiety. Likewise, we fear when the ego's defense mechanisms fail. According to Tyson in Sarijaloo and Kiaei (2016), anxiety represents our basic problems such as fear of intimacy, fear of abandonment, fear of betrayal, and low self-esteem.

2.5 Cruel Act

Cruelty is defined as behaviors performed by one individual against another that result in physically and mental illnesses (Mangangawuhi et al., 2022). Cruelty involves intentionally causing physical or psychological pain to other living beings, typically with pleasure (Nell, 2006).

According to Victor Nell in Mayes (2009, p.14), cruelty is any deliberate action that is particularly motivated by the desire to cause physical or psychological suffering, or that causes one or more beings to enjoy or be indifferent to the suffering caused by that action. Cruelty is defined as conduct that endangers life, limb, or health (physical or mental) or creates a reasonable fear of such risk.

Cruelty is the intentional infliction of suffering. Kemp, Brodsky and Caputo (1997, p.22) explains that for an act to constitute cruelty, there are two elements that must be demonstrated: 1) There is unintentional suffering and the act is not considered cruel. 2) There is intentional suffering and the pleasure felt by the perpetrator is highly correlated, so it is generally considered that when the perpetrator intends to be cruel, he also derives pleasure from the act.

Cruelty is defined as unethical action or mistreatment. Cruelty can be defined as an act that injures or kills others while also causing physical harm to them. The cruelty that caused the collapse was against the law and cruelty can be described as a crime (Wadong, 2000).

2.6 Psychology of Literature

According to Carl Jung (1912), enlightens that the human mind is the root of all sciences and arts. It should be evident that psychology, which is the study of psychic processes, may be used to study literature. Literature on its own provides a general insight into human life, as long as humanity has issues, social life, and intellectual life in

its own distinct way. An author develops a living piece of literature from the character they create, and the character has a distinct personality that was purposefully designed to make the author's work more alive.

Wellek & Warren (1977, p.81) describe in *Theory of Literature* that there are several definitions of literary psychology based on the subject of research, which are:

1. The psychology of literature is the study of the author's psychology as an individual. It signifies that a writer is a human being who is intimately connected to nature, which includes desire and passion. Based on his enthusiasm and emotional basis, he can develop an outstanding work of literature.
2. The psychology of literature is the study of the creative process. It signifies that this research examines how the process of a work might be transformed into an entire literary work.
3. The psychology of literature is the study of the various forms and concepts of psychology as they apply to literary works. This means that the study examines how psychological subjects and instances are used in the context of literary works.
4. The psychology of literature is the study of how literary works affect the reader. It indicates that this study examines the impact of literary work on the reader, whether it influences the reader's way of thinking and life or not.

According to Meiliana cited by Putri and Wulan (2024), psychology can help understand the message, characterization, and other elements of the novel as well as the basis of the characters' behavior, motivations, and conduct. Literary psychology is a field that investigates and studies how the human brain and behavior work. This perspective focuses on common elements found in literary works that are used to describe the psychology of authors, characters, and readers (Sulistiyana & Widiarti, 2019).

2.7 Protagonist

Every story must have a main character. Protagonists usually solve problems or are involved in conflicts, and they also determine the course of the story. According to Nurgiyantoro (1998, p.176–194), protagonists make readers feel sympathetic and empathetic, while antagonists do the opposite. The protagonist, also referred to as the main character, hero, or heroine, is the character who is the center of the story and does something that moves the plot along. Most stories have an audience or reader who really connects with the main character and supports them.

Nurgiyantoro (2009, p.178–179) mentions that protagonists show some traits that match our beliefs. These characters are similar to us, have problems similar to us, and overcome these problems in ways similar to us. Characters in a literary work are usually creations of the author's imagination, yet they play an important role in the plot.

3. Research Method

A research design is a researcher's idea presented in the form of an organized plan that depicts all of the major components of a study (Asenahabi, 2019). This study employed a descriptive qualitative research methodology. According to Pradoko and cited by Sahir (2021), qualitative research design is a design process used to understand social phenomena or human society by creating a broad and complex perspective that can be communicated in words and reporting perspectives obtained in detail from various informant sources, conducted in a natural environment. Descriptive qualitative research method was applied in this study to analyze the psychological aspects of the

protagonist's self-justification of his own cruel acts in the novel *And Then There Were None*. This technique systematically and accurately describes the facts and phenomena being studied.

According to Lambert and Lambert (2013, p. 256), the purpose of data collection in qualitative descriptive studies is to discover the character of the specific events under consideration. Therefore, to conduct an accurate analysis, the data collection are shown in the following steps: (1) searching for data from text related to the actions and reasons to justify the self-justification of Judge Wargrave's in cruel acts in the novel *And Then There Were None*; and (2) making important text related to the identified points. Then, to analyze the data, several types were: (1) classifying each data based on the Judge Wargrave's character activity of his actions to justify his self-justification of his cruel acts and his reasons in committing cruel acts as self-justification; and (2) analyzing the data based on the collected of text in the novel *And Then There Were None* by Agatha Christie (2015).

4. Discussion

This study focuses on the protagonist's actions to justify his own cruel actions and the reasons for committing cruel actions as self-justification of Judge Wargrave, the protagonist in the novel.

4.1 The Protagonist's Action to Justify His Cruel Acts

In Agatha Christie's novel *And Then There Were None*, Judge Wargrave commits a cruel act by killing other characters on a Soldier Island. As a former judge, he considers himself to have an understanding of the law and believes that his cruel acts are to uphold justice, as those he kills are those who have done wrong but are not properly punished. Therefore, he abused his power for the wrong purpose. He planned his every move carefully and acted as one who would be unlikely to be suspected due to his profession as a fair judge. Therefore, he carried out his actions by justifying his actions, using self-defense and manipulation to avoid anyone's suspicion.

4.1.1 Self-Justification

Self-justification is when a person considers their feelings, thoughts, or behaviors to conform them to their personal beliefs, usually to protect self-image or avoid guilt. It is a defense mechanism that helps us maintain self-esteem and integrity even when we act contrary to our values. This analysis investigates the protagonist's self-justification of his cruel actions. This can be seen as below:

“He was very ably defended and made a good impression on the jury in the witness-box. Nevertheless, on the evidence, he was certainly guilty. I summed up accordingly, and the jury brought in a verdict of Guilty. In passing sentence of death I concurred with the verdict. An appeal was lodged on the grounds of misdirection. The appeal was rejected and the man was duly executed. I wish to say before you all that my conscience is perfectly clear on the matter. I did my duty and nothing more I passed sentence on a rightly convicted murderer (Christie, 2015, p.52-53)”

Judge Wargrave attempted to justify his actions in sentencing Edward Seton, who was charged with the murder of an elderly woman, to death. Seton was initially

defended by the juries for his good behavior. However, Judge Wargrave tried to emphasize that he was only doing his job as a judge and his decision was based on the evidence. This was a form of self-justification, where he tried to remove his guilt and emphasized that the decision he had made was the right one.

“Oh, yes, I believe it. Wargrave murdered Edward Seton all right, murdered him as surely as if he'd stuck a stiletto through him! But he was clever enough to do it from the judge's seat in wig and gown. So in the ordinary way you can't bring his little crime home to him (Christie, 2015, p.94).”

This quote is expressed by Lombard when talking to Dr. Armstrong about Judge Wargrave who could allegedly commit murder under the protection of the law because of his profession as a judge. In this case, it can be interpreted that Wargrave feels that he has the right to punish people according to his wishes who he considers guilty. This is an act of self-justification that can be seen in the way he views his actions as legitimate and right, even though they are morally and ethically wrong.

“In the sense you mean, no. I came to that conclusion early this morning. I could have told you that your search would be fruitless. Nevertheless, I am strongly of the opinion that "Mr. Owen" (to give him the name he himself has adopted) is on the island. Very much so. Given the scheme in question which is neither more nor less than the execution of justice upon certain individuals for offences which the law cannot touch, *there is only one way in which that scheme could be accomplished*. Mr. Owen could only come to the island in one way. “It is perfectly clear. *Mr. Owen is one of us...*”(Christie, 2015, p.123)”

While Lombard, Blore and Dr. Armstrong have not yet discovered who killed the other three characters on the island, Judge Wargrave suggests that their investigation is useless as he suspects that the killer is among them, indicating that he feels he has a better understanding. He stated that the killer was trying to execute criminals that the law could not touch, which he was trying to justify his acts as self-justification.

“I will say here that such was the case with the man Edward Seton. His appearance and manner were misleading and he created a good impression on the jury. But not only the evidence, which was clear, though unspectacular, but my own knowledge of criminals told me without any doubt that the man had actually committed the crime with which he was charged, the brutal murder of an elderly woman who trusted him (Christie, 2015, p.238).”

This quote reflects how Judge Wargrave justified his decision in sentencing Seton to death that his judgment was based on facts and experience, where he believed that his understanding of crime was better than others. This is a form of self-justification and shows how individuals can use their arguments to justify their actions.

4.1.2 Self-Defense Mechanism

Self-defense mechanisms are a development of an individual's personality structure. Self-defense mechanisms help protect a person's mind, self, or ego from anxiety and social sanctions.

In other words, self-defense mechanisms are carried out by a person to maintain their self-image and deal with reality (Piliang, 2018). In this research, there are several quotes that confirm Judge Wargrave's self-defense in the island murder case and relate to his self-justification. This can be seen as below:

"I too, am a well-known person! But, my dear sir, that proves less than nothing! Doctors have gone mad before now. Judges have gone mad. So," he added, looking at Blore, "have policemen! (Christie, 2015, p.125)"

As suspicion arose about who the murderer was, Dr. Armstrong made the statement that he could not be suspected because he was a well-known professional. This is denied by Judge Wargrave who immediately mentions that he is also a famous person and that some people in honorable positions can also do unexpected things. He tried to maintain his self-image by distracting attention to avoid responsibility for his own actions which was also related to his self-justification.

"My point is that there can be no exceptions allowed on the score of *character, position, or probability*. What we must now examine is the possibility of eliminating one or more persons on the *facts* (Christie, 2015, p.128)"

Judge Wargrave implies that a social status or profession would potentially commit a crime to reduce suspicion on him which can be said as self-defense. It is also expressed as a distraction from his actions to focus more on the investigation of who might be guilty among them, rather than on himself being the mastermind behind it all. This can be related as a strategy of self-justification in order to distract from his guilt in the interest of his own self-justification.

"I sat on that chair on the terrace for the whole morning until the gong went, but there were, I should imagine, several periods during the morning when I was quite unobserved and during which it would have been possible for me to walk down to the sea, kill the General, and return to my chair. There is only my word for the fact that I never left the terrace. In the circumstances that is not enough. There must be *proof* (Christie, 2015, p.133)."

This quote expresses Judge Wargrave's defense when they were discussing the murder of General Macarthur. He emphasizes that there is not enough evidence to confirm his presence at that place and accuses him of killing the General and shows that he is also caught in a complicated situation. This can also create doubt among the other characters by distracting from the possibility that he is the real culprit. His statement can be related to self-justification as he tries to prove his innocence.

4.1.3 Manipulation

In psychology, manipulation means influencing someone by controlling their subconscious desires and thoughts (Trisnayanti & Saputra, 2022). Thus, manipulation can be defined as the way a person changes, influences, or controls another person or opinion to suit their own desires. These are some of the quotes that state the form of manipulation that Judge Wargrave uses to influence the other characters which also relates to self-justification for his cruel actions:

“Either you or Rogers *could* have administered a fatal dose with the greatest ease. Let us now consider the position of the other people present. What chance had I, had Inspector Blore, had Miss Brent, had Miss Claythorne, had Mr. Lombard of administering poison? Can any one of us be completely and entirely eliminated?” He paused. “I think not (Christie, 2015, p.129)”

Dr. Armstrong and Mr. Rogers are suspected of poisoning Miss Rogers. Dr. Armstrong denies the accusations, and Judge Wargrave argues that everyone on the island has the potential to commit the murder. This manipulation aims to clear the suspicion and maintain Judge Wargrave's image as a form of self-justification, as he equates himself and other characters with similar potential to commit the crime.

“On Blore's side, assisting him to the best of our ability will be myself, Dr. Armstrong and Miss Claythorne. You will appreciate therefore, that the odds against you if you choose to resist will be somewhat heavy (Christie, 2015, p.169).”

Judge Wargrave suggested keeping personal items like medicine and a gun in safe storage to prevent further murders. Lombard rejected this suggestion, arguing the gun was used for self-defense. Wargrave manipulated Lombard by claiming both Lombard and Blore are physically strong, but everyone supports Blore due to his lack of a gun. This forced Lombard to follow Wargrave's will, potentially as a self-justification for his actions in controlling the situation like he wanted.

“And now to the actual mechanics of the crime of Soldier Island. To acquire the island, using the man Morris to cover my tracks, was easy enough. He was an expert in that sort of thing (Christie, 2015, p.243)”

This quote is stated by Judge Wargrave who knows that the operation he is about to take will be useless and will die slowly. His last wish was to avenge all the cruel deeds committed by all the characters who were not brought to justice and he would kill them in his own way. He planned murders and gathered information on characters on Soldier Island. He used experienced criminal, Morris, to obtain the island, manipulating him to participate in his cruel actions. This form of manipulation relates to self-justification, as Judge Wargrave tries to justify his actions to prosecute other characters in his own way.

“According to my plan I should shortly need an ally. I selected Dr. Armstrong for that part. He was a gullible sort of man, he knew me by sight and reputation and it was inconceivable to him that a man of my standing should actually be a murderer! (Christie, 2015, p.244)”

When the third murder happened, Judge Wargrave chose Dr. Armstrong as his ally to avoid suspicion and used his reputation and social status to gain Dr. Armstrong's trust so that it would be easy to hide his cruel actions. He thought Dr. Armstrong was a gullible person and would not accuse him of being a murderer, making it easy to manipulate him.

4.2 The Protagonist's Reasons to Commit Cruel Acts as Self-Justification

This study will explain Judge Wargrave's reasons for committing his cruel acts as self-justification. It is believed that he committed the cruel act because he wanted to uphold justice against the criminals who went scot-free even though they were guilty of serious crimes. He justified his actions by stating that they deserved the punishment that he would execute in his own way.

However, Judge Wargrave has had an insane ambition and sadistic obsession since childhood. With these two factors, behind his profession as a judge, he is able to commit cruel acts under the name of justice, as well as to maintain his image as a fair judge. Thus, he believes that his actions to punish other characters in his own way are to uphold justice.

4.2.1 Sadistic Obsession

Judge Wargrave has a sadistic obsession that leads him to commit cruel acts, under the name of justice. Here are some quotes from Judge Wargrave's sadistic obsession that relate to self-justification:

"I have a definite sadistic delight in seeing or causing death. I remember experiments with wasps-with various garden pests... From an early age I knew very strongly the lust to kill. But side by side with this went a contradictory trait-a strong sense of justice. It is abhorrent to me that an innocent person or creature should suffer or die by any act of mine. I have always felt strongly that right should prevail (Christie, 2015, p.237)."

This statement by Judge Wargrave shows the contradiction within him since childhood, which is that he feels pleasure in killing, but on the other hand has a strong sense of justice. This obsession is not only due to his desire to kill, but also to rule over justice in determining the life and death of others.

By acknowledging the sadistic obsession in his actions, he also creates a narrative where his actions are a form of self-justification to uphold justice. His obsession to punish the guilty is a form of contradiction within himself as well as to maintain his image as a judge, despite his cruel acts.

"Crime and its punishment has always fascinated me. I enjoy reading every kind of detective story and thriller. I have devised for my own private amusement the most ingenious ways of carrying out a murder (Christie, 2015, p.238)."

Judge Wargrave expressed his interest in detective stories to create a smooth way of killing. This shows a sadistic obsession, which drives him to commit cruel acts in a carefully thought-out manner. He uses this obsession as a self-justification for his mission, which is to punish the guilty in his own way.

"A childish rhyme of my infancy came back into my mind-the rhyme of the ten little soldier boys. It had fascinated me as a child of two-the inexorable diminishment-the sense of inevitability (Christie, 2015, p.240)"

This quotation shows how Judge Wargrave has been interested in the nursery rhyme *Ten Little Soldier* about merciless reduction (related to murder) since he was 2

years old. He then became obsessed with planning his murder just like in that nursery rhyme. Assuming that death was inevitable, he rationalized his actions. He justified his actions that his murder was part of the moral law to uphold justice.

4.2.2 Insane Ambition

In addition to sadistic obsession as his reason for committing these cruel acts, it is also mentioned what his insane ambition was in his cruel actions. Here are some quotes from Judge Wargrave's insane ambition that relate to self-justification:

“I have wanted-let me admit it frankly-*to commit a murder myself*. I recognised this as the desire of the artist to express himself! I was, or could be, an artist in crime! My imagination, sternly checked by the exigencies of my profession, waxed secretly to colossal force (Christie, 2015, p.239).”

Judge Wargrave began to feel a real desire to kill, not from the bench and his judge's robe. He no longer saw the killings as criminal, but as a form of creative expression and art, reflecting his insane ambition to create something brutal. This is also seen as self-justification, as he wants to show his plan as an expression of his inner self, like an artist.

“It was my ambition to invent a murder mystery that no one could solve. But no artist, I now realise, can be satisfied with art alone. There is a natural craving for recognition which cannot be gainsaid (Christie, 2015, p.248).”

This quote shows Judge Wargrave's insane ambition to create a murder mystery that no one can solve. He also states that as an “artist”, in addition to being satisfied with his work, which is his crime, he also has a desire to be recognized for his intelligence in planning the murder. This reflects his attempt to justify his actions as reasonable for the sake of recognition and personal satisfaction.

5. Conclusion

These findings demonstrate that self-justification serves as a critical bridge between moral reasoning and deviant behavior, offering insights into the psychological underpinnings of justice and guilt in modern literature. This study examines Judge Lawrence Wargrave in Agatha Christie's novel *And Then There Were None*, focusing on his self-justification of his cruel actions. Wargrave, a former judge, appears caring and fair in his punishment but hides a terrible secret. He believes his actions are his way of delivering justice to criminals who go scot-free. He plans his murders, inspired by a nursery rhyme he read at age 2, to do to the characters on Soldier Island, including himself. Wargrave uses psychological mechanisms such as self-justification, self-defense mechanisms, and manipulation to uphold justice. His sadistic obsession and ambition also play a significant role in justifying his actions. Wargrave believes his judgment in sentencing the guilty is based on his court experience and considers himself an artist, enjoying his cruel acts for personal satisfaction. He seeks recognition for his intelligence and creates a murder mystery that no one can solve. Through his character, it can be highlighted how a person can get caught up in self-justification and manipulate morals to justify his cruel actions.

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OPTIMISM VALUES IN RACHAEL LIPPINCOTT'S *FIVE FEET APART*

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Abstract

This study, entitled *Protagonist's Optimism Values in Rachael Lippincott's Five Feet Apart*, aims to analyze the optimism values reflected through the main character, Stella Grant, using a qualitative descriptive method. The analysis focuses on how Stella's behavior demonstrates optimism as she faces the challenges of living with cystic fibrosis. Despite her illness, Stella remains positive, adheres to her medical treatments, and strives not to burden her parents with grief. Her encounter with Will Newman—a more pessimistic patient—further shapes her understanding of life, resilience, and self-compassion. The study applies Snyder's framework of optimism as cited in Goleman's *Emotional Intelligence*, identifying five core optimism values: having expectations for recovery, persistence, self-motivation, self-confidence, and resilience. The findings reveal that Stella most strongly embodies the values of maintaining high expectations for recovery and demonstrating high self-confidence. These aspects underline the novel's central message of hope, perseverance, and emotional strength in the face of suffering.

Keywords: *Expectation; High Self Confidence; Optimism Value; Self-Motivated*

1. Introduction

Literature is a body of written works traditionally associated with imaginative poetry and prose, noted for their author's intent and aesthetic quality. It can be classified by language, origin, period, genre, and subject. Clear definitions are essential, avoiding trivial aspects like catalog classifications. Literature can be categorized into two primary types: unwritten forms like myths and legends, and written forms (Sudjiman, 1986). Written literature as imaginative creations such as songs, poems, novels, and dramas that offer insights into the author's personal experiences (Bressler, 1994). Prose can be divided into nonfiction, which is reality-based, and fiction, which is imaginative (Roberts and Jacobs 1995). Novels, capture human experience and behavior through lengthy, intricate prose. Literature artfully depicts social reality, using language to add artistic values (Taylor 1981) explains. Optimism, seen through Goleman's (1996) emotional intelligence lens, is a self-defense mechanism helping individuals manage adversity by maintaining a positive outlook.

Rachael Lippincott's *Five Feet Apart* (2018) tells the story of Stella Grant, a teenager with Cystic Fibrosis. Despite her worsening condition, Stella remains optimistic, sharing her journey online to educate others. Her relationship with Will

Newman, a pessimistic patient, highlights her influence in encouraging optimism. This study uses Goleman's theory to analyze Stella's optimism, focusing on her life in the hospital and her impact on Will.

Based on the description above, there are two main questions: what types of optimism values are found in Rachael Lippincott's *Five Feet Apart*, and how are these values revealed in the novel? The objectives of this study are to explore the types of optimism values in the novel and to analyze how these values are revealed. This study focuses on the optimism values of Stella Grant in *Five Feet Apart*, particularly her daily hospital life and interactions. The analyzed values include high expectations, perseverance, self-motivation, self-confidence, and resilience. Practically, this research provides insights for students and readers on applying optimism values in real life. Theoretically, it offers a reference for analyzing optimism in literature, focusing on Stella Grant's character in *Five Feet Apart* (Lippincott, 2018).

2. Literature Review

Literary psychology delves into literature through a psychological perspective, viewing literary works as reflections of mental processes. Authors channel their psychological faculties into their creations, integrating personal and psychological elements into their narratives. This approach facilitates a deeper understanding of characters' motivations, internal conflicts, and development while uncovering complex themes such as trauma and identity. It also provides insight into how an author's mental state and personal experiences influence their work. By exploring the emotional and mental dimensions of characters and stories, literary psychology links fiction to real-life psychological conditions, enhancing our comprehension of both texts and readers.

In this context, optimism is a key motivational force that enhances performance and success across various aspects of life. As a hopeful outlook that drives individuals toward their goals, optimism is supported by self-belief and resilience (Snyder & Lopez, 2003). Originating from the Latin word "optimus," meaning "the best," optimism represents a positive attitude crucial for overcoming challenges. It fosters resilience and helps prevent despair, enabling individuals to maintain a constructive outlook even in the face of adversity (Goleman, 2002).

1. Having Expectation to Recovery: Optimism drives individuals to maintain high expectations and hope during difficult times, encouraging persistence and effort.
2. Not Easy to Give Up: Optimists remain enthusiastic and resilient despite obstacles, viewing failures as temporary setbacks rather than permanent defeats.
3. Able to self-Motivated: Optimism fuels self-motivation, helping individuals to stay driven and goal-oriented even in the face of challenges.
4. High Self-Confidence: Optimistic individuals exhibit strong self-confidence, believing in their ability to overcome difficulties and achieve their goals.
5. Not Easy to Surrender: An optimistic attitude involves not easily surrendering to difficulties, maintaining a proactive approach to solving problems and achieving goals.

Several studies have explored optimism values in literature:

1. Lestari (2014) : Analyzed optimism in the film *Negeri 5 Menara*, focusing on the protagonist's pursuit of education and success.
2. Fatimah (2014) : Examined *Cinta Suci Zahrana*, highlighting a woman's balancing of career and personal life with an optimistic outlook.

3. Tanjua (2018) : Investigated *Sepatu Dahlan*, depicting a boy's persistence in pursuing his dreams despite hardships.

These studies, employing qualitative methods and Goleman's theory, reveal optimism values in characters. Inspired by these findings, the researchers investigate the novel *Five Feet Apart* to explore optimism values in the character Stella Grant, using Goleman's framework.

3. Research Method

In this study, the researchers adopted a qualitative approach, following Sugiyono's (2016) post-positivist philosophy, which emphasizes researching natural conditions with the researchers as the key instrument (Sugiyono, 2016). Data collection is done through triangulation and analyzed inductively, focusing on meaning rather than generalization. Darmalaksana (2020) highlights that qualitative research is exploratory, while quantitative research is used for measurement (Darmalaksana, 2020). This descriptive research aims to systematically describe social phenomena, particularly the values of optimism as depicted in the novel *Five Feet Apart*. Data was collected through intensive reading and documentation, identifying themes and patterns of optimism. The analysis steps: organizing and preparing data, reading through it to identify major topics, and interpreting the data to uncover the types of optimism values motivating the main character, Stella Grant (Given, 2008).

4. Discussion

4.1 Data Analysis of Optimism Values of Stella Grant

A. Having Expectations to Recovery

Having expectations should be owned by every human. Stella has high expectations that everyone should have. With having expectations triggers us to stay try and not give up in the face of things which is difficult. High expectations must be accompanied by effort. So that what we do is not in vain and becomes fact. There are several points that Stella Grant makes in the novel *Five Feet Apart* that reflect having expectations to recovery:

I shake my head "We still have spring break together! And I haven't missed a spring break 'Besties Weekend' since eighth grade, when I got that cold!" I say smiling smiling hopefully and looking back and forth between Camila and Mya. (Lippincott, 2018: I, 5)

Based on the quote above Stella having expectation to recovery because she hopes to be able to do 'besties weekend' on the next spring break and she is currently still focused on her recovery so she cannot follow the trip to the Cabo and having expectation on the spring break vacation.

It's not every day you see a happy couple coming into a hospital. Watching them holding hands and exchanging longing glances, I wonder what it would be like to have somebody look at me like that. People are always looking at my cannula, my scars, my G-tube, not at me. (Lippincott, 2018: I, 15)

Based on the quote above, Stella having expectation of having a partner who can hold her hand, who can look at her lovingly, who can accept all of her healing scars because Stella

wants it in her recovery time.

I hope when my parents come to visit over the next few days, my breathing is a little less labored. (Lippincott, 2018: I, 16)

Based on the quote above, Stella having expectation that her breathing can be normal and she is in good shape when her parents visit her in the hospital because she does not want to see her parents anxious about her condition.

I wonder what it would be like to go all around the world but never be able to get outside the walls of the hospital. I don't mind being in the hospital. I feel safe here. Comfortable. But I've been coming to the same one pretty much my whole life. It's home. (Lippincott, 2018: IX, 84)

Based on the quote above, Stella having expectation to recovery because she want travel the world, not because she is uncomfortable in the hospital but she wants to enjoy the outside world without having to be confined to the same hospital continuously since she was a child.

I breathe in and out, feeling the ever-present struggle of my lungs to rise and fall, and I wonder what it would be like with new lungs. Lungs that, for a short while, would completely change life as I know it. Lungs that would actually work. Lungs that would let me breathe, and let me run, and give me more time to really live. (Lippincott, 2018: XIX, 150)

Based on the quote above, Stella talks to Will that she has expectation of having a new lung because she wants to feel breathing normally with a well-functioning lung and give her a longer life.

B. Not Easy to Give Up

Not easy to give up is a very unexemplary attitude, because it can lead to laziness and not wanting to try. People who are easily discouraged usually consider everything they do in vain. But unlike an optimist, she wants to get back up even if she falls several times. Not discouraged includes commendable morals towards oneself and being able to provide motivation to others. Stella owned this attitude not easy to give up. There are several points that Stella Grant makes in the novel *Five Feet Apart* that reflect not easy to give up:

This particular tune-up just happens to be centered around the fact that I need to be pumped with antibiotics to finally get rid of a sore throat and a fever that won't go away. (Lippincott, 2018: I, 4)

Based on the quote above, Stella has a attitude that does not give up easily because she is still willing to undergo all treatments so that her fever and cough condition gets better so as not to cause her lung function to weaken.

I've been making YouTube videos for about half that time to raise awareness about cystic fibrosis. Through the years more people than I could have ever imagined began following my surgeries and my treatments and my visits to Saint Grace's, sticking with me through my awkward braces phase and everything. (Lippincott, 2018: I, 10)

Based on the quote above, Stella has a attitude that does not give up easily because even though she has a deadly disease and she does not stay silent and give up just like that, she can make YouTube videos as motivation and increase people's understanding of the disease she is experiencing.

“You can’t be trusted,” she says, cutting into my killer impression.

“So, here’s how this is going to work. We’ll do our treatments together so I know you’re really doing them.” (Lippincott, 2018: VIII, 72)

Based on the quote above, Stella has a attitude that does not give up easily because she is able to give her spirit to Will where she and Will must continue to do all the treatment from the hospital together so that their illness will improve immediately. She shakes her head, her face serious. “But I can’t, Will. Not now. I have to make it.” (Lippincott, 2018: X, 93)

Based on the quote above, Stella has a attitude of not giving up easily because she knows she will die if she doesn't get a new lung, so all Stella can do is stay alive by undergoing every treatment.

“Living is the only choice I have, Will!” she snaps, standing up and glaring down at me. (Lippincott, 2018: X, 93)

Based on the quote above, Stella has a attitude that does not give up easily because she still wants to fight for life. He did not give up on doing all the treatment at the hospital so that his parents would not be devastated by his death. Because all Stella can do is not give up on life because she doesn't want her parents to feel the loss of their child again after the death of her sister, Abby.

C. Able to Self-Motivated

Self-motivation is an attitude that is deeply ingrained human soul to better achieve a goal. Someone who has this kind of behavior, she able to push herself to keep moving forward and able to accept what has become. There are several points that Stella Grant makes in the novel *Five Feet Apart* that reflect able to self-motivated:

My eyes travel down the long to-do list I made for myself this morning, starting with “#1: Plan to-do list,” which I’ve already put a satisfying line through, and going all the way down to “#22: Contemplate the afterlife.” (Lippincott, 2018: I, 3)

Based on the quote above, Stella has a attitude to able self motivated where he can motivate herself who is sick to keep doing all the lists she will do. She does not choose to be silent but she chooses to motivate herself with a series of lists that she makes so that her life in the hospital is not monotonous.

I shake my head and smile, leaning over to grab a bottle from the medicine cart. “That means taking my medications on time, wearing my AffloVest to break up that mucus, and”—I hold up the bottle—“a whole lot of this liquid nutrition through my G-tube every night. If any ladies out there are wishing they could eat five thousand calories a day and still have a Cabo-ready beach body, I’m up for a trade.” (Lippincott, 2018: I, 10)

Based on the quote above, Stella has a attitude to able self motivated because she can motivate herself to stay excited to do all the same treatments continuously so that she can go on vacation with her friends in the future without to be afraid of thinking about her illness.

I swallow hard and give her hand a comforting squeeze, but my mind instantly travels to the G-tube. The spreadsheets. The app. A big 35 percent practically sitting on my chest. Until I get the transplant, that number isn't going back up. Until then, I'm the only one who can keep me alive. And I have to. I have to stay alive. Because I'm pretty sure keeping me alive is the only thing keeping my parents going. (Lippincott, 2018: IX, 80)

Based on the quote above, Stella has a attitude to able self motivated because she motivates herself that who else can keep her alive besides herself. So until later she finds a lung transplant, she must continue to motivate herself to stay alive so that her parents are also happy.

I tap her leg with the pool cue, but for once I'm not kidding. There's something I actually want. "How 'bout a promise, then? To stick around for the next one?" She looks surprised, and then nods. "I promise." (Lippincott, 2018: XVIII, 143)

Based on the quote above, Stella has a attitude to able self motivated because she has an promise with Will that she must stay alive until their next birthday.

D. High Self-Confidence

Self-confidence is one aspect of personality which is very important in human life. Person who are confident in their own abilities and have realistic expectations, even when their hopes didn't come true, they kept their minds positive and can accept it. There are several points that Stella Grant makes in the novel *Five Feet Apart* that reflect high self confidence:

And right underneath all that vibrancy is . . . my pile of medical equipment, sitting right next to a hideous green faux-leather hospital chair that comes standard for every room here at Saint Grace's. I eye the empty IV pole warily, knowing my first of many rounds of antibiotics over the next month is exactly an hour and nine minutes away. Lucky me. (Lippincott, 2018: I, 3)

Based on the quote above, Stella has a high self confidence where she feels confident because she is lucky to be able to undergo all the treatments provided by the hospital because it is not an easy thing but she is lucky to be able to have it without needing to think about the cost.

"New lungs can come in at any moment, so I've got to be ready!" I say the words like I believe them wholeheartedly. (Lippincott, 2018: I, 11)

Based on the quote above, Stella has a high self confidence because she believes that new lungs can come at any time and she has to be ready at any time because the opportunity to get a new lung is not an easy thing and this opportunity has been waiting for her since she was a child.

So, after all that CF has stolen from me—from us—I’m stealing something back.” She holds up the pool cue defiantly, fighting for every one of us. “I’m stealing three hundred and four point eight millimeters. Twelve whole inches. One fucking foot of space, distance, length.” I stare at the video in total admiration. “Cystic fibrosis will steal no more from me. From now on, I am the thief.” (Lippincott, 2018: XVI, 136)

Based on the quote above, Stella has a high self-confidence because she believes that this time she can steal from Cystic Fibrosis where since she was a child she has been stolen by Cystic Fibrosis, this time she is confident that she can take a closer distance with her fellow Cystic Fibrosis patient, Will, for this time she stole it.

For the first time in a long time, I don’t feel sick. (Lippincott, 2018: XXIII, 183)

Based on the quote above, Stella has a high self-confidence where Stella feels that she doesn't feel sick after a long time, having fun with Will can make her confident and forget for a moment about the illness she is suffering.

I don’t need new lungs to feel alive. I feel alive right now. (Lippincott, 2018: XXIII, 184)

Based on the quote above, Stella has a high self confidence where Stella is confident and believes she doesn't need a new lung, she believes that she can live a normal life without a new lung. The reality is that Stella cannot live normally without a new lung.

E. Not Easy to Surrender

Not easy to surrender or not resigned in doing something. Not surrendering means that there is no anxiety in living life and willing to accept failure or a calamity without complaint of any occurrence that fell on him. Not being resigned means not make a calamity that befalls him with just keep silent but have the will to act more actively so as not to be trapped in the calamity. It can be said that there is a will or actions to change it. There are several points that Stella Grant makes in the novel *Five Feet Apart* that reflect not easy to surrender:

One step at a time. I head over to the wall oxygen, double-checking the flow meter is set properly, and listen for the steady hiss of the oxygen coming out of it before I pull the tube around my ears and slide the prongs of the cannula into my nose. Sighing, I sink down onto the familiarly uncomfortable hospital mattress, and take a deep breath. (Lippincott, 2018: I, Page 8)

Based on the quote above, Stella has a attitude that does note easy to surrender because Stella does all the procedures of her treatment correctly even though she has done all of this since she was a child and she likes to be in this hospital because by being in the hospital and going through all the stages she can recover.

We’ve fought CF together for a freaking decade. Well, together from a safe distance anyway. (Lippincott, 2018: I, 12)

Based on the quote above, Stella has a attitude that does note easy to surrender, she is

fighter but she is not fighting alone against her illness. She has a friend named Poe, who is also a CF patient. Poe has been Stella's friend since childhood and since they were admitted to the same hospital. They are very familiar and struggle together to face their illness.

"Stella is fighting for her life in there. And she's doing it for you."
(Lippincott, 2018: XIV, 115)

Based on the quote above, Stella has a attitude that does not easy to surrender where she continues to struggle in the operating room where the surgery is the surgery that she has been waiting for for a long time, namely surgery to get a new lung. She fights for her parents so that they don't feel anxious about being abandoned again by their child, for her nurse Barb and for Will.

The air struggles in and out of my lungs, and I take my portable oxygen on my bedside table, putting the nose cannula in and turning it on to give them a hand. (Lippincott, 2018: XV, 124)

Based on the quote above, Stella has a nature of not giving up easily where she still uses all her medical equipment so that she can still breathe normally even though she is after surgery but she does not give up doing the same thing over and over again.

5. Conclusion

Rachael Lippincott's *Five Feet Apart* presents the story of Stella Grant, a young woman living with cystic fibrosis whose journey embodies profound optimism and emotional resilience. Through disciplined self-care and unwavering hope, Stella demonstrates that optimism can serve as both a coping mechanism and a source of strength in confronting life-threatening illness. Her determination to recover, her self-motivation, and her confidence reveal the multifaceted nature of optimism as defined in Goleman's framework. Stella's interactions with Will Newman, a more pessimistic counterpart, further illustrate how optimism can inspire transformation in others and reshape one's understanding of life and love in the face of mortality.

The study concludes that five key optimism values—expectations for recovery, persistence, self-motivation, self-confidence, and resilience—are central to Stella's character. Among these, maintaining hope for recovery and demonstrating high self-confidence emerge most prominently. The novel ultimately emphasizes that optimism not only sustains individuals in times of hardship but also strengthens emotional connections and inspires perseverance in others.

For future research, scholars are encouraged to deepen their analysis of character development through psychological and literary theories, expanding upon how emotional intelligence informs literary characterization. Educational institutions are also urged to integrate both theoretical and practical approaches in literary studies to foster more holistic and contemporary analyses.

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PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE THROUGH CUISINE: SYMBOLIC MEANINGS OF NASI HADAP-HADAPAN IN MALAY WEDDINGS IN TANJUNG BALAI

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Abstract

Food plays a pivotal role in the construction of cultural identity and the preservation of intangible heritage across societies. This study explores the symbolic meanings embedded in the *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* tradition, a central element in Malay wedding rituals in Tanjung Balai, North Sumatra. The practice of *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan*—a ceremonial meal shared by the bride, groom, and their families—represents not only a social gathering but also a transmission of philosophical values and cultural wisdom. Using a qualitative descriptive method, data were collected through interviews with cultural practitioners, community elders, and government officials, complemented by participant observation. The findings reveal that each component of the food—such as rice, *ayam masak bulat* (whole chicken), assorted cakes, sweets, and vegetables—carries symbolic meanings that reflect prosperity, harmony, perseverance, and readiness for married life. Despite its deep cultural significance, the tradition is increasingly perceived as a form of entertainment rather than a sacred practice, largely due to modernization and diminishing intergenerational knowledge. This article argues that revitalizing and contextualizing *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* is essential for safeguarding Malay intangible heritage while reinforcing social cohesion in multicultural Indonesia.

Keywords: *Cultural heritage; Food symbolism; Malay wedding; Nasi Hadap-Hadapan; Tradition*

1. Introduction

Food transcends its role as sustenance—it is a profound cultural expression that embodies identity, heritage, and collective memory. Across societies, food-related rituals operate as symbolic systems through which communities transmit values, social roles, and philosophical worldviews (Counihan & Van Esterik, 2013; Williams, 2016). In Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia, traditional cuisines form an essential part of intangible cultural heritage, sustaining community bonds and shaping intergenerational

identity (Amalia, 2020). Yet these traditions face increasing challenges from modernization, globalization, and the diminishing engagement of younger generations.

One of the most distinctive examples of this heritage is the *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* tradition practiced by the Malay community in Tanjung Balai, North Sumatra. This wedding ritual involves a ceremonial meal shared by the bride, groom, and their families, symbolizing prosperity, harmony, and readiness for marital life. Each element of the meal—rice as a sign of fertility and abundance, and the whole chicken representing perseverance and responsibility—carries symbolic meanings that extend beyond nourishment. Beyond its culinary form, the ritual reinforces familial ties and serves as a channel for transmitting cultural wisdom from elders to younger generations (Lubis, 2023).

However, despite its rich symbolism, *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* has increasingly become a performative element of wedding celebrations, valued more for its aesthetic appeal than its philosophical or moral content. This transformation reflects broader issues in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage within rapidly modernizing and multicultural contexts such as Tanjung Balai, where external cultural influences and shifting social values reshape traditional practices (UNESCO, 2021; Heryanto & Widodo, 2021).

This article refines and expands upon the author's earlier undergraduate thesis (Lubis, 2023) by offering a deeper theoretical interpretation and broader cultural analysis of *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* through a semiotic lens. It advances current discussions on food symbolism and intangible heritage by revealing how culinary practices function as living texts that encode and communicate Malay cultural identity. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this study seeks to answer the following research question: What symbolic meanings are embedded in the foods of *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan*, and how do they reflect Malay cultural identity?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Culture and Tradition

Culture is broadly defined as a system of knowledge, values, and practices shared by a community, shaping their worldview and social life (Koentjaraningrat, 2002). Traditions, as a subset of culture, are practices transmitted across generations, providing continuity and identity (Yahya, 2009). They function not only as rituals but also as cultural markers that distinguish one group from another. In contemporary societies, traditions face pressures from globalization, modernization, and shifts in community priorities, leading to a gradual erosion of cultural practices (Ismail, 2019). For the Malay community in Tanjung Balai, *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* embodies a tradition that links individuals to their cultural heritage while reinforcing social ties.

2.2 Symbolic Meaning and Semiotics

Symbols are central to understanding cultural practices. Derived from the Greek *symbolon*, symbols function as signs that convey meanings beyond their physical form (Susanto in Kusumawardani, 2003). Geertz (1973) emphasizes that culture is essentially a system of symbols that provides a framework of meaning for individuals and communities. Semiotics, the study of signs and meaning-making, offers a methodological lens for analyzing such traditions. Roland Barthes' theory of denotation and connotation is particularly useful: denotation refers to the literal meaning of signs, while connotation reflects cultural, emotional, and contextual meanings (Kusumarini,

2006). In the case of *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan*, food items serve as semiotic texts, where rice, chicken, sweets, and vegetables are encoded with philosophical messages for newlyweds.

2.3 Food and Culture

Food is deeply intertwined with culture, functioning as both sustenance and a symbolic medium (Counihan & Van Esterik, 2013). Scholars argue that food is a “system of communication” that reflects identity, social relations, and cultural continuity (Barthes in Williams, 2016). Recent studies reinforce this perspective, noting that traditional cuisines serve as “archives of cultural memory” and are vital for community resilience in the face of globalization (Huang & Lee, 2020; Suh & MacPherson, 2022). Within Indonesia, food traditions are increasingly recognized as intangible heritage requiring preservation, as they encapsulate values such as hospitality, harmony, and collective identity (Amalia, 2020; Pratiwi, 2021).

2.4 Malay Wedding Traditions and Intangible Heritage

Marriage rituals among the Malay are rich in symbolism, combining Islamic teachings with local customs. These rituals emphasize family unity, moral conduct, and cultural identity (Rasool, 2020). The *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* tradition is one such ritual that distinguishes Malay weddings in North Sumatra, reflecting the blending of religious and cultural values. Recent scholarship on intangible cultural heritage stresses the importance of documenting and revitalizing practices like *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan*, which are vulnerable to decline due to social change and urbanization (UNESCO, 2021; Abdullah & Abdillah, 2021; Heniwati & Syahputra, 2022). By situating food as cultural heritage, scholars argue that rituals can be both preserved and adapted to contemporary contexts without losing their symbolic essence (Heryanto & Widodo, 2021).

While previous studies have examined Malay wedding traditions broadly (Sutrisno, 2008; Rasool, 2020), little scholarly attention has been given to the symbolic role of food within these rituals, especially in the context of Tanjung Balai. Moreover, existing literature often highlights intangible cultural heritage in general but lacks specific analyses of how food operates as a medium of symbolic communication. This study fills the gap by providing an in-depth semiotic analysis of *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* and its significance in sustaining Malay cultural identity.

3. Research Method

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design, which is appropriate for exploring cultural meanings and interpreting symbolic practices. As Creswell (2014) notes, qualitative approaches enable researchers to understand social phenomena from the perspectives of participants. The focus of this research was to uncover the symbolic meanings of foods in the *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* tradition and to examine their cultural significance in contemporary Malay wedding ceremonies in Tanjung Balai.

3.2 Research Site and Time

The study was conducted in Tanjung Balai, North Sumatra, an area characterized by a strong Malay cultural presence alongside other ethnic groups such as Javanese, Batak, and Chinese. Fieldwork took place between February and May 2023, coinciding with a series of wedding ceremonies that incorporated the *Nasi Hadap-*

Hadapan tradition. The location was selected due to the persistence of Malay customs in the community and its accessibility for participant observation.

3.3 Participants and Informants

Four key informants participated in this study, comprising cultural practitioners, community elders, and local officials who were directly involved in the implementation and preservation of Malay wedding traditions. These included: a cultural practitioner with decades of experience preparing *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan*, Head of the Cultural Affairs Section of Tanjung Balai Education Authority, a *Telangkai* (master of ceremonies) with 14 years of experience leading Malay wedding rituals, and a community elder and cultural advisor in Malay wedding traditions.

Their insights provided rich perspectives on both the symbolic meanings of the foods and the evolving role of the tradition.

3.4 Data Collection

Data were collected using three complementary techniques:

1. Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the four informants to explore their interpretations of the symbolic meanings of foods and the perceived importance of the *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* tradition.
2. Participant Observation: The researcher attended several wedding ceremonies to directly observe the implementation of the tradition, including the arrangement of food, the recitation of rhymes, and the interactions among participants.
3. Document Analysis: Relevant documents, such as local cultural archives and previous studies, were reviewed to contextualize the findings within broader Malay traditions.

3.5 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was applied to identify recurring symbolic meanings and cultural themes within the data. Following Braun and Clarke (2006), the analysis involved coding interview transcripts, observational notes, and documents, then grouping them into categories reflecting symbolic meanings (e.g., prosperity, harmony, perseverance). Semiotic theory, particularly Barthes' concepts of denotation and connotation, was employed to interpret how foods in *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* function as cultural texts that communicate philosophical and moral values.

3.6 Trustworthiness

To ensure the credibility of findings, triangulation was applied by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documents. Member-checking was conducted by sharing interpretations with participants to validate accuracy. Reflexivity was also maintained, with the researcher acknowledging her positionality as both an observer and interpreter of cultural practices.

4. Discussion

4.1 Symbolic Meanings of Foods in *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan*

The *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* ritual is not simply a communal meal; it represents a complex semiotic system in which food serves as both material sustenance and symbolic communication. Each item presented in the ritual is deliberately chosen, functioning as a cultural text that conveys layers of meaning rooted in Malay values,

beliefs, and social expectations. As Barthes (1977) explains, cultural objects operate on two semiotic levels: the denotative level, which refers to their literal, material form, and the connotative level, which encodes broader cultural and philosophical meanings.

Within *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan*, this duality transforms ordinary food into extraordinary cultural signs. Rice, chicken, cakes, sweets, vegetables, and other ritual foods are not consumed merely for nourishment; instead, they are read by participants as symbols of prosperity, perseverance, harmony, and marital readiness. In this sense, food becomes a pedagogical medium that teaches the newlyweds about the virtues required in family life, while simultaneously reinforcing the collective identity of the Malay community.

This symbolic coding illustrates what Geertz (1973) describes as the interpretive nature of culture: rituals do not merely reflect reality but actively shape it by prescribing ideals of behavior. Thus, the *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* ritual is both a reflection of Malay cosmology and a model for proper conduct in marriage. It underscores the idea that the success of a household depends not only on material wealth but also on moral qualities such as diligence, cooperation, and balance.

In this way, *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* exemplifies how food operates as a living archive of cultural wisdom, encoding values that guide individuals while sustaining community cohesion across generations. What appears as a simple act of sharing a meal is, in fact, a symbolic performance of identity and continuity, ensuring that cultural memory is preserved through embodied practice.

a. Rice (*Nasi Kuning/ Nasi Lemak*)

Rice is the most significant component of the ritual, both materially and symbolically. Denotatively, rice is the staple food for Malay communities, forming the basis of everyday sustenance. However, in the ritual context, its preparation with turmeric (*nasi kuning*) or coconut milk (*nasi lemak*) elevates it into a **sacred offering**. The golden color of turmeric rice connotes prosperity, triumph, and divine blessing, symbolizing the hope that the couple's household will flourish like fertile rice fields.

From a semiotic perspective, rice serves as a **cultural metaphor for life itself**. Its growth cycle—from planting, nurturing, and harvesting—mirrors the human life cycle, emphasizing the importance of patience, diligence, and humility. Informants noted that rice is considered a “blessed food” (*makanan berkah*), and wasting it is taboo, reinforcing values of respect for sustenance. This aligns with broader Southeast Asian traditions, where rice is often personified as a life-giving entity or “mother” figure, embodying fertility and continuity (Huang & Lee, 2020).

In contemporary weddings, substitutions such as plain white rice or fried rice are sometimes made due to convenience or cost. Yet, the symbolic essence persists: regardless of its form, rice continues to represent continuity, sustenance, and abundance. This adaptability demonstrates the resilience of cultural symbols—their meanings endure even as their material forms evolve. As one informant remarked, “*beras itu hidup*” (rice is life), underscoring its inseparable link to Malay identity and household prosperity.

b. Whole Chicken (*Ayam Masak Bulat*)

The presentation of a whole chicken, complete with head, wings, and feet, symbolizes wholeness, resilience, and familial responsibility. At the denotative level, the chicken is a protein-rich dish consumed at the feast. At the connotative level,

however, its symbolic layers are manifold. The intact form represents the idea of completeness in life and marriage—the notion that a family must be whole, united, and balanced to prosper.

The chicken's feet, in particular, carry a symbolic teaching. Chickens are known to scratch persistently for food, a behavior interpreted as a lesson in perseverance and self-reliance. Newlyweds are thus expected to emulate this diligence in securing sustenance and maintaining their household. Similarly, the chicken's early-rising habit reflects values of discipline and industriousness, reminding couples that success in family life requires effort and dedication from the start of each day.

The chicken also embodies the principle of responsibility and care for others. As a domesticated animal that nurtures its chicks, it becomes a metaphor for the protective and nurturing roles of spouses toward one another and their future children. Informants stressed that this symbolism is crucial: a married couple should not only sustain themselves but also extend care and responsibility to the broader family network, reflecting the communal ethos of Malay culture.

From a semiotic angle, the chicken operates as both a signifier of material nourishment **and** a signified moral guide, demonstrating Barthes' (1977) theory of connotation. Its dual role as food and symbol positions it as a key pedagogical element in the ritual, reminding the couple and community of the ethical obligations tied to family life.

Although modernization has introduced changes in presentation—such as pre-cut chicken dishes for convenience—the symbolic preference for a whole chicken remains strong. Its absence, some informants argued, would leave the ritual “incomplete,” suggesting that certain symbols are so deeply entrenched in cultural consciousness that they resist substitution.

c. Assorted Cakes and Malay Sweets

Cakes and sweets hold an essential place in *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan*, functioning not merely as celebratory desserts but as symbolic vehicles of harmony, prosperity, and sweetness in marital life. Denotatively, they are confections prepared from flour, sugar, eggs, coconut, and other ingredients. Connotatively, however, they convey cultural ideals that extend beyond their culinary forms.

The symbolic meaning of cakes is rooted in their compositional diversity. Each cake is produced by blending multiple ingredients that, in isolation, may have contrasting flavors or textures but, when combined, yield a harmonious taste. This process is interpreted as a metaphor for marital life: two individuals with different temperaments, backgrounds, and family traditions must learn to cooperate and blend their differences to create a harmonious household. Informants noted that the sweetness of cakes serves as a reminder that a marriage should be imbued with kindness, affection, and mutual understanding, ensuring that conflicts are resolved with gentleness rather than hostility.

Malay sweets (*kue Melayu*)—such as *kue lapis*, *kue seri muka*, and other colorful confections—are equally significant. Their bright colors and layered textures symbolize diversity within unity, reflecting the multicultural and pluralistic ethos of Malay communities in Tanjung Balai. Just as sweets come in many forms but share a unifying sweetness, a household is expected to embrace diversity and cultivate joy. The inclusion of **bon-bon flowers** (decorative sugar confections) further amplifies this

symbolism, serving as visual and edible reminders that family life should be both prosperous and aesthetically enriched.

From a semiotic standpoint, cakes and sweets illustrate Barthes' notion of myth-making through food. At the literal level, they are celebratory treats. At the symbolic level, they encode the myth of an ideal household—one that is colorful, prosperous, and filled with harmony. The act of sharing sweets during the ceremony is thus not a simple gesture of hospitality but a ritualized communication of values: it reassures the couple and community that the sweetness of the moment will extend into the sweetness of married life (Barthes, 1977; Counihan & Van Esterik, 2013).

This symbolism also resonates with Malay cultural emphasis on hospitality and generosity. In Malay society, offering sweets to guests is considered a moral and social obligation, reflecting the household's capacity for abundance and kindness (Amalia, 2020). In this way, the cakes and sweets in *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* symbolize not only internal marital harmony but also the couple's readiness to extend generosity to others, reinforcing the communal dimensions of marriage.

In contemporary practice, the preparation of traditional cakes and sweets has sometimes been replaced with modern confections or store-bought pastries. While practical, such substitutions risk diluting the symbolic depth, as modern cakes may not carry the same cultural associations. Nevertheless, as informants stressed, the essential meaning—sweetness, cooperation, and prosperity—remains central. Even when reinterpreted, the symbolism continues to act as a moral compass for married life, bridging tradition with modernity.

d. Vegetables and *Kolak*

Raw vegetables once played an important role in the *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* ritual, though their use has diminished in contemporary practice. Traditionally, the inclusion of carefully carved vegetables symbolized the maturity, diligence, and readiness of the bride to assume domestic responsibilities. The intricacy of preparing and arranging raw vegetables was viewed as a reflection of the bride's culinary skills, patience, and creativity—qualities that were considered essential for managing a household. In Malay society, the ability to prepare food extended beyond sustenance; it was a cultural marker of a woman's preparedness to nurture her family and contribute to domestic harmony (Yahya, 2009; Pratiwi, 2021). Although modern lifestyles have reduced the emphasis on such symbolic displays, the underlying values of responsibility and capability remain embedded in community memory.

Kolak, a sweet dish made from bananas or pumpkin simmered in coconut milk and palm sugar, adds another layer of meaning to the ritual. Its combination of contrasting flavors—sweet, creamy, and slightly salty—serves as a metaphor for the diverse experiences within married life. Just as the ingredients blend harmoniously despite their differences, marriage is expected to bring together two individuals with distinct backgrounds, temperaments, and families into a balanced and unified whole. Informants highlighted that while *kolak* is rarely featured in present-day ceremonies, its symbolic depth is profound. It embodies the philosophical teaching that harmony in marriage is achieved not through uniformity, but through the successful integration of differences (Huang & Lee, 2020; Zhuang, Wan, & Zheng, 2022).

The decline in the use of raw vegetables and *kolak* reflects broader cultural transformations. Younger generations often view these foods as impractical or unnecessary in the context of modern weddings, where efficiency and spectacle take

precedence over symbolism. However, their meanings—maturity, balance, and unity—remain relevant to marital life. Revitalizing the inclusion of these elements could serve not only as a preservation of tradition but also as a pedagogical tool for transmitting cultural values to future generations.

4.2 Semiotic Interpretation

Applying Barthes' semiotic framework to the *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* tradition allows us to see how food operates simultaneously on literal and symbolic levels. At the denotative level, the items presented during the ritual—such as rice, whole chicken, assorted cakes, sweets, and vegetables—are tangible foods consumed by the participants. They are concrete, edible objects central to the communal meal. At the connotative level, however, these same foods take on layered meanings that extend far beyond nourishment. They serve as cultural codes, embodying values such as prosperity, harmony, perseverance, and readiness for family life (Barthes, 1977).

For example, rice is denotatively the primary staple of Malay diets, but connotatively it is invested with symbolic meanings of fertility, abundance, and divine blessing. Its golden variant, *nasi kuning*, particularly signifies wealth and triumph, reflecting aspirations for success in household life. Similarly, the whole chicken is denotatively a source of protein, yet connotatively it becomes a model of persistence and responsibility: just as a chicken diligently scratches for food at dawn, a newlywed couple is expected to rise early, work hard, and nurture their household with care and vigilance. Cakes and sweets, at the denotative level, are celebratory desserts, but at the connotative level, they embody sweetness, fortune, and the ideal of marital harmony achieved through cooperation of diverse ingredients. Even less common items such as vegetables and *kolak* encode values of maturity and balance, teaching that unity in marriage arises from the blending of differences into harmony.

This duality underscores Barthes' insight that cultural objects are never "innocent" but always embedded with meanings constructed by and for the community. Food in *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* functions as a semiotic text, where signs are organized into a system of communication that transmits social expectations to participants and observers alike (Huo, Abd Jamil, & Yang, 2025). In this sense, the ritual meal is a form of cultural pedagogy: it teaches the newlyweds not only how to eat together but how to live together in accordance with Malay values.

Geertz's (1973) perspective further illuminates this process. He argued that rituals serve as both "models of" and "models for" reality. As a "model of," *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* reflects the collective worldview of the Malay community, embodying ideals of prosperity, harmony, and endurance. As a "model for," it prescribes behaviors for newlyweds, guiding them toward fulfilling their roles as responsible spouses and community members. In this way, the ritual is both descriptive and normative, simultaneously affirming cultural identity and shaping future practice.

Contemporary semiotic research reinforces the idea that symbols within rituals are not static but dynamic, shifting in meaning as they are reinterpreted by new generations (Inai et al., 2020; Abdullah & Abdillah, 2021). In Tanjung Balai, while modernization has reduced the strictness of ritual practice, the symbolic codes embedded in the food continue to act as carriers of cultural memory. Even when participants are unaware of the deeper meanings, the act of performing the ritual sustains the continuity of tradition and reaffirms communal belonging.

Therefore, the *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* ritual demonstrates the powerful role of food as a semiotic system that encodes both explicit and implicit meanings. It is at once a material practice and a symbolic performance, where denotative foods become connotative texts that instruct, remind, and reinforce the values of Malay cultural identity.



Figure 1. Bride and groom during the *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* ritual

In figure 1, the bride and groom are seated opposite each other during the *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* ritual, a position that carries deep symbolic significance. Their face-to-face seating arrangement embodies the principles of harmony and balance, suggesting that a successful marriage requires constant dialogue, mutual respect, and emotional reciprocity. The physical act of sitting across from one another symbolizes not opposition but complementarity—two distinct individuals coming together in unity. This spatial orientation reflects the Malay cultural understanding that marriage is a partnership built on mutual commitment, cooperation, and shared responsibility. At the same time, it visually communicates to the attending families and community that the couple is now entering into a social contract, not only with each other but also with the wider collective that sustains them.



Figure 2. The *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* Ritual during a Malay Wedding Ceremony in Tanjung Balai

4.3 Shifts in Tradition and Modernization

Although the symbolic meanings of foods in *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* remain profound, their practice and perception have undergone significant shifts in response to modernization, globalization, and changing social dynamics. Informants noted that many younger couples perform the ritual more as a formality or spectacle than as a deeply understood cultural expression. In some cases, the foods are displayed for aesthetic purposes, photographed for social media, and consumed perfunctorily, rather than engaged with as conveyors of philosophical and moral values.

This transformation illustrates what UNESCO (2021) has described as the vulnerability of intangible cultural heritage: traditions transmitted orally or through practice are easily eroded when younger generations fail to internalize their symbolic content. In Tanjung Balai, where multiple ethnic groups coexist and modern wedding trends increasingly favor efficiency and spectacle, the symbolic depth of *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* is at risk of being overshadowed by commercialized practices such as catering services, imported culinary items, and entertainment-driven ceremonies. This trend reflects broader issues faced by intangible cultural heritage globally (UNESCO, 2021). In Tanjung Balai, modernization, urbanization, and the absence of strong customary institutions contribute to the ritual's gradual transformation (Fong & Chang, 2024).

The reduction of *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* from a sacred tradition to a decorative performance reflects broader semiotic shifts in cultural practice. As Abdullah and Abdillah (2021) argue, cultural symbols are not static but subject to reinterpretation across historical contexts. In the past, the whole chicken connoted diligence and familial responsibility; today, it may simply be perceived as a festive dish with little symbolic depth. Similarly, rice, once explicitly linked to fertility and abundance, may now be seen merely as a staple food, its symbolic weight diluted by routine consumption outside of ritual settings.

Globalization and digital media also contribute to these transformations. Fong and Chang (2024), studying Malaysian commensality in digital contexts, observe how the act of eating together increasingly takes on symbolic forms through digital spectacles such as Mukbang videos, where food becomes a performative object rather than a lived cultural text. In parallel, rituals like *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* risk being commodified into visual displays for social media consumption, where the visual “aesthetic” of tradition eclipses its embedded cultural wisdom.

Furthermore, modernization has altered gender expectations embedded in the ritual. Raw vegetables and *kolak*, once used to symbolize the bride's maturity and readiness to manage domestic responsibilities, are increasingly omitted. Their absence reflects not only practical considerations but also changing perceptions of women's roles in contemporary households. While these omissions may signal progress in terms of gender equality, they also highlight the loss of nuanced symbolic teachings previously transmitted through food rituals.

Zhuang, Wan, and Zheng (2022) emphasize that landscapes of intangible cultural heritage must be adaptively preserved—not by freezing traditions in time but by recontextualizing them to remain meaningful in modern society. For *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan*, this could mean maintaining the symbolic essence of prosperity, harmony, and perseverance while adapting its material forms to suit contemporary tastes and practices. For instance, modern couples might substitute certain foods while still honoring their symbolic meanings through reinterpretation or education.

Thus, the shifts observed in *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* illustrate both the fragility and resilience of cultural symbols. While the ritual's original symbolic depth may be diluted in practice, its continued performance ensures that at least fragments of meaning persist. The challenge lies in revitalizing the practice so that future generations not only perform the ritual but also understand and internalize its philosophical messages.

4.4 Implications for Cultural Heritage Preservation

The symbolic depth of *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* highlights how food traditions function as **living archives of cultural memory**—repositories of collective wisdom encoded in everyday practices (Huang & Lee, 2020). Unlike written texts, these archives are embodied, performed, and transmitted through ritual, making them both powerful and fragile. Their continuity depends not only on documentation but also on active participation and intergenerational engagement within the community. Without sustained efforts, informants warned, *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* risks losing its essence and surviving merely as a decorative performance staged for photographs or tourism.

This challenge reflects UNESCO's (2021) broader observation that **intangible cultural heritage** is particularly vulnerable to erosion because it relies on lived practice rather than fixed material forms. Preservation, therefore, cannot be limited to recording or archiving the tradition in books and videos. Instead, it requires strategies that allow the ritual to remain embedded in everyday life while retaining its symbolic and pedagogical functions.

Abdullah and Abdillah (2021) emphasize that cultural preservation should not mean rigidly “freezing” traditions in time, as doing so risks fossilizing them into static museum pieces disconnected from the communities that sustain them. Instead, preservation must be dynamic and adaptive, allowing traditions to evolve while safeguarding their symbolic core. For *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan*, this could mean permitting substitutions in food items to reflect contemporary tastes or economic realities, provided that the connotative meanings—prosperity, perseverance, harmony—are explained and honored. Several pathways emerge for ensuring continuity:

1. Integration into Cultural Education

Schools and community learning centers in Tanjung Balai could incorporate lessons on the symbolic meanings of *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan*. By framing the ritual as part of local heritage, younger generations can learn not only the “how” of the practice but also the “why” behind it. This aligns with Suh and MacPherson's (2022) call for embedding food heritage into formal and informal education as a way to sustain cultural identity.

2. Promotion through Local Tourism and Cultural Festivals

As Pratiwi (2021) notes, culinary traditions can be preserved by linking them to tourism and community-based cultural festivals. Showcasing *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* during cultural weeks or heritage festivals would allow the practice to gain visibility while also providing economic incentives for communities to continue performing it. Importantly, such promotion must be designed collaboratively with local practitioners to avoid reducing the ritual to a commodified spectacle.

3. Intergenerational Storytelling and Community Transmission

Oral storytelling and mentorship by elders remain critical for sustaining symbolic depth. Community leaders and cultural practitioners should be encouraged to

explain the meanings behind each food item during ceremonies, ensuring that rituals are not only performed but also **interpreted and internalized**. This storytelling component could revitalize the ritual's role as a pedagogical tool for imparting values such as diligence, unity, and harmony.

4. Digital Documentation and Media Innovation

In today's digital era, documenting *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* through short films, social media storytelling, and online exhibitions could expand its reach, particularly among urban youth who are increasingly detached from traditional rituals. Fong and Chang (2024) highlight that digital platforms, while sometimes reducing food to spectacle, can also be harnessed as tools for cultural education when used intentionally.

Ultimately, safeguarding *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* requires a community-based approach in which cultural bearers are not passive objects of preservation but active agents in revitalization. By situating the ritual within education, tourism, storytelling, and digital innovation, the practice can adapt to contemporary lifestyles while maintaining its symbolic essence. In this way, food becomes not only a means of nourishment but also a cultural bridge connecting the past with the present and guiding future generations in the values of prosperity, perseverance, and harmony.

5. Conclusion

This study has examined the symbolic meanings of foods in the *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* tradition practiced in Malay wedding ceremonies in Tanjung Balai. Through a qualitative and semiotic lens, it was found that each element of the ceremonial meal embodies profound cultural values: rice signifies prosperity and fertility; the whole chicken represents perseverance, diligence, and responsibility; cakes and sweets symbolize harmony and sweetness in married life; and vegetables and *kolak* reflect maturity and the balance required in family life. Together, these foods serve as a cultural text that communicates moral guidance and social expectations for newlyweds.

The findings further demonstrate that *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* is more than a wedding ritual—it is a living repository of Malay cultural heritage. However, the tradition faces challenges in contemporary practice, where its symbolic meanings are increasingly overlooked and the ritual is reduced to entertainment. This transformation reflects broader global patterns in which modernization and urbanization threaten the continuity of intangible cultural heritage.

The contribution of this study lies in its dual focus: first, it enriches scholarly understanding of how food operates as a symbolic medium in cultural rituals; and second, it emphasizes the urgency of preserving food-based traditions as part of Indonesia's diverse intangible heritage. By applying semiotic analysis, the study illustrates how rituals function as both reflections of cultural identity and vehicles for transmitting moral values.

To ensure the sustainability of *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan*, several recommendations are proposed. Local governments and cultural institutions should prioritize the documentation and promotion of the ritual, integrating it into heritage education and tourism initiatives. Community elders and practitioners should be actively involved in intergenerational knowledge transfer, ensuring that younger generations understand not only the practice but also its meanings. Finally, adaptation strategies should allow the

tradition to evolve in form while preserving its symbolic core, ensuring its relevance for contemporary Malay society.

Taken as a whole, *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* exemplifies the intricate relationship between food, culture, and identity. Preserving such traditions is not only about safeguarding the past but also about ensuring that cultural values continue to guide and enrich the lives of future generations.

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UNMASKING THE ANTAGONIST: A PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF PSYCHOPATHY IN JAMES PATTERSON'S *FEAR NO EVIL*

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Abstract

This study explores the psychological dimensions of antagonism in James Patterson's novel *Fear No Evil*, focusing on the construction of the antagonist Matthew Butler as a psychopath. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach and drawing upon Robert Hare's Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R), the analysis identifies how Butler exhibits core psychopathic traits such as lack of empathy, manipulateness, impulsivity, and emotional shallowness. Data were collected through close reading and textual analysis, emphasizing the antagonist's actions, dialogue, and interactions with other characters. The findings reveal that Butler's characterization is deeply rooted in psychopathic tendencies that serve not only as a narrative device but also as a reflection of broader psychological realities in crime fiction. By integrating psychological theory with literary analysis, this research contributes to the field of literary psychology, offering insights into how contemporary thrillers represent mental disorders and how antagonistic characters function to intensify narrative conflict. The study further underscores the significance of interdisciplinary approaches in understanding the intersection of literature, psychology, and criminology, particularly in examining how fictional psychopaths are constructed in popular culture.

Keywords: *antagonist; crime fiction; literary psychology; psychopathy; thriller*

1. Introduction

Literature often serves as a mirror of human experience, reflecting not only cultural and social realities but also the complexities of psychological life. Among the various elements of narrative fiction, the representation of characters with psychological disorders has received growing scholarly attention, particularly in the fields of literary psychology and criminological studies. Crime fiction, in particular, frequently constructs antagonists who embody psychological disturbances, thereby intensifying the conflict within the narrative and engaging readers in both suspense and moral contemplation. James Patterson, one of the most prolific and widely read contemporary thriller writers, has consistently employed psychologically complex characters in his novels. In *Fear No Evil* (2021), Patterson introduces Matthew Butler, an antagonist whose actions and motives are deeply intertwined with psychopathic traits, rendering him a compelling subject for psychological analysis.

The study of antagonists in literature is not merely an exercise in character analysis; it is also an exploration of how literary texts encode societal anxieties, moral dilemmas, and psychological pathologies. The figure of the psychopath, in particular, has emerged as a cultural archetype in popular fiction, often embodying extreme forms of violence, manipulation, and emotional detachment. Scholars such as Hare (1999) have emphasized that psychopathy is not only a clinical construct but also a narrative device through which society projects fears about criminality, deviance, and the breakdown of social order. Patterson's Matthew Butler exemplifies this archetype, as his characterization resonates strongly with Robert Hare's Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R), a widely used tool in diagnosing psychopathy.

The importance of examining Butler's psychopathy in *Fear No Evil* lies in the intersection between psychology and literature. While clinical psychology aims to understand psychopathy as a mental disorder with identifiable behavioral markers, literary studies investigate how such traits are represented, dramatized, and interpreted within fictional texts. This interdisciplinary approach enriches both fields: psychologists gain insights into cultural perceptions of psychopathy, while literary scholars uncover deeper psychological meanings embedded within narrative structures. In this sense, Patterson's novel not only entertains but also participates in shaping cultural understandings of mental disorders and criminal behavior.

Previous studies on antagonists in literature have highlighted the critical role that psychological traits play in shaping narrative tension. For instance, Barlow and Durand (2017) argue that psychopathological behaviors in fictional characters often reflect real-world psychological patterns, making literature a valuable medium for studying the cultural dimensions of mental illness. Similarly, Furnham et al. (2019) emphasize that fictional psychopaths are typically exaggerated portrayals, yet they remain rooted in identifiable clinical features such as lack of empathy, impulsivity, and manipulative behavior. Within the Indonesian scholarly context, research on literary psychology has largely focused on protagonists' struggles with trauma, depression, or resilience, while studies on antagonists' psychological dimensions remain relatively scarce. This research thus fills an important gap by shifting attention to the antagonist, whose role is equally central in the narrative structure.

Another layer of significance stems from the genre of crime fiction itself. Crime fiction not only entertains but also negotiates questions of justice, morality, and social order. The antagonist is central to this process, as their deviant behavior becomes the axis around which the narrative of conflict and resolution revolves. As Mandel (2020) observes, the criminal antagonist embodies the fears and uncertainties of contemporary society, particularly in an age marked by rising anxieties over violence and security. By analyzing Butler's psychopathy, this study contributes to broader discussions of how antagonists function within crime fiction as cultural signifiers of danger and disorder.

The methodological approach of this study combines literary analysis with psychological theory, specifically Hare's PCL-R framework. The checklist identifies interpersonal, affective, and behavioral characteristics commonly associated with psychopathy, including superficial charm, manipulativeness, shallow emotions, lack of empathy, impulsivity, and criminal versatility. By applying this framework to the textual representation of Butler, the study systematically uncovers the ways in which Patterson constructs his antagonist as a psychopath. This not only provides a rigorous basis for literary interpretation but also bridges the gap between clinical psychology and literary criticism.

The objectives of this study are threefold. First, it seeks to identify the psychopathic traits exhibited by the antagonist Matthew Butler in *Fear No Evil*. Second, it aims to analyze how these traits shape the narrative structure and contribute to the tension and conflict within the novel. Third, it endeavors to situate the representation of psychopathy within broader cultural and psychological discourses, highlighting the relevance of fictional psychopaths to contemporary understandings of crime and mental health. Through these objectives, the study emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary inquiry in deepening our understanding of literature and psychology.

This research is also significant in its contribution to the field of literary psychology, particularly within the Indonesian academic context. By foregrounding the antagonist's psychological profile, the study challenges the tendency to focus predominantly on protagonists' experiences, thereby broadening the scope of literary psychological analysis. Furthermore, the integration of recent psychological scholarship on psychopathy ensures that the analysis remains relevant and aligned with contemporary academic discussions. In doing so, the study not only enriches literary scholarship but also fosters dialogue across disciplines, demonstrating the mutual benefits of integrating psychology and literature.

In sum, this research situates James Patterson's *Fear No Evil* within the intersection of literature, psychology, and criminology. It argues that Matthew Butler's characterization as a psychopath is not merely a fictional construct but also a cultural reflection of real-world concerns about criminality and psychological deviance. By unmasking the antagonist through a psychological analysis, the study contributes to ongoing scholarly conversations about the representation of mental disorders in literature, the narrative functions of antagonists, and the cultural meanings embedded in crime fiction.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Literary Psychology and the Study of Character

Literary psychology is an interdisciplinary field that applies psychological theories to the study of literary texts. It emphasizes the ways in which literature reflects, constructs, and interrogates human psychological experiences (Endraswara, 2013). In the context of narrative fiction, characters are often examined as psychological subjects whose behaviors, thoughts, and emotions mirror real-life psychological phenomena. According to Wellek and Warren (2014), literature not only serves as an artistic expression but also functions as a repository of human behavior and mental states. This dual role positions literary texts as valuable sites for examining psychological constructs, such as trauma, depression, or psychopathy, within fictional frameworks.

Recent scholarship has emphasized the value of analyzing antagonists through a psychological lens. While protagonists often embody struggles that resonate with readers, antagonists represent conflict, deviance, and transgression. As pointed out by Cain (2020), antagonists frequently embody psychological abnormalities that function as narrative drivers. By examining these figures, scholars can uncover the intersections between psychology and cultural anxieties, as well as the ways in which fiction shapes perceptions of mental disorders.

2.2 The Antagonist in Crime Fiction

Crime fiction as a genre revolves around the conflict between order and disorder, law and transgression. The antagonist, often represented as a criminal, plays a

crucial role in destabilizing social order and propelling the narrative toward resolution (Mandel, 2020). The antagonist is not merely a plot device but a central figure through which themes of morality, justice, and human psychology are explored.

James Patterson's novels, particularly those in the Alex Cross series, illustrate this dynamic vividly. His antagonists are often constructed as psychologically complex figures whose deviance challenges the detective protagonist. As noted by Knight (2018), Patterson's villains are not flat caricatures but intricate characters whose psychological dimensions enhance the suspense and realism of the narrative. Within *Fear No Evil*, Matthew Butler exemplifies this approach, as his psychopathy is not only a personal trait but also a symbolic representation of larger social fears surrounding violence, crime, and moral decay.

2.3 Psychopathy in Psychological Scholarship

Psychopathy has been widely studied within the field of psychology, particularly through the work of Robert Hare. Hare's Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R) remains the gold standard in assessing psychopathic traits (Hare, 1999). The PCL-R evaluates traits such as superficial charm, manipulativeness, lack of empathy, shallow affect, impulsivity, and criminal versatility. Psychopaths are often described as individuals who exhibit severe emotional deficits alongside antisocial behaviors (Patrick et al., 2018).

Recent studies have continued to refine the understanding of psychopathy. For example, Garofalo et al. (2020) emphasize the role of emotional dysfunction and moral insensitivity in distinguishing psychopaths from other offenders. Similarly, Baskin-Sommers and Brazil (2022) highlight how psychopathy involves not only interpersonal deficits but also cognitive-affective impairments that manifest in decision-making and impulse control. These findings reinforce the relevance of applying psychological frameworks to literary texts, as fictional psychopaths often dramatize these clinical features in ways that resonate with cultural discourses.

2.4 Representation of Psychopathy in Literature and Media

The figure of the psychopath has become a staple in contemporary literature, film, and television. Fictional portrayals of psychopaths both reflect and shape societal perceptions of the disorder. Furnham et al. (2019) argue that while fictional psychopaths often exaggerate clinical traits, they remain rooted in identifiable psychological realities. This exaggeration serves a narrative function by intensifying conflict and heightening suspense.

Scholars have also emphasized the cultural significance of fictional psychopaths. According to Schmid (2020), the psychopath in popular culture functions as a metaphor for broader anxieties about violence, control, and social breakdown. Characters such as Hannibal Lecter or Tom Ripley have become cultural icons precisely because they embody these anxieties. Patterson's Matthew Butler can be situated within this lineage, as his characterization draws upon familiar tropes of psychopathy while offering a contemporary iteration of the criminal antagonist.

2.5 Gaps in Previous Research

Within Indonesian scholarship, literary psychology has often focused on protagonists' struggles, such as depression, trauma, or resilience (Lubis, 2024). However, fewer studies have examined antagonists as psychological subjects. This

imbalance limits the scope of literary psychological analysis, as antagonists are equally central to narrative structures. Furthermore, while international scholarship has extensively analyzed psychopaths in fiction, there remains a need to contextualize such studies within contemporary works like Patterson's *Fear No Evil*, which reflects current cultural anxieties about crime and morality.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study employs Hare's PCL-R framework as the primary tool for analyzing Matthew Butler's psychopathy. The checklist's two-factor model—interpersonal/affective traits and social deviance—provides a comprehensive lens for identifying and interpreting psychopathic traits (Hare, 1999). The framework has been widely validated in both clinical and forensic contexts (Baskin-Sommers & Brazil, 2022), making it a rigorous basis for literary analysis.

By applying this framework, the study not only uncovers the specific traits embodied by Butler but also situates his characterization within broader psychological and cultural discourses. This dual focus reflects the interdisciplinary nature of literary psychology, which integrates textual analysis with psychological theory to generate deeper insights into the human condition as represented in literature.

3. Research Method

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative descriptive design, which is suitable for exploring literary texts through psychological frameworks. Qualitative research emphasizes interpretative analysis rather than numerical data, allowing the researcher to capture the nuanced representation of characters and their psychological traits (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A descriptive approach was chosen to provide a detailed account of the antagonist's psychopathy in James Patterson's *Fear No Evil*, focusing on how specific textual elements reflect psychological constructs.

3.2 Data Source

The primary data source for this research is James Patterson's novel *Fear No Evil* (2021). As part of the long-running Alex Cross series, the novel centers on the conflict between the detective protagonist and the antagonist Matthew Butler, whose characterization embodies multiple psychopathic traits. The antagonist's dialogue, actions, inner thoughts, and interactions with other characters serve as the textual evidence analyzed in this study.

In addition to the primary text, secondary sources were consulted to frame the analysis. These include scholarly works on psychopathy, literary psychology, and crime fiction, such as Hare's *Psychopathy Checklist-Revised* (1999), Furnham et al. (2019), and Mandel (2020). Recent studies from 2019 to 2024 were incorporated to ensure the analysis reflects current academic discussions.

3.3 Data Collection Technique

Data were collected using the technique of close reading, which involves repeated and focused engagement with the text. Passages in which the antagonist demonstrates potential psychopathic behavior were identified, highlighted, and categorized. These passages included instances of manipulation, emotional detachment,

violence, impulsivity, and moral insensitivity. Notes were systematically organized to facilitate thematic analysis.

To strengthen reliability, the researcher cross-referenced identified passages with definitions and indicators of psychopathy provided in Hare's PCL-R. This alignment ensured that the analysis remained grounded in established psychological theory rather than subjective interpretation alone.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis followed a three-stage process:

1. Identification – Relevant textual excerpts illustrating Butler's behavior were collected.
2. Classification – These excerpts were categorized according to the PCL-R's dimensions: interpersonal/affective traits and social deviance.
3. Interpretation – Each trait was interpreted through the lens of literary psychology, considering not only its clinical correspondence but also its narrative function within the novel.

For example, Butler's manipulateness was analyzed both as a clinical marker of psychopathy and as a narrative strategy used by Patterson to heighten conflict with the protagonist. This dual analysis allowed the study to bridge the disciplines of psychology and literary criticism.

3.5 Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the credibility and dependability of the research, triangulation of sources was applied. This involved comparing the primary text with secondary sources such as psychological studies and literary analyses. Peer-reviewed articles published within the last five years were particularly emphasized to confirm the relevance of the findings. Furthermore, the researcher employed consistent coding procedures in analyzing textual data, enhancing reliability.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Although this study does not involve human participants, ethical considerations remain relevant. The representation of mental disorders in literature must be approached with sensitivity to avoid reinforcing harmful stereotypes. While fictional psychopaths often dramatize clinical traits for narrative purposes, this study acknowledges the distinction between literary representation and clinical reality. The analysis seeks to highlight how fiction constructs cultural meanings around psychopathy, rather than equating fictional characters with actual patients.

4. Discussion

The analysis of Matthew Butler in James Patterson's *Fear No Evil* (2021) demonstrates how the antagonist embodies psychopathic traits consistent with Robert Hare's Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R). The discussion is organized into four subsections—interpersonal traits, affective traits, social deviance, and narrative implications—to show how Butler's characterization aligns with psychological constructs while advancing the narrative functions of crime fiction.

4.1 Interpersonal Traits

One of the most salient dimensions of psychopathy is the interpersonal domain, which includes superficial charm, manipulateness, deceitfulness, and a grandiose sense of self-worth. As outlined in Hare's *Psychopathy Checklist-Revised* (1999), these traits are not only clinical markers but also serve, in fictional narratives, as devices through which antagonists exert control over others and sustain tension within the plot. Matthew Butler, the antagonist in Patterson's *Fear No Evil* (2021), consistently demonstrates such interpersonal features in ways that underscore his role as a manipulative and dangerous figure.

A clear example of Butler's manipulateness is revealed in his interactions with his subordinates. In one passage, he persuades his accomplices to commit violence by presenting himself as a confident and visionary leader: "*You trust me, don't you? Do this one thing, and we will own everything that matters.*" (Patterson, 2021, p. 134) Here, Butler employs the rhetoric of loyalty and reward, framing the violent act as an opportunity for collective success. This persuasive strategy reflects what Hare (1999) terms "glib and superficial charm," a façade used to conceal selfish motives. In this case, Butler does not intend to empower his subordinates but rather to exploit them as instruments of his ambition. Garofalo, Neumann, and Velotti (2020) argue that such manipulative tactics are instrumental in nature, allowing psychopaths to secure compliance and extend their influence without direct coercion. Butler's leadership is therefore deceptive, couched in the language of unity but driven by self-interest.

This manipulateness also reveals Butler's ability to exploit psychological vulnerabilities. By appealing to his subordinates' desire for recognition and power, he positions himself as the gatekeeper of their aspirations. Such behavior corresponds with Furnham et al.'s (2019) analysis of psychopaths in media, which notes that manipulative characters often exploit others' weaknesses, sustaining control through a combination of promises and threats. For readers, these interactions reinforce Butler's status as a figure who thrives not only on violence but also on psychological domination.

Beyond his interactions with allies, Butler's manipulative tendencies extend to his adversarial encounters with Alex Cross. In a confrontational scene, he deliberately misleads Cross about his plans, boasting: "*You'll never see it coming, Alex. By the time you think you've figured me out, I'll already be gone.*" (Patterson, 2021, p. 276) This statement encapsulates Butler's use of deception as a psychological weapon. He undermines Cross's confidence by planting doubt and reinforcing the perception of his own superiority. Such tactics exemplify what Baskin-Sommers and Brazil (2022) describe as the "cognitive-affective dysfunction" of psychopaths, whereby they exploit others without experiencing remorse or empathy. In Butler's case, manipulation is not a defensive maneuver but an offensive strategy that destabilizes his opponent and asserts his dominance.

Moreover, Butler's manipulation of Cross demonstrates his ability to weaponize uncertainty. By refusing to provide clarity, Butler forces Cross into a state of reactive tension, always second-guessing the antagonist's next move. This mirrors what Knight (2018) identifies as a defining feature of thriller fiction—the use of antagonists to sustain narrative suspense. Butler's psychological games thus serve a dual function: they affirm his psychopathy while simultaneously driving the plot forward.

Importantly, Butler's manipulateness is also tied to his grandiose self-image. His statements often carry an air of superiority, suggesting that he views himself as intellectually and strategically beyond the reach of others. For instance, his declaration

that Cross will “never see it coming” implies not only deception but also a belief in his own invincibility. Research by Wall, Wygant, and Sellbom (2021) confirms that grandiosity is a core element of psychopathy, often manifesting in exaggerated self-confidence that leads to reckless behavior. Butler's arrogance heightens the danger he poses, as it blinds him to the possibility of failure.

In addition, Butler's interpersonal traits highlight the thematic contrast between antagonist and protagonist. Whereas Cross relies on collaboration, empathy, and trust, Butler manipulates and deceives to maintain control. This contrast dramatizes the ethical divide at the heart of the novel, reinforcing the cultural association of psychopathy with immorality and corruption. As Schmid (2020) observes, fictional psychopaths often symbolize broader societal fears about the abuse of power and the erosion of trust. Butler's deception, therefore, resonates not only within the confines of the narrative but also within cultural discourses on leadership, manipulation, and morality.

From a literary-psychological perspective, Butler's manipulative interactions underscore the utility of applying clinical frameworks such as the PCL-R to fiction. By interpreting Butler's behavior through the lens of psychopathy, readers gain insight into how fictional characters embody real-world psychological traits. At the same time, literature provides a cultural stage upon which such traits are dramatized, exaggerated, and made legible for broad audiences. Patterson's depiction of Butler thus bridges psychology and literature, reinforcing the interdisciplinary value of analyzing fictional antagonists.

Taken as a whole, Butler's interpersonal traits—his manipulateness, deceptive leadership, and psychological games—form the foundation of his psychopathy. These features not only establish his dominance over subordinates and adversaries but also sustain the novel's suspenseful atmosphere. Through his charm and deceit, Butler embodies the dangerous allure of psychopathy, serving as both a clinical case study and a narrative catalyst.

4.2 Affective Traits

In addition to manipulateness and charm, Butler exemplifies the affective deficits central to psychopathy. According to Hare's PCL-R (1999), affective traits include shallow emotions, a lack of empathy, and an absence of remorse or guilt. These characteristics are crucial in distinguishing psychopaths from other offenders, as they reflect deep impairments in emotional processing. Butler's emotional detachment is repeatedly dramatized in *Fear No Evil* (2021), underscoring both his clinical alignment with psychopathy and his symbolic role as a figure of dehumanization in contemporary culture.

One of the clearest illustrations of Butler's affective deficits appears after he murders one of his victims. Rather than displaying guilt or hesitation, he reflects with chilling indifference: “*It was nothing personal. Just a task to be done.*” (Patterson, 2021, p. 198) Here, violence is stripped of emotional weight, reduced to a pragmatic necessity. This attitude exemplifies Patrick, Fowles, and Krueger's (2018) argument that psychopaths display profound impairments in empathy and guilt. From a literary standpoint, the statement frames Butler as a mechanized agent of violence, a character for whom killing is as banal as completing an errand. Furnham, Daoud, and Swami (2019) note that fictional psychopaths often dramatize this absence of affect, rendering violence functional rather than moral. For readers, Butler's remark is unsettling

precisely because it denies the moral gravity of murder, reframing it as an impersonal duty.

Butler's emotional shallowness also emerges in his treatment of allies, as when he abandons an injured accomplice with calculated coldness: "*Weakness has no place beside me. If you fall, you're already dead weight.*" (Patterson, 2021, p. 241) This utterance reinforces his lack of compassion and loyalty, qualities typically associated with human relationality. Instead, Butler equates weakness with worthlessness, severing bonds the moment they no longer serve his goals. This aligns with Schmid's (2020) observation that fictional psychopaths embody cultural fears of dehumanization, where relationships are stripped of mutuality and reduced to instruments of utility. The abandonment dramatizes not only Butler's shallow affect but also the corrosive effects of a worldview devoid of empathy.

The contrast between Butler and Alex Cross further underscores the narrative significance of affective traits. While Butler dismisses others as expendable, Cross is consistently portrayed as a family-centered protagonist whose empathy shapes both his personal and professional life. This polarity highlights the moral axis of the novel: Butler represents emotional void, whereas Cross embodies emotional depth and responsibility. Such juxtapositions are a hallmark of crime fiction, where antagonists often embody traits diametrically opposed to those of the detective hero (Knight, 2018). By constructing Butler as affectively deficient, Patterson intensifies the emotional stakes of the conflict, ensuring that the narrative resonates with readers on both psychological and moral levels.

Butler's lack of remorse is further revealed in his rationalizations of violence. When questioned about his actions, he frequently frames them as necessary or inevitable, thereby erasing personal accountability. This mirrors what Baskin-Sommers and Brazil (2022) describe as the cognitive-affective dysfunction of psychopathy, in which individuals justify harmful actions without experiencing guilt. Such rationalizations not only protect the psychopath's self-image but also reinforce their detachment from moral norms. In Butler's case, his indifference to human suffering emphasizes his role as an unrepentant agent of chaos.

Recent research in forensic psychology has highlighted the dangers of such emotional deficits. Wall, Wygant, and Sellbom (2021) note that a lack of empathy is a reliable predictor of persistent violent behavior, as it eliminates internal restraints on aggression. By portraying Butler as affectively barren, Patterson aligns his character with real-world concerns about the risks posed by individuals high in psychopathy. This connection underscores the interdisciplinary value of literary psychology: fictional characters both reflect and shape cultural understandings of psychological disorders.

From a symbolic perspective, Butler's affective traits extend beyond individual pathology to embody broader societal fears. Schmid (2020) argues that cultural representations of psychopaths often function as metaphors for anxieties about dehumanization in an increasingly mechanized and violent world. Butler exemplifies this cultural archetype, as his emotional detachment reduces others to tools or obstacles, stripping human life of inherent value. His cold pragmatism resonates with contemporary anxieties about systems—whether corporate, political, or criminal—that prioritize efficiency and power over compassion.

Finally, Butler's shallow affect plays a crucial role in the narrative's suspense. His indifference to violence renders him unpredictable, as readers cannot rely on conventional moral frameworks to anticipate his behavior. Unlike antagonists driven by

revenge or passion, Butler's motives are opaque, shaped by utilitarian calculations rather than emotional impulses. This unpredictability heightens narrative tension, making him a more formidable adversary for Alex Cross. As Roehl (2024) observes, crime fiction thrives on the destabilization of moral certainty, and psychopaths such as Butler exemplify this destabilization by rejecting emotional logic altogether.

In conclusion, Butler's affective traits—his lack of empathy, shallow emotions, and absence of remorse—firmly situate him within the psychological construct of psychopathy while also amplifying the novel's cultural and narrative significance. Through textual evidence, Patterson constructs a character whose emotional void not only defines his pathology but also symbolizes wider fears about dehumanization and moral collapse. By contrasting Butler with Cross's empathetic character, the novel reinforces the central moral tension of crime fiction: the confrontation between humanistic values and affective emptiness.

4.3 Social Deviance

The third cluster of traits associated with psychopathy involves social deviance, which Hare's *Psychopathy Checklist-Revised* (1999) defines as a persistent pattern of impulsivity, irresponsibility, and chronic antisocial behavior. These traits distinguish the psychopath not only as emotionally impaired but also as behaviorally destructive, both to others and to themselves. In James Patterson's *Fear No Evil* (2021), Matthew Butler exemplifies this dimension of psychopathy through rash decision-making, betrayal of allies, and ongoing involvement in organized crime. His social deviance reinforces his role as a destabilizing force within the narrative and as a symbolic figure of moral disorder.

One of the clearest examples of Butler's deviance is his impulsivity. At a crucial moment in the plot, Butler ignores his associate's warnings and insists on escalating violence immediately:

"Why wait? Kill him now. The longer we hesitate, the weaker we look." (Patterson, 2021, p. 159)

This decision underscores Butler's inability to regulate his impulses, a key marker in Hare's (1999) PCL-R framework. Instead of exercising strategic patience, Butler prioritizes immediate gratification, equating hesitation with weakness. Wall, Wygant, and Sellbom (2021) argue that impulsivity is one of the strongest predictors of violent behavior among individuals high in psychopathy, as it overrides rational calculation and heightens the likelihood of destructive outcomes. Within the narrative, Butler's impulsivity undermines his operations by attracting unnecessary risks, highlighting the self-destructive tendencies that accompany psychopathic deviance.

His impulsivity also has symbolic significance. In crime fiction, calculated villains often project control and foresight, whereas Butler's rash decisions render him unpredictable and volatile. This unpredictability increases the narrative tension, as readers and characters cannot anticipate whether Butler will follow strategy or indulge sudden violent whims. As Knight (2018) notes, the erratic behavior of antagonists in thrillers intensifies suspense by destabilizing the detective's ability to predict outcomes. Thus, Butler's impulsivity is not only a psychological trait but also a narrative mechanism that sustains the novel's atmosphere of danger.

Butler's social deviance also manifests in his irresponsibility, particularly in his treatment of allies. After exploiting the loyalty of an associate, he dismisses them coldly

once they are no longer useful: *"You served your purpose. Now you're finished."* (Patterson, 2021, p. 265)

This statement illustrates Butler's instrumental view of relationships, in which people are disposable tools rather than partners. Furnham, Daoud, and Swami (2019) emphasize that psychopaths in media often exploit relationships for short-term gain, discarding others without guilt or hesitation. Butler's betrayal underscores this pattern, revealing how his irresponsibility extends beyond personal recklessness to relational exploitation. In the context of the narrative, such betrayal isolates Butler, as his inability to sustain trust erodes his support system and marks him as a destabilizing presence even among his own ranks.

This irresponsibility also reflects the broader theme of moral decay. Unlike Alex Cross, whose relationships are rooted in loyalty and empathy, Butler consistently devalues human connection, prioritizing utility over commitment. This thematic contrast intensifies the moral polarity of the novel, with Butler embodying self-serving irresponsibility and Cross representing relational responsibility. The juxtaposition dramatizes the cultural fear that social ties may collapse when trust and loyalty are replaced by opportunism and betrayal.

Beyond impulsivity and irresponsibility, Butler epitomizes chronic antisocial behavior. His consistent engagement in organized crime—kidnapping, murder, and calculated acts of terrorism—reinforces his identity as a habitual violator of social and legal norms. Such behaviors align with Hare's (1999) identification of criminal versatility as a core feature of psychopathy. Unlike offenders who specialize in one form of crime, psychopaths often display a wide range of antisocial acts, demonstrating both adaptability and persistence in their deviance.

This chronic criminality also resonates with Mandel's (2020) argument that fictional antagonists embody cultural anxieties about lawlessness and systemic disorder. Butler is not portrayed merely as an individual criminal but as the architect of a broader network of violence, suggesting that his deviance extends beyond personal pathology into structural menace. In this sense, Butler symbolizes systemic corruption and the collapse of moral order, reflecting contemporary concerns about the reach of global crime networks and the erosion of legal institutions.

From a literary perspective, Butler's persistent antisocial conduct sustains the stakes of the narrative. His repeated violations of law and morality ensure that conflict remains urgent and unresolved until the climactic confrontation with Alex Cross. As Roehl (2024) observes, crime fiction relies on the persistent threat of transgression to propel its plots; without such deviance, the detective's pursuit would lack urgency. Butler's criminality thus anchors the narrative's structure, making his defeat both narratively and morally necessary.

Furthermore, Butler's deviance highlights the duality of psychopathy as both an individual and cultural construct. Clinically, his impulsivity, irresponsibility, and antisocial behavior align with psychological research on psychopathy. Culturally, however, his character dramatizes collective fears about instability, betrayal, and systemic lawlessness. Schmid (2020) notes that fictional psychopaths often function as cultural metaphors for the fragility of social order, embodying the chaos that threatens to destabilize communities. Butler fulfills this role by representing not only an individual villain but also a symbolic threat to the very fabric of justice and morality.

In summary, Butler's social deviance manifests through impulsivity, irresponsibility, and chronic criminality, firmly situating him within Hare's PCL-R framework. Each

trait contributes both to his psychological profile and to the narrative's suspenseful dynamics. His rash decisions jeopardize his own operations, his betrayal of allies isolates him, and his ongoing criminality positions him as a systemic threat. By portraying Butler as a socially deviant figure, Patterson amplifies the novel's tension and dramatizes cultural anxieties about lawlessness and moral collapse. Butler is not only an antagonist within the story but also a literary embodiment of psychopathy's destructive reach.

4.4 Narrative Implications

While Butler's traits clearly align with psychological frameworks such as Hare's PCL-R (1999), their significance extends beyond clinical correspondence into the realm of narrative design. In James Patterson's *Fear No Evil* (2021), Butler's psychopathy is not simply descriptive but also functional, shaping the suspense, thematic resonance, and cultural impact of the novel. By examining the narrative implications of Butler's characterization, it becomes evident that his manipulateness, impulsivity, and emotional void are central to both the structure and meaning of the story.

One of Butler's most striking narrative functions is the way his manipulateness sustains suspense. As he toys with Alex Cross, Butler deliberately obscures his true intentions, creating a sense of constant uncertainty. For example, in a confrontation with Cross, Butler asserts: "*You'll never see it coming, Alex. By the time you think you've figured me out, I'll already be gone.*" (Patterson, 2021, p. 276) This statement highlights Butler's deliberate cultivation of unpredictability, which destabilizes the detective and frustrates the reader's desire for resolution. Such manipulative taunting exemplifies Knight's (2018) claim that antagonists in thrillers act as the "engine of conflict," keeping the plot in perpetual motion by resisting predictability and closure. Butler's gamesmanship not only affirms his psychopathy but also sustains narrative tension by ensuring that Cross, and by extension the reader, remains in a state of unease.

Closely tied to this is Butler's impulsivity, which injects volatility into the story and maintains narrative momentum. Unlike antagonists who meticulously plan every action, Butler frequently makes rash decisions that destabilize both his enemies and his allies. In one instance, he insists: "*Why wait? Kill him now. The longer we hesitate, the weaker we look.*" (Patterson, 2021, p. 159) Such impulsive declarations demonstrate how his behavioral instability drives the story forward, ensuring that violence erupts suddenly and unpredictably. For readers, this unpredictability creates dramatic intensity, as Butler's actions can never be fully anticipated. Wall, Wygant, and Sellbom (2021) argue that impulsivity is not only a clinical marker of psychopathy but also a behavioral trait that generates instability in interpersonal dynamics. Patterson channels this instability into narrative form, using Butler's impulsivity as a mechanism to accelerate conflict and heighten suspense.

Symbolically, Butler also embodies broader anxieties about contemporary violence and moral collapse. As Schmid (2020) explains, fictional psychopaths often serve as cultural mirrors, reflecting fears about the erosion of ethical boundaries and the rise of systemic corruption. Butler's ruthless pursuit of power, devoid of empathy or remorse, exemplifies this cultural function. His willingness to sacrifice anyone who hinders him dramatizes anxieties about global crime networks in which human life is devalued in favor of efficiency and control. This is most evident in his callous dismissal of an injured ally: "*Weakness has no place beside me. If you fall, you're already dead weight.*" (Patterson, 2021, p. 241) The remark reveals Butler's worldview, in which

utility outweighs compassion, and individuals are discarded when no longer functional. Such scenes resonate with Schmid's (2020) analysis of the psychopath as a cultural archetype of dehumanization, where the loss of empathy reflects society's fears about the mechanization of violence and the breakdown of trust.

Butler's characterization also deepens the thematic contrast between antagonist and protagonist. Whereas Alex Cross embodies empathy, loyalty, and moral responsibility—qualities tied to his role as a detective and family man—Butler represents their antithesis. His emotional void dramatizes the clash between dehumanizing violence and humanistic values, amplifying the moral stakes of the narrative. This juxtaposition ensures that the conflict between Cross and Butler is not merely physical but also ethical, reflecting what Roehl (2024) identifies as a hallmark of crime fiction: the confrontation between opposing moral worldviews.

Finally, Butler's representation illustrates how Patterson integrates psychological realism into crime fiction. Although his traits are heightened for narrative effect, they resonate strongly with clinical findings. Butler's manipulateness, impulsivity, and affective deficits align with established research on psychopathy (Hare, 1999; Patrick et al., 2018; Garofalo et al., 2020), lending credibility to his characterization. This balance between exaggeration and realism explains why fictional psychopaths remain compelling. As Barlow and Durand (2017) argue, fictional characters captivate readers when their behaviors echo real-world psychological patterns, even when dramatized for suspense. Butler's depiction exemplifies this balance, grounding Patterson's thriller in recognizable psychological realities while amplifying them for narrative power.

From a cultural perspective, Butler's psychopathy underscores crime fiction's broader social role. Crime fiction not only entertains but also negotiates cultural anxieties about justice, morality, and order. By presenting Butler as a ruthless psychopath, Patterson dramatizes fears about the fragility of social order in the face of unrestrained violence and systemic corruption. As Mandel (2020) notes, antagonists in crime fiction embody cultural anxieties about lawlessness, symbolizing threats that extend beyond individual pathology to systemic instability. Butler's character thus functions on multiple levels: as a clinical embodiment of psychopathy, as a narrative engine of suspense, and as a cultural metaphor for contemporary fears.

In summary, the narrative implications of Butler's psychopathy are multifaceted. His manipulateness sustains suspense by undermining certainty, his impulsivity accelerates conflict by injecting volatility, and his emotional void amplifies the moral contrast with Alex Cross. Symbolically, he embodies cultural anxieties about dehumanization, violence, and systemic corruption. Finally, his traits reflect psychological realism, grounding the fiction in recognizable clinical constructs while amplifying them for dramatic effect. Butler is not only the antagonist of *Fear No Evil* but also a narrative and cultural figure through which Patterson explores the psychological and ethical crises of contemporary society.

5. Conclusion

This study has examined the characterization of Matthew Butler, the antagonist in James Patterson's *Fear No Evil* (2021), through the framework of Robert Hare's Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R). The findings confirm that Butler embodies multiple dimensions of psychopathy, including interpersonal manipulation, affective deficits, and social deviance. His manipulative charm, emotional detachment,

impulsivity, and chronic antisocial behavior are consistently depicted throughout the narrative, aligning closely with clinical descriptions of psychopathic traits.

From an interpersonal perspective, Butler demonstrates superficial charm and manipulateness, using persuasion and deception to control both his allies and adversaries. These traits not only secure his authority within the fictional criminal world but also destabilize other characters, particularly Alex Cross. From an affective perspective, Butler's lack of empathy and remorse positions him as a cold, detached figure who views violence as a functional tool rather than a moral violation. His shallow emotional responses underscore the cultural anxieties surrounding dehumanization and the erosion of ethical values. From the standpoint of social deviance, Butler's impulsivity, irresponsibility, and chronic engagement in criminal activity illustrate the instability and destructiveness of psychopathy.

The narrative implications of Butler's psychopathy are equally significant. His traits heighten the suspense and unpredictability of the novel, functioning as what Knight (2018) identifies as the "engine of conflict" in thriller fiction. Moreover, Butler's role extends beyond the plot to serve as a symbolic figure of contemporary fears about crime, control, and moral breakdown. As Schmid (2020) observes, fictional psychopaths reflect cultural anxieties, and in this case, Butler represents both individual deviance and systemic threats associated with globalized criminal networks.

This study contributes to literary psychology by shifting focus from protagonists' psychological experiences, which have been more frequently examined in Indonesian scholarship, to the antagonist as a psychological subject. By applying Hare's PCL-R framework, the analysis demonstrates the value of interdisciplinary approaches that integrate psychological theory with literary criticism. Such methods enrich both fields: psychology gains insight into cultural constructions of psychopathy, while literary studies uncover the ways in which psychological concepts are dramatized within fictional narratives.

Furthermore, the study highlights the role of crime fiction as a cultural medium through which readers grapple with questions of morality, justice, and human psychology. Patterson's *Fear No Evil* illustrates how thrillers both entertain and interrogate social fears, making the antagonist central to this process. Butler's psychopathy is not merely a personal defect but a narrative device that articulates the dangers of violence and moral decay in contemporary society.

Taken as a whole, the representation of psychopathy in *Fear No Evil* underscores the enduring relevance of antagonists in literature as both psychological subjects and cultural symbols. By unmasking Butler's psychopathy, the study provides insights into how literature reflects real-world psychological patterns while shaping societal perceptions of mental disorders. Future research may expand this approach by comparing psychopath representations across different authors or media, thereby deepening our understanding of how fictional psychopaths continue to evolve within popular culture.

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SOCIAL AWARENESS IN PRAMOEDYA ANANTA TOER'S NOVEL *THIS EARTH OF MANKIND*

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Abstract

This study examines the representation of social awareness in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's novel *This Earth of Mankind*, using Sheldon's framework. Through qualitative descriptive analysis, the study identifies three dimensions of social awareness—cognition, social environment, and goals and motives—reflected in the characters of Minke, Nyai Ontosoroh, and Tuan de la Croix. The findings highlight Pramoedya's critique of colonial social hierarchies and the awakening of native consciousness. Twelve data were collected to support the statement about social awareness and its aspects found in the novel. The results of this study are that there are three aspects of social awareness found in the novel *This Earth of Humanity*, namely cognition, social environment, and goals and motives. The cognition can be seen through Minke's character, which is displayed through his disbelief in Astrology and superstition, his good process of absorbing information, and his way of thinking critically about the problems of the indigenous people. The social environment can be seen through social awareness of the backwardness of natives' behavior and social awareness of native status towards Europeans. Goals and motives can be seen through the goals of Minke and Tuan de la Croix, who wanted to make the natives more advanced and developed, and Nyai Ontosoroh's goals for Annelies.

Keywords: *Cognition; goals; motives; social awareness; social environment*

1. Introduction

Basically, humans are social beings. As social beings, humans cannot live without the help of others. Whatever the circumstances or abilities, they definitely need the help of others (Zuriah, 2011: 32). It means that humans are essentially social creatures, that is, they are interdependent on one another. It is human nature to live in society and always interact with other people. To survive, humans need other people. One example of human activity as a social being is gotong royong, or mutual cooperation. Therefore, humans as social beings must care about everything around them. They must realize the importance of mutual respect, love, and care for fellow living beings.

However, in the current era of globalization and technological sophistication, which has many positive impacts on society, it also has negative impacts. Humans as social beings are too busy demanding personal rights and pleasures. They seem

reluctant to carry out their obligations to society. Some of the negative impacts of globalization are a consumptive lifestyle (behavior or lifestyle of individuals who like to spend money without careful consideration), individualistic attitude (attitude of a person who is concerned with self-interest and as if he does not need help from others), Westernized lifestyle and social inequality. Social inequality can also be seen from several examples of social phenomena, especially in Indonesia, i.e, poverty, unequal education, people's per capita income that is below the regional minimum wage (UMR), and damaged morale and behavior of students. All of these impacts mentioned are social problems that are currently common in society, especially in big and metropolitan cities.

To overcome these bad phenomena, each individual must carry out his role properly in society. They must have sensitivity and social awareness because this is one of the important needs of society. Social awareness in the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (Tim Prima Pena, 2015, p.562) is defined as a person's full awareness of his rights and obligations as a member of society. On the other hand, social awareness can also be referred to as the ability to be able to read, realize, and understand what is experienced by the people around them and their environment. Social awareness in society is essential. With that, humans can develop knowledge so that they become social beings who are educated, and who carry out social life with a high understanding of education, so that they understand the same position as one another, by not always looking at differences based on wealth, honor, power, and education. Social awareness has the goal of forming a society that can live together without differences and without harming one another.

In line with the explanation above, the researchers discuss social awareness in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's novel *This Earth of Humanity*. This novel tells about the social and political conditions of Indonesian society during the colonial and independent governments. It deals with themes of power that make people respect and have authority in controlling society. Therefore, Minke, an indigenous boy who has a European mindset, observes the social conditions around him and is aware of this. He, a proud, highly educated, strong-willed individual, refuses to accept the hierarchy that parcels out freedom and power according to the amount of European blood running through one's veins. He and Nyai, his friend, fought back against European laws as firmly as they could.

There are several reasons the researchers analyze this novel. First, because this novel has been translated into thirty-three languages. Second, the researcher is interested in discussing the social conditions of Indonesian society that occurred during the colonial government. Third, this novel is a realistic historical novel, which describes the actual condition and situation during the Dutch colonial period. By researching this novel, the researchers at the same time studies the history of Indonesian society, because a great nation is a nation that knows its own history. Thus, the researchers discuss the social awareness that occurred during the colonial government which is depicted in the novel *This Earth of Humanity* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer.

2. Literature Review

Literary studies are always open to various understandings and intertwined in various fields of science such as sociology, psychology, history, philosophy, and others. In other words, literature can be used as a medium of expression to interpret humans based on their existence and culture, personality, and differences. This is as stated by

Suhariyadi (2014, p.26), literature is multidisciplinary, which means that literary theory can be used as a basis for understanding in any field.

Social psychology is a combination of two sciences between sociology and psychology. Social psychology is used to study social phenomena with a psychological perspective, namely social awareness in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's novel *This Earth of Mankind*. Baron & Byrne (2008), say that social psychology is a field of science that seeks an understanding of the origins and causes of individual thoughts and behavior in social situations. This definition emphasizes the importance of understanding the origins and causes of behavior and thoughts. According to Sears (1991), social psychology is a science that seeks systematically to understand social behavior, regarding a) how we observe other people and social situations, b) how other people react to us, and, c) how we are affected by social situations.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher can conclude two things. First, literature can be used as a forum or basis for understanding in any field, including the field of social psychology. Second, social psychology is used to study social phenomena from a psychological perspective. In line with this understanding, researchers will discuss social phenomena, namely social awareness, using a psychological perspective. Social psychology deals with social influences on individual processes and their perceptions, attitudes, and interactions.

2.1 Social Awareness

Social awareness is a person's full awareness of their rights and obligations as a member of society. In line with this explanation, this novel discusses social awareness in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *This Earth of Mankind*. Then, the researcher will explain the definition of social awareness through the explanations of the experts below.

Wegner & Guiliano in Sheldon (1996, p.620) state that social awareness is mental events in which one forms a mental event in which one forms a mental representation of either oneself or another person. It means that social awareness can be interpreted as a representation of one's soul, of himself and others. Prasolova-Forland (2002) states that social awareness relates to a person's awareness of social situations experienced by oneself and others so that individuals can know and be aware of things that are happening around them, such as what other people are doing, whether someone is engaged in a conversation and can be interrupted, who is around, and what circumstances are going on. According to Freire in La Abute (2019, p.188), social awareness arises because a person must have social intelligence. This intelligence is not only limited to sensitivity, sympathy, and empathy for the situation of people who are experiencing oppression both physically and psychologically, but a form of one's understanding of social reality so that he understands what he should do in responding to this reality even though it has to go against the structure or system. Existing in society itself. Real social intelligence is one's awareness of the social reality that occurred in his era.

Based on explanations regarding social awareness, it can be concluded that social awareness is the sensitivity possessed by individuals to analyze social conditions and situations. This is usually depicted with individual empathy, to pick up on social signals and social needs.

2.2 Elements of Social Awareness

Azzet (2010, p.78), in his book *Mengembangkan Kecerdasan Spiritual*, suggests that social awareness is divided into four elements including primal empathy, attunement, empathic accuracy, and social cognition.

- a. Primal Empathy: Building awareness to be empathetic is a must. Because empathy is the most important and fundamental thing for someone to have so that their social intelligence can develop optimally. With empathy, a person's relationship will be closed because they can feel each other and at the same time understand each other's feelings, needs, and moods. Thus, the bond feels closer to one another. This is what is needed so that a person feels comfortable, valued, needed, listened to, and various other personal needs. Thus, two or more individuals who are in a relationship will feel a role and are not alienated in their social environment.
- b. Attunement: Attunement is the ability to be able to listen openly so that one can understand what someone has said. The purpose of this ability is how someone can listen well and effectively so that they can respond quickly and can provide a harmonious and positive response.
- c. Empathic Accuracy: That is the ability to be able to understand properly and precisely the feelings and thoughts of other people. And this ability is developed after we listen carefully to what has been conveyed by other people, whether it is related to their feelings or thoughts.
- d. Social Cognition: Social cognition or social knowledge is more about how one understands the social world. Understanding this issue is very important because, without knowledge of what the social world is like, what its characteristics are and intricacies, and how the social world is intertwined, it will be difficult for someone to be able to carry out social interactions.

2.3 Aspects of Social Awareness

According to Sheldon (1996, p.621), there are two aspects that affect a person's social awareness, including the following.

- a. Cognition: Each individual has their own habits or style in paying attention to information obtained from their social environment. This shows that the cognitive system that each individual has is different from one another and can influence their social awareness in social interaction (Sheldon, 1996, p.621).
- b. Social Environment: Awareness of the social environment can help a person build bridges between himself and others in social life (Sheldon, 1996, p.621).

To reconcile the idea of the aspects of social awareness in the two parts above. With the aspects that can be found in the novel, it is crucial to take other points as described by Franzoi, et.al (1990, p.641-659) i.e goals and motives in order to make them match. They confirm that social awareness can be influenced by goals and motives. These goals and motives reflect the social information needed by a person. For example, people who often position themselves as other people in order to understand what other people feel will tend to do that (Franzoi, et.al, 1990, p.641).

2.4 Dimension of Social Awareness

Sheldon (1996, p.628) explains that social awareness has three dimensions, namely tacit awareness (self-perspective and the perspective of others), focal awareness (self as an object and others as objects), and content awareness (observable appearance and experience unobservable).

Based on the differences that exist between the perspectives taken for social evaluation and the targets of a social evaluation, Wegner and Giuliano (1982, p.1-17) introduce two basic dimensions of social awareness, namely tacit awareness, and focal awareness. Tacit awareness can be defined as a person's point of view or, in other words, "from which side he sees". Meanwhile, focal awareness can be defined as the object of an evaluation or "what he sees".

Sheldon and Johnson (1993, p.320) add that individuals do not always access a target from privileged awareness, but also non-privileged awareness. Non-privileged awareness can be seen from three things, namely a) a person does not have to psychologically use other people's perspectives to evaluate his own appearance, b) a person does not always have to see other people's perspectives to find out what other people might be experiencing, and c) a person can detach from his personal experiences by psychologically using another person's perspective.

2.5 Forms of Social Awareness

Based on the dimensions of social awareness, Sheldon and Johnson (1993, p.320-330) found a social awareness model that contains several dimensions of the forms of social awareness used by people in their social life. These forms of social awareness include:

1. Self-experience seen from one's own perspective: This form of social awareness can occur when a person tries to understand his anger and can be illustrated by the thought "I'm really angry." This form of consciousness means that it can be seen or formed when humans tell the truth about what they are feeling.
2. Appearance seen from the perspective of others: This form of social awareness can occur when someone wears a different color shirt when appearing in front of a crowd, and realizes that people are watching him. This form of awareness can be understood when one is aware of being the center of attention of many people.
3. The experiences of other people are seen from their own perspective. This form of social awareness can occur when a person tries to feel what other people feel and can be illustrated "I also feel ashamed if I become him." This form of awareness occurs when we position ourselves with other people as if we are also feeling what other people are feeling.
4. The appearance of others is seen from one's own perspective: This form of social awareness can occur because someone is laughing at the appearance of others.
5. The appearance seen from one's own perspective: This form of social awareness can occur when a person examines his appearance carefully in the mirror and can be exemplified by an anorexic who insists that he is too fat, despite the protests of others.
6. The experience yourself seen from the perspective of others. This form of social awareness can be illustrated by the thought: "He reacted as if I was angry, maybe I am angry." This form of awareness can occur when we realize that what others see of us may be true.
7. Seeing other people's experiences from one's own perspective: This form of social awareness can be illustrated by the thought: "He has no right to be angry." This form of consciousness occurs when we don't want what we feel to be felt by other people so that someone doesn't feel discouraged and describes it through what we have felt.
8. The appearance of other people is seen from his perspective. This form of social awareness occurs when he realizes that there is a teenage obsession with his face or

certain parts of his body. This form of social awareness occurs when we judge other people according to our own perspective, as if what other people think is not suitable for them, which is appropriate only according to our perspective.

3. Research Method

This research uses a social-psychological approach. The social-psychological approach is used because this approach is very suitable for discussing individual behavior and social situations. It means that the researchers will discuss social phenomena, namely social awareness, using a psychological perspective. This research discusses social awareness in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's novel *This Earth of Humanity*. This research uses the concept of Social Awareness by Sheldon (1996).

Referring to the research problems, the researcher used a qualitative descriptive method. Semi (1993, p.59), states that qualitative descriptive research prioritizes process rather than results, data analysis tends to be inductive, and meaning is essential. Therefore, this study seeks to describe the object as it is and aims to raise the facts and circumstances that occurred during the research.

4. Discussion

There are three aspects of social awareness in the novel, i.e. cognition, social environment, and goals and motives. These aspects will be explained in the following sub-sections.

4.1 Cognition

Cognition is a tough process, namely the ability of individuals to connect, assess and consider an event. The process of cognition is related to the level of intelligence which characterizes a person with a variety of interests, especially aimed at ideas and learning. Every individual thinks of using his intellect. It is intelligence ability that determines whether a problem at hand is resolved quickly or not. Intelligence is the highest mental ability possessed by humans. A level of intelligence can help a person in dealing with various problems that arise in his life. Sujiono (2013, p.3-4) also states that cognition is related to intelligence. Cognition is more passive or static, which is the potential or power to understand something, while intelligence is more active, which is the actualization or embodiment of that power or potential in the form of activity or behavior. In line with the statement above, the researcher discusses Minke's cognition, and it will be described and proven through the data below.

Indeed I don't believe in astrology. How could anyone believe in it? It has never lit the way for progress in science and in learning. And it demands of us that we submit to its predictions. There is nothing else we can do except to throw it into the pig's slops bucket. Once I had my fortune told, just for fun. My horoscope was turned over and over. The fortune-teller opened her mouth. She had two gold teeth: If sir is patient, she said, he will surely meet the maiden. So I just prefer to trust my intellect. Even with the patience of all mankind, I would never meet her.

I put my trust in scientific understanding and in reason. With these, at least, there are certainties that can be grasped (Toer, 1996, p.19).

The quotation above shows that Minke does not believe in astrology. As Minke knows, the Javanese culture and customs are full of superstitions and predictions. They still apply the customs and rules handed down by their gods or ancestors. However, as a native Javanese, Minke's behaviors and way of thinking are already highly developed compared to most Javanese. As an H.B.S (*Hoogere Burgerschool*) student, he is equipped with advanced knowledge. Therefore, he does not believe in prophecy and superstition and believes more in sense and science. From the explanation, it can be said that Minke has the cognitive ability to absorb information. He believes more in something that is proven in real terms, not just mere guesswork.

Minke's ability to absorb information from the events he experienced can also be seen in the data below.

That night I found it difficult to sleep. My thoughts worked hard trying to understand this woman. Outsiders viewed her as only a nyai, a concubine. Or people respected her only because of her wealth. I saw her from yet another angle: from all that she was capable of doing, from everything she said. I think Jean Marais was right: You must first of all think justly. Don't sit in judgment over others when you don't know the truth of the matter (Toer, 1996, p.72).

Nyai Ontosoroh is the mistress of Mr. Herman Mellema, a Dutch businessman and official. She is willing to become a concubine just to have a rich and comfortable life. That is the rumor and people's opinion of Nyai. However, Minke looked at Nyai in a different way, one might even admiringly. After knowing Nyai and Annelies, Minke realizes that all the people's assumptions were wrong. She is an amazing woman who can run her company successfully. She also has great insight and knowledge and even speaks Dutch, Javanese, and Malay, which at that time, it would be very rare to find Javanese, Indo, or Dutch people who could master these three languages simultaneously. In line with the words of Jean Marais who states that one must have a fair mind. Cognition and intelligence abilities help Minke to absorb information well. Jean's words also make Minke have a different perspective and not immediately believe the rumors circulating about Nyai.

The next data discusses Minke's cognitive abilities in concluding the problems he is experiencing.

Should I have such grandiose suspicions as this? Was my thinking, as an educated person, fair and just? Was I not both too young and too ignorant to have such suspicions? I thought it over and over again. I couldn't avoid always coming back to the same condition: being inclined to accept my suspicions. My dismissal from school, the withdrawal of my dismissal, the closing down of the school discussions, the expelling of Magda Peters, the intervention of the assistant resident of B- , the invitation that was announced by the school director at the graduation party, and his own and the other teachers' absence at our wedding, and being represented only by the letter brought by Magda Peters. . . . No, I was not too ignorant or too young to understand. Each event was linked and entwined together so as to give victory to Maurits Mellema over the Native woman Sanikem, her daughter, and son-in-law, her wealth and property (Toer, 1996, p.333-334).

The data above shows Minke's way of thinking of absorbing information about the problems he faces. As an educated person, Minke suspects that all the events he experienced were propaganda by the Dutch and Maurits Mellema against Sankikem (a.k.a Nyai Otoroh), the natives. He also thinks that everyone who is related to and has an interest in the Dutch government secretly wants to bring him and Nyai down, and control Nyai's property and belongings. From this problem, Minke finally realizes that all the European science that he glorified is sheer nonsense. The law and science they teach are solely for their personal benefit. They use it as a tool to bring down natives and take away their honor and rights.

4.2 Social Environment

The social environment is where daily activities take place. It is also the strength of society with various systems of norms around individuals or groups of people that influence their behavior and interactions. Through the social environment, one's personality can be formed. Therefore, a good social environment will form a good personality and vice versa. It can also be a factor that supports behavioral changes that occur in each individual or group. This also changes Minke's behavior because of his social environment. In discussing the social environment, the researchers found two points of discussion, namely the backwardness of the native's behavior and the status of natives towards the Dutch law. This point will be discussed as follows.

A. The Backwardness of the Native's Behavior

A maid served chocolate milk and cakes. And the servant didn't come cringing in as she would have before Native masters. She walked in and stood gaping at me in amazement. That would never be allowed by a Native master: A servant must bow down, bow and scrape continuously.

How beautiful life is when one doesn't have to cringe before others
(Toer, 1996, p.30).

The data above shows Minke's astonishment at the treatment of the maid at Nyai Ontosoroh's residence. There the maids walk normally, not on all fours as he often sees at the native masters' homes, including at his house in City B, the home of Regent B, his father. Minke then realizes that it would be nice if the natives also treated their subordinates or other people the same way Nyai Ontosoroh/the Netherlands treats them. The explanation regarding the differences in native treatment can be compared with the next quotation.

Minke's amazement does not stop there, he feels that Nyai Ontosoroh's residence was a different world. Quite a stark difference from what he sees in native residences. This can be explained through the data below.

I was dumbfounded to see women leaving their kitchens in their homes, wearing work clothes, seeking a living in someone else's business, mixing with men! Was this also a sign of the modern era in the Indies?

"You're amazed to see women working?" I nodded. "They wear the same uniforms here as workers in Holland, but we can only give them calico (Toer, 1996: 35-36)."

Through the data, it is clear that Minke is surprised by the behavior and treatment of the workers at Nyai Ontosoroh's company. Previously, Minke had never imagined that women could leave the house to work. What he knows is that women only need to be in the kitchen and at home, and are not allowed to do activities outside the home. As if that was not enough to confuse Minke, he also realizes that the workers at Nyai Ontosoroh's company all wear the same clothes, white. As explained by Annelies that their company follows the regulations in Holland (Netherlands).

Further data shows evidence that native behavior is still backward, this can be proven through the custom which forces people of lower status to have to walk squatting and with both hands. This is evidenced by the quotation below.

To my left and right clam-shell ornaments were spread out. And the floor shone from the rays of light from four oil lamps. Truly, my friends would ridicule me if they could see this play, where a human being, who normally walks on his two whole legs, on his own feet, now has to walk with only half his legs, aided by his two hands. Ya, Allah! You, my ancestors, you: What is the reason you created customs that would so humiliate your own descendants? You never once gave it any thought, you, my ancestors who indulged in these excesses! Your descendants could have been honored without such humiliation! How could you bring yourself to leave such customs as a legacy? (Toer, 1996, p.121-122).

The previous data and the data above imply a very significant difference. As previously explained, people with lower status or positions must respect people with higher status, older, or their employer. Actually, this custom is not wrong; in fact, it is a good behavior. But, then, it is misused, and people with higher status sometimes consider this habit excessive. As illustrated by the data above, Minke has to walk on all fours to greet his father. Minke, who is used to western customs, is actually against it, but he will not dare to contradict his father. He considers this to be outrageous and even ashamed to do it.

It can be concluded that Minke's surprise is not without cause. Even though he attends a Dutch school, he does not know much about their culture, knowledge, and customs. This is what made him realize that the natives should also take and absorb these good habits and knowledge from the Netherlands, so that natives are not backward and can develop.

B. The Status of Natives Towards The European / Dutch's Law

"Minke, if you maintain your present attitude, I mean your European attitude, not a slavish attitude like most Javanese, perhaps one day you will be an important person. You can become a leader, a pioneer, an example to your race. You, as an educated person, surely understand that your people have fallen very low, humiliatingly low. Europeans can no longer do anything to help. The Natives themselves must begin to do something."

His words hurt. Yes, every time the essence of Java was insulted, offended by outsiders, my feelings were also hurt. I felt so totally Javanese. But when the ignorance and stupidity of Java was

mentioned, I felt European. So these messages, which had brought me so many thoughts, I took with me in my heart on the train back to Surabaya (Toer, 1996, p.148).

The above data clearly illustrates how Mr. de la Croix views the Natives. He considers that the natives still follow the slavery system. Therefore, he hopes that Minke can be a breath of fresh air and bring change to the natives. The intention conveyed by Mr. de la Croix is actually good, but still, he looked down on the Natives with contempt. This stereotype develops among Europeans towards Natives' social environment. They consider that Europeans had a higher status in all aspects.

This stereotype also brings changes to Minke's behavior. He is sick when the Natives are insulted and ashamed to be Javanese. As a result, he considers himself more European. The European attitude towards the Native's status is also explained in the following quotation.

After reading all their comments and proposals, Mama stated: "They can't stand seeing Natives not being trodden under their feet. Natives must always be in the wrong, Europeans must be innocent, so therefore Natives must be wrong to start with. To be born a Native is to be in the wrong. We're facing a more difficult situation now, Minke, my son. [That was the first time she called me 'my son,' and tears came to my eyes when I heard it.] Will you run from us, child?" (Toer, 1996, p.278).

The data above is Nyai Ontosoroh's complaints about Europeans. Nyai criticizes how the Europeans treat the Natives. This criticism is not without reason. Nyai sees how the Dutch and Europeans respond to the murder of Mr. Mellema. Mellema, a Dutchman, is poisoned by the owner of the brothel, Ah Tjong. However, Europe alleges that Nyai is the mastermind and involves in the murder case. Of course, this made Nyai angry and angry. From the above data, it is explained that Europe will never give equal rights and justice to the Natives. We must always be under them, trampled on and blamed. Subsequent data discussing the Native status of Europeans will be proven through the quotation below.

As I listened, the words of Mother came back to me: "The Dutch are very, very powerful but they have never stolen people's wives as did the kings of Java." But now, Mother? It is none other than your own daughter-in-law they are threatening to steal, to steal a child from her mother, a wife from her husband; and they want, too, to steal the fruits of Mama's hard work and everything she has strived to achieve over the last twenty years without ever a holiday. And all this was based upon no more than beautiful documents written by expert scribes and clerks with their indelible black ink that soaked halfway through the thickness of the paper (Toer, 1996, p.327).

The data above once again proves the status of the Natives in the eyes of Europe and the Netherlands. Europe has a double standard. They consider the natives to be contemptible, and stupid and adhere to a system of slavery, but they themselves are dirtier and enslave the natives. Their people take native women without marrying them, colonize weak nations and monopolize them. The laws and knowledge they teach are

only for their own sake. This is illustrated in the situation experienced by Nyai and Minke. No matter how hard they struggle and try to save their families and property, they will still lose against Dutch law. They will not consider them equal and still will not defend the Natives.

4.3 Goals and Motives

Goals and motives are regulators of one's behavior to interact with one another. It also influences one's decisions and behavior. With goals and motives, it is easier for someone to direct life to what they want to achieve. In connection with the explanation above, the researchers discuss the goals and motives of the social awareness of the characters depicted in the novel *This Earth of Mankind* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer.

...How was it possible that a Native, a girl to boot, only an E.L.S. graduate, could write and articulate her opinions in the European manner, let alone have them published in a scholarly magazine? But I believed it and must believe it; it was something that strengthened my belief that I too could do what she had done. Hadn't I already proved that I could do it? Even if still just initial attempts and in a very small way? It was indeed her example that stimulated me to write. And now I was coming to know this older woman. She doesn't write articles but she is expert in seizing people in her grasp. She runs a big, European-type firm. She confronts her own eldest son, controls her master, Herman Mellema, trains her youngest child to be a future administrator, Annelies Mellema—the beautiful maiden of whom all men dream. I would study this strange and frightening family. And one day I'd write (Toer, 1996, p.72-73).

The data above shows the social awareness felt by Minke. He knows that it is rare to find educated Natives. Because of that, he is surprised that there is a native woman who is educated and had a European mind. The girl is only seventeen years old and a graduate of E.L.S, but she has already published her writings in science magazines. Another thing, Minke also admires Nyai Ontosoroh, a native woman who can lead her own family and company. Without school, she could read, write and be broad-minded. These circumstances made Minke realize that if women can do these extraordinary things, so of course he can do it too. This social awareness makes Minke have goals in life, namely he wants to develop and become more educated.

The data below is the social awareness felt by Nyai Ontosoroh. The objectives and motives will be discussed through the quotation below.

Why am I telling you this story, Ann? Because I don't want to see my child go through such cursed experiences as these. You must marry properly. Marry someone like you, of your own will. You, my child, you must not be treated like a piece of livestock. My child may not be sold to anyone, no matter what the price. Mama will make sure that such a thing does not happen to you. I will fight to preserve the dignity of my child. My mother was incapable of defending me, so she was not fit to be my mother. My father sold me like the offspring of a horse; he wasn't fit to be my father. I don't have any parents (Toer, 1996, p.87).

The data above explains the goals and motives of Nyai in educating and responding to her children. Previously, Nyai is sold by her father to Mr. Herman Mellema as a concubine. She can not fight let alone refuse her father's orders. She understands very well the environment and social status of the Native, they will always be looked down upon and not given any rights. Social awareness helps Nyai not to make the same mistake by causing her daughter, Annelies, to experience the same experience. She wants to be strong so that her daughter will not be treated arbitrarily and could legally marry, unlike her former self.

The last data to show social awareness in the aspect of goals and motives can be illustrated through the following quotation.

Sarah reported: Minke became angry in the end, Dr. Snouck Hurgronje and his Association Theory were three hundred years behind the times, repeated just as you had said. Papa was surprised and had to ask me to explain further. Then Papa said: He is proud to be a Javanese, and that is good as long as he has self-respect as an individual as well as a child of his race. He mustn't become like the general run of his people; when among themselves they feel as if they are from a race which has no equal on the earth. But as soon as they are near a European, even just one, they shrivel up, lacking the courage even to lift up their eyes.

I agree with this praise of you, my friend. May things go well for you (Toer, 1996, p.192).

The previous data describes Minke and Nyai's goals for their own lives. Unlike the aspects of the aims and motives from the previous data, the quotation above describes Mr. de la Croix's goals and motives towards Minke. His concern for the natives encourages him to support Minke. He learns that Minke is educated, has a European mind, and attends H.B.S. He also knows that Minke is an accomplished, intelligent child, and produces many written works. Therefore Mr. de la Croix hopes that Minke can be a breath of fresh air and can bring change to the Natives. he also hoped that natives could stand on their own feet and not be humiliated again under the shadow of Europe.

5. Conclusion

After analyzing the aspects of social awareness in the novel *This Earth of Humanity*, which is written by Pramoedya Anata Toer, some findings could be interpreted. It is found that there is an aspect of social awareness in the novel *This Earth of humanity*. There are three aspects of social awareness in the novel, i.e. cognition, social environment, and goals and motives. There are twelve data to support the statements about the aspects of social awareness that are found in the novel. The data are explained and analyzed from the point of view of Minke, Nyai Ontosoroh, and Tuan de la Croix.

It is very clear that the social condition of the natives during the colonial period was very apprehensive. Natives were exploited, humiliated, and denied equal rights to Europeans.

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THE PROTAGONIST'S EXPECTATION IN DEWI LESTARI'S *PAPER BOAT*

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Abstract

Expectation is a positive mental state about the ability to achieve future goals. The *Paper Boat* novel by Dewi Lestari is one of the literary works that has a positive attitude about expectation. This thesis aims to identify the expectations of the protagonist and how the protagonist achieves her expectations in the *Paper Boat* novel by Dewi. This study uses a qualitative descriptive research method to process and analyze the data. This study explores the way of life and life lessons for a better life goal. The results of this study indicate the expectations of the protagonist pertaining to becoming a writer, making a work, namely a fairy tale book, which includes the hard work and patience seen in the protagonist Kugy, and marrying the person she loves. As for the dominant expectation is the protagonist who really wants to be a writer, because of the optimistic attitude contained in the protagonist, all her expectations come true.

Keywords: *Expectation; marrying; protagonist*

1. Introduction

A novel is a genre of fiction that can be defined as the art or craft of designing through the written word, a representation of human life that instructs or diverts both. Nurgiyantoro (2010: 10) suggests that the novel is a work of fiction that is built by building elements, namely intrinsic elements and extrinsic elements. A novel is also defined as an essay in the form of prose that includes a series of stories from a person's life with other people around him by highlighting the character and nature of the author. Sumardjo (1984: 65) novels are often interpreted as only telling stories about parts of one's life, such as the period before marriage after experiencing a period of love or part of life when a character experiences a crisis in his soul, and so on.

The *Paper Boat* is one of the works of the nation's children, namely Dewi Lestari. *Paper Boat* is a teen romance novel published by Bentang Pustaka in 2009. *Paper Boat* is Dewi's sixth novel and her first novel in the popular genre. For the first time, Dewi was widely known as a novelist when her first novel, entitled *Supernova*, was published in 2001. Then, Dewi made several other written works which are also well known among the public, especially literature lovers, one of which is this *Paper Boat*. What is unique about this *Paper Boat* is that originally the script of this story was written by Dewi in 1996, then the script had experienced near death for approximately 11 years. Until finally, The *Paper Boat* was rewritten by Dewi at the end of 2007. Amazingly, Dewi completed the script of this story in 55 days. Of course, accompanied

by tenacity and a reckless attitude. Eight years after the publication of the novel *Paper Boat*, the novel was also translated into English by a translator named Tiffany Tsao.

This *Paper Boat* contains realistic stories that are often experienced by most teenagers. The storyline of *The Paper Boat* is also coherent, making it comfortable to read. Based on the description above. The protagonist's expectations are, becoming a writer, creating a fairy tale, and getting married. According to Tarigan (1986: 21), it defines writing as an attempt to create graphic symbols. The symbol used is a symbol that is already widely known by the public, in the form of writing. So the unification of these symbols is to form a message whose meaning is easily understood by the reader. According to Nurjamal, Daeng et al (2011: 69), writing is a language skill, namely a person's ability to express ideas, feelings, and thoughts to other people or parties using written media. According to Duvall & Miller (1985), marriage is a socially recognized relationship between a man and a woman that provides for sexual relations, legitimizes childbearing and establishes a division of labor between spouses.

The writers were interested in analyzing the protagonist's expectations from the novel. By knowing it, there will be a lot of things to be gained. In the novel, *Paper Boat* describes the protagonist's expectation that is an important part of one's life. Expectation, then, helps the protagonist to achieve her goals, and encourages her to take positive steps that can lead her to positive results. With expectation, she will be able to face challenges with strategies to achieve success and increase her chances of achieving her goals.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Expectation

Expectation is a positive mental state about the ability to achieve goals in the future with two complementary and reciprocal components of pathway thinking and agency thinking to maintain and achieve the goals that individuals want to create and do. Expectation in human life is an ideal, an expected. Humans involve other humans or other forces outside anticipating something that will happen, in addition to the results that have been done and are waiting for the results. So, what is expected is the result of his hard work and the help of other forces. Expectation exists because humans live. Human life is full of dynamics, full of desires or wills. Expectations for each person are different levels. People who think broadly have broad expectations. Likewise, people whose thinking insight is narrow hopes will also be narrow.

In general, expectation is in the form of abstract, invisible, but it is argued even sometimes, in the mind and made suggestions to be realized. But sometimes expectations rest on someone or something. In practice, many people try to make their expectations come true by praying or trying. Snyder (2000) states that expectation is the totality of the individual's abilities to produce pathways to achieve the desired goals, along with the motivation he has for using these pathways. Ceavens, Michael, and Snyder in Snyder (2000) state that expectation is a thought process a person has between agency (energy that leads to goals) and pathways (plans to achieve goals), and expectation is a sense of success that comes from agency (energy that leads to goals). That leads to goals and pathways plans to achieve goals.

2.2 Expectation Component

Snyder (2005) identified several components of expectation as follows:

- a. **Goal Thinking:** Goal is mental action targeting individual desires. Goals can be small and large, and can involve objects that are far away temporarily to reach the future. Goals are also very diverse in terms of the level of possibility to achieve them. Even a goal that seems impossible to achieve on time can be achieved with more planning and effort, and a goal will only grab attention if it is of sufficient importance and value to the individual.
- b. **Pathway Thinking:** The goal is not only focused on the concepts in our minds, but it also needs a way to achieve them we want; this is the pathway to functioning. Pathway reflects the view that we get to find one or several main ways to achieve the goals we want. Then, when we face obstacles that hinder the goal, we have to think about looking for alternatives in achieving these goals. Pathway involves time to reach a goal, being blocked and having to find new ways to achieve it.
- c. **Agency Thinking:** The last component of expectation is the intermediary or ability to motivate ourselves to use various means to achieve goals. In this case, we use agency to achieve the success of our goals. As previously explained, how we face obstacles and motivate ourselves will be in vain when used in a limited way, so if we channel our motivation in new ways to achieve goals.

2.3 Characteristics of Individuals with Great Expectations

Snyder (2005) also identified several characteristics of individual with great expectation as follows:

- a. **Optimistic:** A person with great expectations must be optimistic but not the other way around. Optimism seems closely related to will power but not to way power. Those who are optimistic have a mental energy related to achieving their goals, but they do not always have thoughts related to how to achieve goals (way power).
- b. **Having a Way of Achieving Goals in Her Life:** Someone with a great level of expectation tends to have the belief that he himself has control over his life and himself determines the fate of his life. Achieving any goal requires strong self-discipline. It involves being aware of our actions and the ability to overcome some bad habits that may be holding us back. Instilling self-discipline into our lives is no easy task. It takes unwavering attention to our actions and an unrelenting drive to want to achieve something great. In relation to the aforementioned point, 'Having a Way of Achieving Goals in Her Life', as one of the characteristics that need to be gained in this life, it is quite necessary to describe this further due to the fact that it concerns the point in the analysis in chapter IV of this thesis, by reconciling the data from other sources. Her expectation is to become a writer and to marry her love. With her personality that has a broad imagination and broad insight, he deserves to be a writer. Writing will not be complete with reading, because diligently reading is a capital and an important factor to become a reliable writer. By reading, our insight and knowledge of the world of writing will continue to grow, reading will increase and open our minds to new ideas. According to Nurgiyantoro (2001, p.273), writing is an activity to express ideas through language media. Writing is a productive and expressive activity, so writers must have the ability to use vocabulary, grammar, and language structure. Marriage is a ceremony of binding the marriage vows which is celebrated or carried out by two people with the intention of formalizing the marriage bond according to religious norms, legal norms, and social norms. This takes after what Subekti (1996) indicates, by verifying that marriage is a legal bond between a man and a woman for a long time,

and by confirming that marriage has a holy purpose that leads the married couple to happiness till the end of their life. Subekti (1996) also clarifies that the purpose of marriage is to build a happy household based on the guidance of God Almighty. And this is finally made one of the subject matter of the discussion in this proposal.

- c. High Self-Esteem: A person who is accustomed to developing will power and way power related to his goals will have positive self-esteem in various situations. They think positively about themselves because they know that they have achieved their goals in the past and will do the same for future goals. The self-esteem of people with great levels of expectations appearing in a private space is related to feelings of pride in themselves.
- d. Have a Perception of Her Ability in Problem Solving: One's ability to solve problems is related to one's thinking regarding how to achieve goals. When faced with a difficult situation in carrying out the usual way to achieve a goal, they become very task-oriented and resort to alternative ways to achieve the goal. They tend to have anticipated problems by developing plans with a back-up system to overcome the possibility of experiencing a difficulty.

3. Research Method

This research adopts descriptive qualitative because the analysis and the findings are accomplished in a descriptive form. As it is said by H. Bogdan and Taylor (2012) stating that qualitative is descriptive, where data are in the form of words or picture rather than numbers. Pertaining to the discussion in this study, this design generates ideas to conduct an analysis on the protagonist's expectations in Dewi Lestari's novel *Paper Boat*. It brings about the points to be analyzed becoming a proper description, and purposefully becoming the suitable standard kind of literary writing research.

In collecting the data, the researchers pass some procedures as follows:

1. Searching and finding for the data that are related to the subject matter of analysis.
2. Identifying the data in the form of words, phrases, and sentences which are then collected to be brought into analysis.
3. Taking the identified data from the novel, which are specifically matched with the subject matter.

To analyze the data needed, some procedures are important to do. According to Patton (1990, p.103), data analysis is the process of organizing data into a pattern, category, and into analysis. In this study, there are some procedures used to analyze the data. They are:

1. Drawing the data from the novel *Paper Boat* in the form of analysis.
2. Taking the data to be described based on the subject matter of this study.
3. Analyzing the data to reveal the answers related to the study.

4. Discussion

4.1 Becoming a Writer

Kugy is the protagonist in the novel *Paper Boat* by Dewi Lestari. This can be seen from Kugy's many actions in moving the novel's storyline. Apart from quantity, in terms of quality, Kugy has a very strong character in the story. Kugy is described as a cheerful, petite girl who has expectations of becoming a fairy-tale writer, so she often fantasizes and no wonder she is often considered strange by those around him. This is illustrated in the following quotation:

“A petite girl as high as her chin, looks like a junior high school student, her fashion style is messy, her hair looks like she’s just been electrocuted, her eyes widen as if threatening (Lestari, 2009, p.21).”

In the quotation, it describes the physical characteristics of Kugy. The psychic of Kugy’s character described by the author is very complex. The character of Kugy’s character, among others, has a different taste in old music from people her age. The character Kugy has a habit of writing letters to the God Neptune using paper boats. Other Kugy characters can also be seen from the following quote:

“I am actually Neptune’s errand girl sent to earth to be a spy, and coincidentally my zodiac sign is aquarius, magical right? (Lestari, 2009, p.33)”

In the quote above, one of the oddities that is often done by Kugy. Kugy thinks of herself as a messenger girl from Neptune who was sent to Earth as a spy. Although she is often considered strange, she is still confident.

Another Kugy figure is also depicted in this quotation: “This girl is a very good writer, but she can’t draw at all. She said in her heart” (Lestari, 2009, p.40). This quotation illustrates that Kugy is very talented at writing, especially writing fairy tales, but unfortunately, she cannot make illustrations for her own stories. Although Kugy often fantasizes and thinks strangely, she is a person who has a clear purpose in life. It is seen when she wants to be a writer, especially a fairy tale writer. She carries out diligently and optimistically all activities that are considered to support her ideals. Since childhood, she has collected fairy tale books from home and abroad. Until she had time to open a mini library at home. In addition, she is also the editor-in-chief of a magazine at her school. That is why in college she majored in literature.

In the *Paper Boat* novel, there is an optimistic attitude of the protagonist which is described as that whatever happens, she will always believe that she will achieve her goals despite the many obstacles she will go through, and she also does not easily give up on the surrounding circumstances. This can be seen from this quote: “Kugy is making a fairy tale? Wow that’s great, when will it be published?” (Lestari, 2009, p.110). So, optimism is a social and personal attitude of humans both individually and in groups, a belief in the importance of effort in achieving a better or even perfect life. The optimistic attitude above is seen in the relationship between woman and herself and the relationship between woman and her God. The protagonist’s relationship with her God, apart from trying, is usually individual between humans and their God. Like an attitude of gratitude and patience, humans must also continue to pray for God to grant everything we want to achieve. In addition, humans must have a good attitude towards God in order to get good results. In the *paper boat* novel, there is an attitude of gratitude that the protagonist does in dealing with all the events that occur. The depiction of the attitude of optimism in the protagonist includes the development of adolescents who occur at the age of 12 to 18 years. Usually, teenagers have a fairly high ego and uncontrolled emotions and can-do things without thinking. In the *Paper Boat* novel, Kugy’s character is a teenager who leads to maturity because she can do something according to the realities of life. Where she has an expectation to become a writer, especially a fairy tale writer, which she finds exciting and fun. In the development of the transition process from adolescence to adulthood produces changes that can make him mature in making choices in her life. In essence, the protagonist’s optimism

involves the relationship between woman and herself and the relationship between woman and her God. This is done with the aim of achieving the desired life goals and so that they can be examples in everyday life and provide useful lessons for the lives of other humans to take the positive values contained in them. Therefore, what is done faithfully will get satisfactory results.

4.2. Creating Fairy Tale

Kugy really wants to create a fairy tale book that she made herself. Kugy, who has been mature and realistic thoughts about her life. She is obsessed with being a fairy tale writer. However, she is aware and realistic about the fact that fairy tale writers are not a common job in her environment. However, Kugy still chooses another path in her life by pursuing the world of writing. It is proven that she is studying Literature, even though she does not focus on being a fairy tale writer. She has a mature mind. She still achieves her dream of becoming an unrealistic fairy tale writer by becoming a serious writer in order to be established as a stepping stone to achieve her main goals. In achieving what she wants, the protagonist feels confident and believes that with the effort she puts in, all of that will come true, because belief alone will not be enough without effort. In this case, it can be described as how the protagonist tries to achieve her desires, namely as follows:

a. Doing Hard Work

Hard work is something that shows you like to do positive things and do not like to be silent in doing a job. Hard work is also having a blazing spirit and having the will and ability to achieve personal targets that are considered slightly beyond our own limits. People who work hard will spend their share of failure faster so that they will reach the point of success faster. In addition to success, with hard work we will also get many valuable life experiences. The series of processes that we go through during hard work will provide many things that are stored neatly in our memory. All these processes will make us wiser, more grateful, and more patient. In other words, hard work is an effort to do a job seriously so that it can get good results. If it is related to the *Paper Boat* novel, the attitude of hard work can be seen in the following quote:

“That afternoon after her students returned home, Kugy sat in her small hut wrtining stories about the Jenderal Pilik dan Pasukan Alit (Lestari, 2009, p.104).”

Based on the quote above, it can be seen that Kugy has worked hard as the protagonist. Even though all the work was accompanied by college, she always tried to do all the activities outside of her campus, including writing her fairy tales. Besides that, she also became an intern at the advertising office. In the end, Kugy's hard-working attitude had an impact on the results she got, even though at first she was just an intern, but that didn't mean she didn't get the opportunity to give her diamond ideas in the meeting room. Besides that, she also occasionally writes fairy tales in between her working hours, which can be seen in the following quote:

“I really can't say much, but I will not waste this opportunity. I'm sure one day what we call a hobby, will eventually become my new profession. It's a little money but I don't care (Lestari, 2009, p.362)”

As illustrated in the quote above, Kugy's hard-working and optimistic attitude to achieving her expectations can be an example for readers, especially teenagers who

often waste time and easily give up on achieving their expectations. Because with hard work the impossible becomes possible. Besides that, Kugy's passionate and unyielding attitude finally made her find a way and a place to channel her hobbies and talents which are part of her ideals. Therefore, she worked very hard to make it happen. Kugy's hard-working attitude is a positive attitude that can be used as an example by teenagers and adults. In the end, the attitude of hard work can sharpen the mind of someone who does not know whether to know.

b. Being Patient

Patience is an attitude that always accepts what it faces, even if it is bad. Patience also means it is the key in solving various life problems. The higher the level of a person's patience, the more prepared she is to face a problem. Patient people are people who have high values in life and their environment. Patience may involve persistence in the face of procrastination. Patient behavior is used to refer to a steadfast character trait. Human life is actually full of struggles, and victory in these struggles is very dependent on the extent to which a person has patience in dealing with those struggles. Because patience is a way that can lead someone to the desired victory, an effective weapon to conquer the enemy, whatever its form, whether hidden or visible. In this case, there will be a lot of trials for people who are patient. But in the end, she will get everything she wants. This can be seen from the following quotation:

“Yeah, the important thing is that you're home. There's nothing more important than that. As if advising herself. Kugy can only be silent, she is aware that her position is very weak, there is no point in defending herself (Lestari, 2009, p.360).”

From the quote above, it can be seen that Kugy is trying to be patient with what happened to her. Because with patience she will not make the problem wider and even more chaotic, but with patience it will make her more able to learn how to live and achieve her expectations. Patience is also reflected when the protagonist feels guilty for doing work that might harm others. By admitting mistakes and being patient in accepting all the consequences that must be accepted. Kugy also tries to correct her mistakes so that she no longer makes others feel aggrieved by her behavior.

4.3. Getting Married

Kugy is a unique girl who has a high imagination and is talented at writing, while Keenan is a teenager who is smart and talented at painting but does not have the support of his own father to pursue painting. The two of them accidentally meet because they are both continuing their studies at the same university in Bandung. Keenan's character, who has an introverted character, is smooth, does not like crowds, and is talented at painting, which can be seen in the following quotation:

“He secretly observed his two sons who were six years apart in age, and realized that they were different. Jeroen is extroverted, athletic, diplomatic, likes to socialize and organizes, while Keenan is introverted, gentle, doesn't like crowds, and prefers to be alone to paint. (Lestari, 2009, p.15)”

Since meeting each other for the first time, Kugy and Keenan have felt that there is something different between the two of them. They fall in love with each other, but they both disguise and bury their feelings for each other. Because they both prefer to focus on their respective dreams and expectations. They prefer to harbor feelings of love because, for them, there is something more important than love. It can be seen in the following quote:

“Because the heart doesn’t need to choose, it always knows where to anchor (Lestari, 2009, p.430).”

Over time, Kugy and Keenan become close friends. Kugy has told Keenan that she is writing a fairy tale. And Keenan also tells Kugy that he really likes painting, and Keenan also shows some of his paintings to Kugy. Kugy also thinks that she could work with Keenan, Kugy, who writes the fairy tales, and Keenan, who paints the pictures. It can be seen in this quote: “Yeah, we can still work together. And we’ve always been best friends.” (Lestari, 2009: 412). Love is meant, in this case, as a love affair with the opposite sex. However, that does not mean we do not need to be concerned about it forever. It is just that when we are teenagers, especially at the age when we are students, we should explore ourselves as well as possible. Many things can be done and realized at a young age.

Like Kugy and Keenan, who have to go through the twists and turns and various controversies in realizing their expectations, but with persistence they are finally able to achieve their expectations. At first, Keenan does not get support from his own father because his father feels that the wealth from painting is not much. Keenan’s father feels that Keenan’s intelligence is better channeled into continuing the family business. Kugy also has doubts about her abilities; she feels writing is just a hobby which, if continued for work, would not have much benefit. But in the end, Kugy and Keenan worked according to their respective interests. Kugy becomes a fairy tale writer and Keenan becomes a painter with the blessing of his father. It can be seen in the following:

“Opportunity to choose love, and surrender to the flow that carries it. Wherever it is. The heart always knows (Lestari, 2009, p.431).”

Without the need to speed up or slow down, the mooring will come on time. Kugy and Keenan are separated for a long time and a long distance. There is gripping sadness because of missing someone. Sometimes, this longing takes over the mind, which makes it difficult to think of anything other than that person. Longing will arise if we have an emotional bond or experience that really imprints on something so that when we lose or do not find something with it, we will feel lost. High longing will arise if we have a high intensity for something. If not, then the longing will be felt normal. That is how Kugy feels when Keenan leaves her without any news. She always writes her sadness on paper and folds it into a boat and then drifts it into the lake, hoping the writing would reach Keenan.

“Wherever you are, I hope this message reaches you, even without a boat. I miss you so much. Kugy wrote on a piece of paper that was shaped into a boat, and drifted into the lake (Lestari, 2009, p.232)”

Keenan and Kugy separated because Keenan had to study painting in Bali and left his studies in Bandung. Meanwhile, Kugy continues to study literature, majoring in

Bandung and still holds fast to continue her fairy tales and become a writer. This can be seen from the following quote:

“Even if one world makes a fool of me, but this is what I want. I want to be a fairy tale writer. From then until now, not changed (Lestari, 2009, p.362).”

After years, they are separated, but in the end they meet unplanned according to the will of the universe. Even though they have been in a relationship with other people, in the end their hearts will flow to find a true partner. This is true love. Kugy and Keenan never expect to meet again; they only think that their story would end just like that, but God says; otherwise, they meet in the same situation as adults, and already understand their respective feelings. They still love each other, from the past until now, and that feeling remains in their hearts. “Kugy? How are you? Keenan called her in a low voice. Fine. Short answer Kugy”. (Lestari, 2009, p.328). Once they meet again, the feelings they used to harbor can no longer be hidden. Even though when they meet they already have their respective partners, but still their hearts cannot be lied to, Kugy and Keenan are honest with their girlfriend, that they love each other, and Kugy and Keenan’s lovers accept that. Because they do not want to force what should not be for them. Kugy and Keenan have harbored these feelings for years and pretend to be friends. The two of them have been through a lot, even when they separate and have their respective partners, Kugy and Keenan still have feelings of love for each other. Successive hurdles that the two of them went through, and now they have finally decided to express their feelings for each other and decided to get married.

In the midst of the calm blue sea, a small group of hands slid out of the lip of the fishing boat. She deliberately takes a ride to wash her paper boat away. It is not from the pond, not from times, not from a creek. This time she wants to release it in the middle of the sea. Her last letter to Neptune.

*“Neptune,
I don’t write letters to the headquarters every year. Do
not be angry.
But we really want to stop being agents.
Not more secrets.
Not more expectations.
Because we have lived that expectation.
Now and forever.
K&K
(and little K is still in the stomach) (Lestari, 2009, p.433).”*

So far, Kugy has always poured out her heart and thoughts to Neptune on a piece of paper in the shape of a boat. She always tells whatever she experiences during her life in this world, always has a good imagination and has big dreams. But for today, Kugy stops being Neptune’s agent, she stops writing to Neptune. Her life journey had a happy ending. All her dreams and expectations have been fulfilled; she has gone through the ups and downs of her life. She has also earned the title of writer, and marrying the person she loves has also come true. Now there is no Neptune agent anymore, just her and two K. Kugy, Keenan, and little baby K in Kugy’s tummy. The paper boat rocks alone. It slowly abandons the wooden boat that departed back to the shoreline, carrying Kugy, who immediately runs down to break the water. Someone is

already standing waiting for her with outstretched arms, ready to grab her and lift her tiny body into the air.

5. Conclusion

In the *paper boat* novel, it can be found that the main character lives her life by being optimistic and always thinking positively to achieve all her expectations. In the novel, it is not always about love, although there are a love story of the main character and her struggle to achieve her expectations. The main character in the novel experiences an inner conflict that appears in her life. But even so, the main character in the novel does not give up on all the obstacles that occur. She is always optimistic and full of enthusiasm in the face of all events that occur. In this case, there is a moral value in the form of an optimistic attitude in the novel, namely being patient and working hard.

The main character in this novel is an excellent example for today's young people and adults alike. From the attitude and struggle of the main character in achieving her expectations, the findings highlight the role of optimism as a narrative device that reflects personal growth in Indonesian contemporary fiction. Besides that, we can also apply the moral values contained in the novel to our daily lives, namely to always work hard, think positively, and never give up on the situation until our expectations come true.

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MOOD AND MODALITY IN JAMES RICE'S NOVEL *ALICE AND THE FLY*

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Abstract

This study analyzes the realization of mood and modality in Detective Sergeant Terrence's dialogues using Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework. This study aims to analyze mood structure, mood types, and modality contained in detective Sergeant Terrence. Alice and the Fly novel by James Rice is about Greg who has Schizophrenia. He falls in love and becomes obsessed. He killed the girl he liked. So detective Sergeant Terrence must find out what really happened to him. The data used in this study were from the Alice and the Fly novel by James Rice. This study was written using a descriptive qualitative method. The steps to analyze the data were starting from specifying the data based on the categories that I would analyze. From the result of this study, it can be concluded that the detective uses the mood structure of a finite subject when he communicates with the five characters. Then the use of the interrogative shows the detective wants to know more information about the murder case rather than stating or ordering something. In modality analysis through the use of a modal finite operator and mood adjunct, the results show that the detective tends to use a modal finite operator with low value.

Keywords: *James Rice; modality; mood; novel; schizophrenia*

1. Introduction

Literature represents the culture and tradition of a language or a people. Language has an important role in human life because it is the main means of communication. The way people use language to communicate with other people in a conversation will be different depending on the context of culture or context of the situation. This is because language itself has many functions in the process of communication. For instance, the language used by someone who acts as a boss in an office will certainly be different from that he uses as a father at home. Therefore, when we talk about the different ways of communicating, then we also talk about speech functions.

A speech function is a way for someone to deliver ideas in communication to make listeners understand the ideas well. According to Halliday & Matthiessen (2014, p.135), there are four speech functions which offer, command, statement, and question. Those four functions are included in the two variables, which are goods & services and information. There are three fundamental components in systematic functional

linguistics. There are ideational meaning, interpersonal meaning, and textual meaning. The study focused on interpersonal meaning.

Interpersonal meaning is related to the position of the speaker, which is realized through their wording called mood and modality in clause (Kristianti, 2021, p.1). These are meanings for acting upon and with others. According to Halliday (2014, p.83) the structure of the clause as an exchange has a transaction between speakers in which the element the speaker is responsible for the validity of what she is saying. As a result, they will get something that they want through their transactions, and it involves with their relationships in social life. Interpersonal meaning can be shown in the social relationships of people that are being established and maintained through language choices (Schleppegrell, 2008, p.48). It proves that people must have their own ideology to maintain and establish their relation among others.

The general principle behind the expression of mood in the clause is as follows. The grammatical category that is characteristically used to exchange information is the indicative; within the category of indicative, the characteristic expression of a statement is the declarative, that of a question is the interrogative; and within the category of interrogative, there is a further distinction between yes no interrogative, for polar question and WH- interrogative, for content question (Halliday, 1994, p.74). In an imperative mood, we can use 'let's' or finite only. In modality, it can be divided into two types, which are modalization and modulation. Modalization is a type of modality showing probability and usuality. Meanwhile, modulation deals with a modality that shows obligation and inclination.

This novel contains the journal of a main character named Greg. He suffers from schizophrenia. According to (Niv, et al. 2013, p.1), Schizophrenia is a common psychiatric disorder that can affect a person's thinking, emotion, and behaviors. Individuals with this illness will have periods when they have difficulty understanding the surrounding reality. They may hear voices other people don't hear. They may have unusual thoughts and suspicions, such as believing that other people are reading their minds, controlling their thoughts, or plotting to harm them. These experiences can terrify people with the illness and make them withdrawn or extremely agitated. In addition, the symptoms such as hallucinations and delusions.

Greg likes to hallucinate and is afraid of spiders. Whenever he was hallucinating or seeing 'spiders' around him, he was always scratching his body. He was asked by his teacher to write a journal of every incident or feeling he felt to help him overcome schizophrenia. On the one hand, his family does not care about him, and he is isolated from the school environment. No one wants to be friends with him. He met a girlfriend at school; he fell in love and became obsessed. Until finally, there was a tragedy where his schizophrenia appeared, and he unwittingly killed the girl he liked. So detective Sergeant Terrence must find out what really happened to him.

In this research, we discuss the interpersonal meta-function, especially the use of mood and modality. The researcher uses the novel *Alice and the Fly* because they are interested in novel psychology. In this novel, there are several psychological problems such as schizophrenia, obsessions, bullying, etc. Researchers are more interested in analyzing in terms of linguistics because in the novel there is a transcript of the interview which found differences in the use of mood and modality conveyed by the detective Sergeant Terrence. The researchers only focus on detective Sergeant Terrence because he is the liaison between several characters. Finally, this study aims to identify and interpret the types of mood and modality used by Detective Terrence in *Alice and*

the Fly, employing Halliday's SFL framework to reveal interpersonal meaning construction.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Systemic Functional Linguistic

Every sentence has rules, so learners need to be familiar with the grammar to get better conversations and texts. Therefore, the grammar of systematic functional linguistics needs to be studied more closely. They are systemic and functional. Systemic refers to the set of interrelated choices to make meaning. While, function refers to the approach. As stated by Gerrot and Wignell (1994, p.6), "functional grammars view language as a resource for making meaning". It discusses how people use language in a different context and how language is structured as a semiotic system.

2.2 Metafunction of Language

Language, from the perspective of Halliday, is a source to express meaning. Metafunction of language is organized around three kinds of meaning, namely ideational meaning, interpersonal meaning, and textual meaning. Ideational meaning is the meaning function to represent patterns of experiences. It enables human beings to build a mental picture of reality, to make sense of their experience of what goes around them and inside them. Interpersonal meaning is concerned with the interaction between the speaker or writer and the listener or reader. Its function is so enabling of exchanging roles in rhetorical interaction: statements, questions, offers and commands.

The textual meaning is concerned with the organization of the text in which the experiential, logical and interpersonal are bound together into a coherent. In other words, the textual meaning is the meaning of the message. For example, foregrounding/salience, types of cohesion (Eggins & Slade, 1997, p.49). Eggins (2004, p.110-111) states that language is designed to fulfill three main functions: a function for relating experience, a function for creating personal relationships, a function for organizing information.

2.3 Mood Structure

Eggins (1994, p.152) states that the mood structure of the clauses refers to the organization of the set of functional constituents, including constituent subjects. The mood system in the clause encodes the relationship between the participants in an interaction as well as the speaker's or writer's attitude and comment. Included here, for example, are indicative, imperative, and interrogative instructions. The mood system also includes choices in modality, such as expression of probability and obligation.

From the theory above, it can be concluded that mood is the central aspect of the grammar of exchange and its elements, including subject, have a function to construct the role of clause exchange in dialogue. In the interpersonal meaning, a clause is analyzed from the mood structures, which consist of mood elements and residue elements.

2.4 Mood Types

Mood types in English depend on the position of the Subject and the Finite in the clause. There are two main categories of mood types: indicative and imperative moods (Gerrot & Wignell, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Each of them has different arrangements and functions.

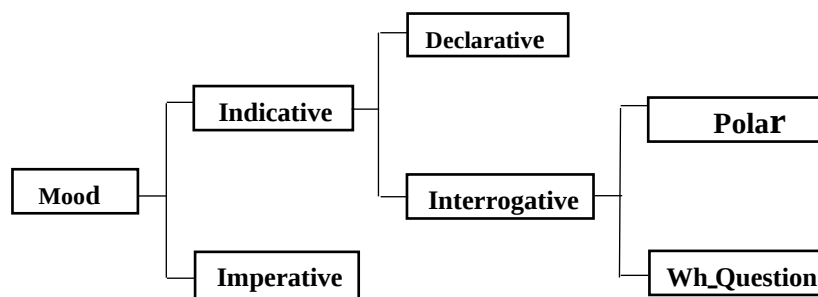


Figure 2.1 Mood Types
Source: Gerrot and Wignell (1994, p.38)

a. Indicative Mood

Indicative mood is used to exchange information (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p.114). Indicative mood is realized by the features Subject + Finite. Indicative mood can be subdivided into two kinds: Declarative Mood and interrogative Mood. Interrogative mood is also subdivided into two kinds: Polar (yes/no question) and Wh-questions.

1. Declarative

Declarative is the characteristic expression of a statement (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p.114). In the declarative mood, the Subject is followed by a finite. Declarative clauses can be identified as clauses in which the structural element of a subject occurs before the finite element of the clause.

Unmarked: Subject + Finite

The car	had	four bicycle wheels.
Subject	Finite	Complement
Mood		Residue

Marked: Finite + Subject

Then	came	the production line.
	Predicator	Subject
	Residue	Mood

Source: Gerrot & Wignell (1994, p.39)

2. Interrogative

Interrogative mood is the characteristic expression of a question (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p.114). There are two types that belong to interrogative mood: Polar (yes/no questions) and Wh-Questions. Interrogative clauses are different from declaratives. The ones that make it different are the structure of the subject and the finite. The declarative clauses are realized by the subject that precedes the finite structure, while interrogative clauses are realized by the finite subject.

- Polar Interrogative.

The structure of polar interrogative is the finite precedes the subject. Polar interrogative clause also known as yes/no question.

Are	you	okay?
Finite	Subject	Complement
mood		Residue

- WH-Question

Wh-Questions is a type where the Wh-element that serves as either the Subject, the complement, or the adjunct is located at the initial position of a clause and then is followed by Finite. WHQuestions is different from polar interrogative clauses by having a WH-element. e.g.: who, what, where, which, why, etc. The WHelement stands for the missing piece of information that the speaker wants the listener to supply.

Interrogative Clause with Wh Element as the Subject

What	is	that thing?
Subject/Wh	Finite	Complement
Residue	Mood	

Interrogative Clause with Wh Element as the Complement

Whose daughter	are	you?
Complement/Wh	Finite	Subject
Residue	Mood	

Interrogative Clause with Wh Element as the Adjunct

Where	have	you	been?
Adjunct/Wh	Finite	Subject	Predicator
Mood			
Residue			

b. Imperative Mood

Unlike indicative mood, imperative mood is used to exchange goods and services (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p.138). As imperative, the Mood element may consist of Subject + Finite, Subject only, Finite only, or they may have no Mood element. There will always be a Predicator. Imperative mood can be in the form of a command or offer. However, there is no any grammatical rule restricted respectively. The imperative mood expresses direct commands, requests, and prohibitions. An imperative is used to tell someone to do something without argument.

Imperative Mood with Finite + Subject in the Mood Element

Don't	you	believe	it.
Finite	Subject	Predicator	Complement
Mood		Residue	

Imperative Mood with only Subject in the Mood Element

Let's	go	home,	shall	we?
Subject	Predicator	Adjunct	Finite	Subject
Mood	Residue		Mood tag	

Imperative Mood without Mood Element

Come	into my parlour,	will	you?
Predicator	Adjunct	Finite	Subject
Residue		Mood tag	

Imperative Mood with only finite in the Mood Element

Do	take	care,	won't	you?
Finite	Predicator	complement	Finite	Subject
Mood	Residue		Mood tag	

2.5 Modality

Modality shows the speaker's judgments in what the speaker is saying. Halliday (1994, p.89) stated that there are two kinds of modality, namely "modalization" and "modulation".

2.5.1 Modalization

Modalization includes scales of probability and usability. Probability occurs when the speaker expresses a judgment about the probability of something happening or being happening. It consists of 'probably', 'possibly', and 'certainly'. Usability occurs when the speaker expresses a judgment about the frequency with which something happens. It consists of 'sometimes', 'usually', and 'always'.

2.5.2. Modulation

Modulation includes scales of obligation and inclination. Obligation occurs when the speaker gives command, demand, suggestion, and advice to the listener. Furthermore, inclination indicates the tendency of the speaker when doing something and the capability of the speaker's own feelings. Each category of modalization and modulation is divided into three values: high, medium and low values.

	Probability	Usability	Obligation	Inclination
High	Certain	always	Required	determined
Median	Probable	usually	Supposed	keen
Low	Possible	sometimes	Allowed	wiling

Adapted from Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.620)

Table 1. Three Values of Modality

Meanwhile, Butt, et.al (2000, p.113) used the term "modality" to refer to all positioning by speaker about usability, possibility, inclination and obligation. They mentioned that there are three ways to express modality: by modal finite, by mood adjunct, by interpersonal grammatical metaphor.

a. Modal Operator

Modal operators are the elements that can express modality in a clause. Modal operator is one of the parts of a finite element besides polarity and tense. Halliday (1994, p.76) categorized modal operators into three values: high, median, and low. Those values are considered by the aspect of interpersonal meaning. The status, contact, and affect make the degree be low, medium, or high.

b. Mood Adjunct

Beside modal operators, there are mood adjuncts that can be used to express modality in a clause. As I have mentioned before in the subsection mood element 2.3, the mood adjunct expresses the meaning which is constructed in the mood element, namely polarity, modality, temporality. Thus, mood adjuncts tend to occur in a clause near the finite verbal operator. Here, to understand more about modality and its realization in modal operators and mood adjuncts, we can see in table 3 below.

Kinds of Modality	Realization	Values of Modality		
		High	Medium	Low
Modalization	Probability	must be, should be, must, certainly	probably	maybe, may, possible
	Usuality	always	often, usually	ever, never, sometimes
Modulation	Obligation	required, must, have to, ought to, need to	should, shall, will, would, supposed	may, might, can, could, allowed
	Inclination	determined	Keen	wiling

Adapted from Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, p.145)

Table 2. The Classification of Mood Operator and Mood Adjuncts

c. Interpersonal Grammatical

Metaphor Sometimes we use a whole clause in a text to express modality. We use the grammar metaphorically when we say, for example: “I think...” when we mean ‘probably’; “I believe...” when we mean ‘certainly’; and “Don't you think?” when we mean ‘definitely’. They are examples of grammatical metaphor, in this case the metaphor of modality (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p.626). Those examples of modality are classified as metaphorical because they are realized as a clause.

3. Research Method

Hancock B., et al. (2009, p.4) qualitative research attempts to broaden and/or deepen our understanding of how things come to be the way they are in our social world. Therefore, the qualitative approach suits the purpose of this study since it focuses more on words in the text. Furthermore, this approach allows the researcher to interpret the text and ultimately make an understanding regarding the issue inside it.

In this study, the researchers used a non-participant observation method to collect the data. The researchers use this method because it only requires the writer to observe the dialogue going on in the transcript interview in the novel without getting involved directly. While for the technique, the researchers used a note-taking technique for collecting the data. To collect the data, the researchers read the novel. Then the researchers noted and underlined the data. Then, I classify and determine based on the structure, types of mood and modality. Thereafter, the data are explained one by one in the discussion section.

In this study, the researchers used the qualitative analysis method to analyze and discuss the interpersonal meaning in the novel. The analysis covers how mood and modality is used by Detective Sergeant Terrence Mansell. The steps to analyze the data were starting from specifying the data based on the categories that the researchers would discuss. Next, the researchers analyzed and discussed the mood types, mood structures and modality which are found in the novel. Then, in the final section, the researchers summarized the result of the research and made the conclusion about the mood and modality which are found in the novel.

4. Discussion

The researchers divided the discussion of data analysis subsection into two parts, which are mood types with mood structure and modality analysis. In the analysis section, researchers analyzed transcript interview data between detective Sergeant Terrence Mansell and Ian Conner (Gregory Hall's classmate); Miss Rachel Hayes (Gregory Hall's teacher); Miss Sarah Hall (Gregory Hall's Sister); Mrs Deborah Hall (Gregory Hall's mother); and Dr Howard Hall (Gregory Hall's father), who is featured in *Alice and the Fly* novel.

4.1 Mood Types and Mood Structure

a. Declarative

A declarative is an expression of a statement, which usually uses subject + finite, as in the following sentences:

1. "We're here to discuss Greg." (Rice, 2015)

We	are	here to discuss	Greg.
Subject	Finite	Cir. Adjunct	Complement
Mood		Residue	

Detective Terrence Mansell to Ian Conner (Gregory Hall's classmate)

In this novel, the detective wants to interview Greg's classmate, Ian Conner, because the night before the girl Greg liked was killed, and Ian saw him at the party. So, the detective gives the statement as to why Ian is called. The declarative clause above includes subject, finite and circumstantial adjuncts: 'We' own the position of subject, 'are' the function of finite, then 'here to discuss Greg' are circumstantial adjuncts of place 'here' and circumstantial adjuncts of cause to express information about what for. 'Greg' as complement.

2. "I can't discuss details anyway." (Rice, 2015)

I	can	not	discuss	details anyway
Subject	Finite	Mood Adjunct	Predicator	Complement
Mood			Residue	

Detective Terrence Mansell to Miss Rachel Hayes (Gregory Hall's teacher)

Miss Hayes knows what happened to Greg but not in detail, and the detective gives the statement that he can't tell it in detail. 'I' own the position of subject, 'can' the function of finite, 'not' as mood adjunct of polarity, 'discuss' as a predicator of this word as the element which is a part of the verbal group and 'details anyway' as a complement.

3. "I promise this won't take long." (Rice, 2015)

I	promise		this	would	not	take	long
Subject	Finite	Predicate	Subject	Finite	Mood Adjunct	Predicate or	Complement
Mood		Residue	Mood			Residue	

Detective Terrence Mansell to Miss Sarah Hall (Gregory Hall's sister)

Before the interview started, the detective promised his sister that this interview would not be long. ‘I’ as a subject, the verbal group from the Finite only needed to be split, and the Predicator would appear. In this clause, the Predicator is ‘promise’, telling you what process is actually going on. It comes from the split process of ‘promise’ becoming do + promise. ‘This’ owns the position of subject to represent the word of interview, ‘would’ as a finite, ‘not’ as a mood adjunct of polarity, ‘take’ as a predicator, and ‘long’ as a complement.

b. Interrogative

Interrogative is expression of a question. Structures of interrogative are realized by finite precedes subject structure.

1. “Would you consider him a friend?” (Rice, 2015)

Would	you	consider	him a friend?
Finite	Subject	Predicator	Complement
Mood		Residue	

Detective Terrence Mansell to Ian Conner (Gregory Hall’s classmate)

In the question sentence above, the detective tries to find information about Greg and whether anyone wants to accept him as his friend in his current situation. In the sentence, the detective uses polar interrogative which the answer is just ‘yes, I would’ or ‘no, I wouldn’t’. The structure starts with the finite element ‘would’, ‘you’ as a subject, ‘consider’ as a predicator which the specifying the process being discussed, and ‘him a friend’ as a complement.

2. “What did you talk about?” (Rice, 2015)

What	did	you	talk	about?
Wh-element	Finite	Subject	Predicator	Complement
Mood				
Residue				

Detective Terrence Mansell to Miss Rachel Hayes (Gregory Hall’s teacher)

Miss Hayes explained about Greg, who never told anything, including the bully. The detective tried to request an explanation of it by asking a question about using the Wh-element. ‘What’ as a wh-element, ‘did’ as a finite, ‘you’ as subject, ‘talk’ as predicator, and ‘about’ as a complement to answer the question of what.

c. Imperative

As imperative, the Mood element may consist of Subject + Finite, Subject only, Finite only, or they may have no Mood element. There will always be a Predicator. The imperative mood expresses direct commands, requests, and prohibitions. An imperative is used to tell someone to do something without argument.

In the detective's interview with his classmate, it couldn't find Imperative.

1. “So, tell me about your relationship with Greg.” (Rice, 2015)

So,	tell	me	about your relationship	with Greg
Conj. Adjunct	Predicator	Complement	Cir. Adjunct	Complement
Residue				

Detective Terrence Mansell to Miss Rachel Hayes (Gregory Hall’s teacher)

The detective asks Miss Hayes to explain the relationship between her and Greg. It was used by the speaker to give commands. As for the structure, this imperative has no mood element of subject + finite. 'so' as a conjunction adjunct to provide linking relationship between one sentence and another, 'tell' it has a predicator as a sign of the structure of imperative mood, 'me' as complement, 'about your relationship' as a circumstantial of matter, and 'with Greg' as complement.

2. "Just don't blame yourself." (Rice, 2015)

Just	do	not	blame	yourself.
Mood Adjunct	Finite	Mood Adjunct	Predicator	Complement
Mood			Residue	

Detective Terrence Mansell to Miss Sarah Hall (Gregory Hall's sister)

In the imperative clause above, the detective gives a prohibition to his sister. Detective is using an imperative mood with a finite "don't" in the mood element. The word 'blame' is a verb that acts as a predicator. Thus, because 'blame' is a transitive verb that needs an object, there are 'yourself' who own the position of complements to complete the clause.

4.2 Modality

4.2.1. Modalization

A. Low values of Modalization

a) "never"

The word 'never' as mood adjunct of polarity and modality. One example of the sentence is "but you *never* made this 'connection'?" which is delivered by detective to Miss Hayes. In this question sentence 'never' is used to express the usuality and to emphasize the question.

b) "ever"

The word 'ever' is mood adjunct of polarity and modality. The example is "did he *ever* talk about a place called Finners Island?" detective said to Miss Hayes in interrogative sentence. In this question sentence 'never' is used to express the usuality and to emphasize the question.

c) "May"

The word 'may' as modal operator that used by detective to Miss Hayes. The interrogative sentence "do you think Greg may have found you sexuality attractive?" showed that detective wants to confirm whether the possibility is yes or no.

B. Medium values of Modalization

a) "Probably"

'Probably' as modal operator of probability, in the clause "as you *probably* know, we're here to discuss Greg" that detective conveys to his friend. This is just an expression of the speaker's opinion which maybe yes, maybe no.

b) "I guess"

In the clause "*I guess* you're right then. I presume you know why you're her" that detective convey to Miss Hayes, as interpersonal grammatical.

The word 'I presume' mean 'probably', it is expression of the speaker's opinion which maybe yes, maybe no.

C. High values of Modalization

a) "I'm sure"

In the clause "*I'm sure* he'd appreciate your support" that detective conveyed to Greg's father, it's interpersonal grammatical. The word 'I'm sure' express a judgment about the certainty.

b) "must"

The word 'must' include modalization of probability. Detective conveyed a statement to his teacher "that *must* have made things difficult for him" to express of judgment of certainty.

4.2.2 Modulation

A. Low values of Modulation

a) "can"

The word 'can' as modal operator is often found in interview conversations 12 times. For example, "can you elaborate?" and "I can imagine" are the interrogative sentence and declarative sentence. The word 'can' indicates the ability to do something. In the first sentence, the detective asked Ian if he was able to connect between the reasons, he didn't want to be Greg's friends with Greg's character at school. In the second sentence, the detective tells Miss Hayes that he can imagine if Miss Hayes is frustrated. He has tried to help Greg, but Greg stops to meet her.

b) "might"

The modal operator of 'might' that used detective for his father. The interrogative sentence as "you hadn't considered the possibility Greg might go there?" to indicate a possibility which was likely to occur.

B. Medium values of Modulation

a) "would"

The word 'would' is included in the operator modal. In the interview transcript, the detective used the statements "*I'd* like to stick with Greg if possible" to Miss Hayes, and "*I'd* just like to hear it first-hand, if that's OK" to his father to express his opinion. This sentence is in a form of a conditional sentence that the speaker expects to occur.

b) "shall"

Detectives use 'should' in interrogative sentences to offer to do something "*shall* we get this over with, then?". 'Shall' is included in the modal operator.

C. High values of Modulation

a) "need to"

The declarative sentence " I *need to* work out whether what's written there is accurate or not" indicates that 'need to' express attitude about action. This is included in the modulation of the obligation.

4.3 Finding

4.3.1 Mood Types

After analyzing the transcript interview conducted by detective in *Alice and the Fly* novel, researcher found 177 clauses, they are: 67 declarative, 105 interrogative, and 5 imperatives. Detective Sergeant Terrence Mansell to Gregory Hall's classmate, Ian Connor: 3 declarative, 15 interrogative, and 0 imperative. Detective Sergeant Terrence Mansell to Gregory Hall's teacher, Miss Rachel Hayes: 21 declarative, 26 interrogative, and 2 imperatives. Detective Terrence Mansell to Gregory Hall's sister, Miss Sarah Hall: 10 declarative, 25 interrogative, and 1 imperative. Detective Terrence Mansell to Gregory Hall's Mother, Mrs. Deborah Hall: 10 declarative, 18 interrogative, and 1 imperative. Detective Terrence Mansell to Gregory Hall's Father, Dr. Howard Hall: 23 declarative, 21 interrogative, and 1 imperative.

4.3.2 Mood Structure

After analyzing the transcript interview conducted by the detective in *Alice and the Fly* novel of mood structure from 177 clauses, the researcher found that the mood element contained: 205 subject, 203 finite, in the residue element: 149 predicate, 132 complement, 59 moods adjunct, 37 circumstantial adjunct, 3 comment adjunct, and 40 conjunction adjuncts. Detective Sergeant Terrence Mansell to Gregory Hall's classmate, Ian.

Connor

Mood Elements	Total
Subject	19
Finite	20
Grand Total	29

Residue Elements	Total
Predicate	14
Complement	13
Adjunct	5
Circumstantial Adjunct	7
Comment Adjunct	-
Conjunctive Adjunct	2
Grand Total	41

Detective Sergeant Terrence Mansell to Gregory Hall's teacher, Miss Rachel Hayes

Mood Elements	Total
Subject	58
Finite	56
Grand Total	114

Residue Elements	Total
Predicate	46
Complement	40
Adjunct	22
Circumstantial Adjunct	11
Comment Adjunct	-
Conjunctive Adjunct	12
Grand Total	131

Detective Terrence Mansell to Gregory Hall's sister, Miss Sarah Hall

Mood Elements	Total
Subject	40
Finite	41
Grand Total	81

Residue Elements	Total
Predicate	28
Complement	28
Adjunct	12
Circumstantial Adjunct	5
Comment Adjunct	-
Conjunctive Adjunct	5
Grand Total	78

Detective Terrence Mansell to Gregory Hall's Mother, Mrs. Deborah Hall

Mood Elements	Total
Subject	32
Finite	30
Grand Total	62

Residue Elements	Total
Predicate	20
Complement	17
Adjunct	7
Circumstantial Adjunct	4
Comment Adjunct	2
Conjunctive Adjunct	10
Grand Total	60

Detective Terrence Mansell to Gregory Hall's Father, Dr. Howard Hall

Mood Elements	Total
Subject	56
Finite	56
Grand Total	112

Residue Elements	Total
Predicate	41
Complement	34
Adjunct	13
Circumstantial Adjunct	10
Comment Adjunct	1
Conjunctive Adjunct	11
Grand Total	110

4.3.3 Modality

a. Modalization

After analyzing the transcript interview conducted by detective in *Alice and the Fly* novel, researcher found 15 modalization.

Value of Modality	Modals and Mood adjunct used by Detective	Number of utterances
Low	Never	3
	Possible	1
	May	1
	Ever	3
	I guess	3
Median	Probably	1
High	Must	2
	Certain	

b. Modulation

After analyzing the transcript interview conducted by detective in *Alice and the Fly* novel, researcher found 30 modulations.

Value of Modality	Modals and Mood adjunct used by Detective	Number of utterances
Low	Can	12
	Could	3
	Might	1
Median	Would	11
	Shall	1
High	Need to	2
	I'm sure	1

5. Conclusion

From the analysis of the mood and modality in *Alice and the Fly* novel above, it can be concluded that detectives use language to find information from the five characters. In this case, there are three conclusions that can be drawn. First, the detective uses the mood structure of a finite + subject when he communicates with the five characters. The structure of a finite + subject is a polar interrogative mood. In the novel, there are 105 interrogative sentences in the interview transcript, of which 29 are WH-question sentences and 78 polar interrogative sentences.

Then the use of the interrogative shows the detective wants to know more information about the murder case rather than stating or ordering something. In addition, in the data, there are almost as many question sentences as statements to show concern for Greg's parents. Meanwhile, to Greg's friend and teacher, the detectives gave more confirming questions. While for Greg's sister, the detective uses a question sentence followed by a sentence expressing support. The predominance of interrogative moods indicates the detective's investigative function and his strategic politeness in eliciting information, reflecting the interpersonal role of mood choices in narrative discourse.

Last, in modality analysis through the use of a modal finite operator and mood adjunct, the results show that the detective tends to use a modal finite operator with low value. According to the data, the use of 'can' is more widely used than other types of modalities. 'Can' is used to indicate obligation. This shows that the detective is trying to state his opinion in a convincing way to the five characters so that they can believe him. It also shows his strength in the five characters by showing his ability to do something with his words and actions.

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THE PROTAGONIST'S IMPROPER BEHAVIOR IN TETSUKO KUROYANAGI'S *TOTTO-CHAN: THE GIRL AT THE WINDOW*

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Abstract

This research aims at uncovering the kinds of improper behavior performed by the protagonist character in the novel “The Girls at the Window” written by Tetsuko Kuroyanagi. This study explores the types and causes of improper behaviors exhibited by the protagonist in Tetsuko Kuroyanagi’s novel, *Totto-Chan: The Girl at the Window*. Using a qualitative descriptive method, the study identifies behaviors such as classroom disruption, damage to school property, and dishonesty toward parents. He is making a mess in the classroom, damaging school facilities and lying to parents. This research uses qualitative descriptive method. Under qualitative descriptive, this research completes its analysis process and findings by describing and illustrating the data that has been collected. It is by explaining the improper behavior and examples of bad behavior of the protagonist from the data collected from the novel in the forms of quotation. The results of this research are to find out what bad behavior the protagonist does, and the reasons why the protagonist does it.

Keywords: *Behavior; disturbed class; protagonist; improper*

1. Introduction

Literary works are very artistic works, which can make us feel touched. The existence of a literary work is to be enjoyed by oneself or to be enjoyed by anyone who reads it. Literature is also an expression of the human person in the form of experiences, thoughts, feelings, ideas, enthusiasm, and beliefs in the form of concrete images that evoke enchantment with language instruments (Sarinofta, 2018). This statement is also justified by Panuti explaining that “literature” is a spoken or written work that has various superior characteristics such as originality, artistry, beauty in content, and expression. Therefore, many people now like and are interested in literary works, because a good literary work will convey messages from the author through various unique ways and beautiful language. In the above sense, it is interpreted that life involves humans and between events that occur in a person's mind.

Every literary work always contains a moral message that we can learn after reading, hearing and seeing the contents of the literary work. That is the reason why researchers make literary works as objects to convey various feelings such as emotions, sadness, happiness and the nature or attitude of a person. Currently, many literary works

have been published, one of which is a novel. Therefore, the novel that I want to propose as material for analysis

From the number of novels, the researchers take *Totto-Chan: The Girl at the Window* Tetsuko Kuroyanagi's have to be analyzed at concerns the protagonist's behavior. A child's social interactions are heavily influenced by emotions, whether it is in her good fun or not. How the child adapts to the environment, cooperates, is willing to share with friends and people around her, depends on how we educate and develop children's social emotions from an early age. The process of interaction between children with the social environment will mutual relationship influence and be influenced by each other. The social environment includes people: parents, school, peers and adults. Based on the explanation above, the researchers feel it necessary to do an analysis of the behavior of one of the protagonist characters, a girl named Totto-Chan who often does something wrong to her friends in her social environment.

Totto-Chan: The Girl at the Window by Tetsuko Kuroyanagi is a novel translated from English language which was originally published in Japanese language in 1981. Events by events are experienced by Totto-Chan along with other characters. With Totto-Chan and other characters who have different behavior, such as Totto-Chan, who has an improper and unruly behavior like the behavior of a child in general. For example, almost every child who is difficult to advise or difficult to manage is always called a "naughty child" by the people around him or even by their own parents. Therefore, when children's children hear the words "bad boy", they will lose their enthusiasm and confidence. It is because there are many separate factors that can make children improper, whether it is from themselves or from something close to them.

Based on the statement above, the reason why the researchers chose the novel is that it contains an interesting storyline that makes the researchers interested in choosing this novel to analyze. This novel also has some interesting characters, like Totto-Chan, who always does cute things, but it is not good in every story, and she can also be an example or learn her attitude. Therefore, the researchers would like to uncover the improper behavior of the protagonist and its factors in the novel.

This study aims to analyze the types of improper behaviors demonstrated by Totto-Chan and to explore the social and psychological factors that contribute to her actions. The research contributes to understanding child behavioral development as reflected in literary characters.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Behavior

Behavior is formed due to learning from the surrounding environment through direct experience or observing the behavior of others around them, as well as aggressive behavior is a behavior formed because of these factors, so that there is a need for a program or intervention to reduce aggressive behavior. In Utami (2018, p.41), Tulus said that behavior is a visible reflection in attitudes, actions and words as a person's reaction that arose because of this experience and learning process stimulation of the environment. This issue shows that behavior can be seen immediately as a reaction from stimuli one receives from the surroundings. Children need the ability to adapt to the environment. Sears (2012, p.5) behavior is usually actions that are studied because of reinforcement or reinforcement. Behavior can be formed because of learning through rewards. If the effect of the behavior is negative, then it can reduce the behavior. Aggressive behavior can have a negative effect, so the training provided is expected to

reduce aggressive behavior in children by applying the reward or reward method, either verbal and non-verbal, as reinforcement to reduce behavioral aggression.

The role of the family and community environment is very important for the development of children's behavior. Therefore, it is very important to have positive learning from the environment so that even children will be able to learn and behave positively. Empowerment of the local environment (family, community leaders and local residents) in educating children about aggression becomes very important, so that people are expected to have the ability to be a positive figure/model for positive learning. The results that are expected through this research are that parents and society's surroundings can know and be aware of the situation and conditions of the child's environment and be able to follow up by being a good model for the growth and development of children and being able to handle children effectively to reduce children's aggressive behavior.

Shamsu in Utami (2018, p.41) argues that social behavior describes the child's ability to adapt to the environment socially. The forms of social behavior are: quarrel, competition, cooperation, behavior of power, and sympathy. In interaction with the outside world, children spend a lot of time with peers on various activities. They show symptoms of sharing tasks, the presence of rivalry, quarrels, sympathy, helping each other in dealing with difficulty. This picture shows what shows signs of behavior. It is good behavior and bad behavior.

2.2 Good Behavior

Good behavior can be interpreted as an attitude of accepting and implementing a system that is built on the basis of the common good at interacting (Hasanah in Wijaya, 2021, p.31). Good behavior is carried out so that someone avoids permanent loss. To form a child's positive social behavior, the initial experience of a child greatly determines the child's social development. The beginning of a child's socializing gives more pleasure and satisfaction. Good behavior is an act of helping benefit others without having to ask for any reward and doing it voluntarily. Good behavior is voluntary behavior that has the goal of benefiting others. Good behavior makes a person able to live together productively. Besides that, good behavior can have an impact positive for physical, cognitive and psychological health.

2.3 Bad Behavior

Bad behavior is behavior that is intended to hurt others, both physically and psychologically. If you hurt others because of an element of an accident, then the behavior is not categorized as bad behavior. Pain, due to medical action, for example, even though it is done intentionally, does not include aggression. On the other hand, the intention of hurting others but not succeeding. This can be described as aggressive behavior. Dollard states that aggressive behavior is an emotional response uncontrollable behavior that results in destructive, offensive and injuring behavior. This action can be directed at other people, the environment and oneself, caused by the deep frustration and disappointment that occurs in the individual.

In addition, children tend to find it difficult to control themselves. The child's dominance is controlled by high emotions and is less stable, so that results in behavior that tends to be aggressive as well, mature of early sexual intercourse and also a lack of manners (honesty, respect, mutual respect, etc.). Bringham in Tentama (2012, p.4),

there are three factors that affect aggressive behavior: (1) the learning process, (2) reinforcement (reinforcement) and (3) imitation of the model.

Bad behavior leads to human rights violations by others by means of acts of violence, beatings, rape, and we do not feel guilty when others suffer. Bad behavior, as stated by some experts, has a basic equation is destructive behavior both physically, psychologically, and objects that are around it. Bad behavior always shows rude, offensive and hurtful behavior. Socially, bad behavior is behavior that attacks other people and is good verbal or physical assault. Verbal attacks such as berating, mocking or ridiculing, while physical attacks such as pushing, hitting and fighting.

2.3.1 Making a Mess in the Classroom

Basically, every child has stages of development in which children are required to act or carry out the things that become the task of development properly. The deviant behavior that is carried out is as follows: disobedience and interfering with teaching and learning activities at school. This behavior occurs because of adjustments that must meet children to new environmental demands and conditions. This behavior can occur because of adjustments that must be made by the child.

In the learning process, the teacher often faces whimsy student behavior that is inexplicable and difficult to overcome because the behavior has been reinforced to meet specific needs. Children who always talk in class often disturb the peace of class, perhaps trying to fulfill the need to get attention (Jiwaningsih. 2019, p.6-7).

2.3.2 Damaging School Facilities

Damaging school facilities has often been done by children in their schools. This happens because of a sense of responsibility and a sense of belonging. School facilities for students are relatively low. Even so, there are behaviors that tend to damage school facilities. In fact, there are still students who do this. Teachers who witness this must immediately reprimand and advise students by saying that if they damage school facilities, they must repair or replace them. The causes of this behavior include failure in the socialization process so that the family has a role to be responsible for instilling values and norms in children. The effort made to deal with deviant behavior in students is by giving advice and penal sanctions (Anzalena. 2019, p.129).

2.3.3 Lying to Parents

Lying is a behavior that is often done by individuals to avoid certain situations. Even in a study, it is said that lying behavior is carried out from an early age (Talwar in Indriati, Manuela, 2022). Lying is carried out by individuals in many of their daily activities. The impact of lying behavior is detrimental to others, and to the perpetrator himself. Lying to other people, especially to parents, is a behavior that should not be done. One of the disadvantages that can result from lying to people who are lied to is always feeling suspicious of other people. Individuals who are often lied to will lose their trust in others and will not easily trust again. Then the disadvantages of lying behavior towards individuals who commit lies are always feeling anxious and afraid that their lies will be found out. Individuals who often lie will also slowly lose the trust of others.

3. Research Method

Study design is a method and procedure used to collect and analyze data on a particular research problem. According to Williams, descriptive research is a research

method that can determine the situation in current phenomena. Nassaji in Maria (2017), also states that the goal of descriptive research is drawing and classifying the phenomenon.

Furthermore, this study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to examine behavioral patterns in textual evidence from the novel. Data were collected through close reading, identification of behavioral instances, and classification based on social behavior theories. Hancock (2009, p.17), qualitative research design that concerns the development and the understanding of social phenomena. The data that have been collected descriptively are used to inform the study of the research problem as a whole. Thus, research can be carried out to uncover the problems that will be discussed in this research.

4. Discussion

This behavior exemplifies Totto-Chan's high curiosity, which, while disruptive, reflects a child's exploratory stage as defined by psychological theory.

4.1 Making A Mess in the Classroom

Totto Chan is the main character who is the object of this research. Totto-chan is a first-grade elementary school student who is well known by her school teachers as an overly active child. Because she was too active, Totto-Chan often disrupted teaching and learning activities in class. Quotations below are a quote that describes Totto-chan's character before he was expelled from his old school.

“For example, during alphabet class, your daughter opened the desk, took out a notebook, then closed the table by slamming it. Then he opened the table again, put his head in, took out pencil, quickly slammed the lid down, then wrote 'A'. If bad or wrong handwriting, she will open the table again, take out eraser, closes the table, erases the letter and then opens and closed the table again to save the eraser, it was all done very quickly (Totto Chan, 2015, p.13).”

Totto-chan is known as an overly active student in her class, like what is shown in quotation above that Totto-chan repeatedly opened and closed her desk violently to get things out and put things back in. Totto-chan will do it again if bad writing, take the eraser and put it back. That matter, of course, makes the class atmosphere noisy and disrupted by their activities until finally making Totto-chan known as an active student in a negative context because it interferes with teaching and learning activities. The active character impressed Totto-chan as a mischievous child, so the school was forced to expel Totto-chan from the school. Totto-chan was considered a naughty child seen at the time when Totto-chan did things. She should be or was even forbidden to do so by making a mess in class. The quote below is a quotation showing Totto-chan what she shouldn't have done.

“After an hour of opening and closing her desk, Totto-chan left where he sat and stood in front of the window, looking out. Then, when the teacher started to think as long as Totto-chan wasn't make a fuss just let her stand there, the little girl suddenly calling out to street musicians dressed in shabby clothes. Something that makes Totto-chan happy but annoying for the teacher the fact that their classroom

is located on the ground floor with windows facing the street (Totto chan, 2015, p.15-16).''

The quotation above tells of Totto-chan, who no longer opened the lid of her desk, but calling street musicians and asking them to play a song was something that really, really disturbed class activities at that time. Because their class was located on the first floor, all the students flocked to the window to see the street musician. Definitely Totto-chan's character can't be tolerated again. This irritated the teacher who was teaching at that time, even though at that time Tottochan was happy. By calling street musicians and asking them to play songs made Totto-chan considered a naughty child and very annoying and often made class messy.

One of the characteristics of active children is that they have a high sense of will. This is as stated by Atika (2021). When a child can appreciate herself as 'I', the child begins to realize that she has a will. This is referred to as a child in the active phase. Here is a quote describing Totto Chan as having a high will.

''There is another problem in the drawing lesson. I asked the children to draw a Japanese flag. All the kids drew correctly, but your daughter drew a Navy flag. You know, the one with the picture of the sun with lines of rays... (Totto chan, 2105, p.16)''

The quotation above tells the situation in the drawing class at that time all students were asked to depict the Japanese flag. The Japanese flag at that time had changed into the Japanese flag known today, a white flag with a red circle in the middle. When other children drew correctly, Totto-chan even drew the Force flag. The Sea of Japan is known as the Rising Sun. Don't just draw Japanese Navy flags, Totto-chan also added tassels and poles to the flag, because the paper was full. Finally, Totto-chan drew it past the edge of the paper so that when the paper is lifted, lots of graffiti are left on the table that can't be removed. The initial command was to draw the Japanese flag, but Totto-chan drew the Army flag Sea of Japan, not according to what the master ordered. High will in Totto-chan's active character, can be seen from Totto-chan's desire to draw the Japanese Navy flag, not the Japanese flag, said the Master. Based on the quotation above, it can be said that Totto-Chan is a child who has a high will. This is because the child in the active phase has a high sense of will. Totto-chan's naughtiness made her mother call to school. At school, Mama was told by Totto-chan's homeroom teacher about things that Totto-chan had been doing while studying at school. As an example of Totto-chan's character, which seems mischievous, this is also reinforced by the quotation as the following:

''After saying that, the teacher stood up and said the closing words coldly, ''I'm not the only teacher who is annoyed. The teacher in the class next door is also having a hard time (Totto-Chan, 2015, p.18).''

The above quotation explains that Totto-chan is not only annoying to the teachers in his class, he also often annoys the other teachers with her behavior. At first, this made other teachers passing by feel confused because she was punished too many times to stand there. In the end, it actually makes trouble for her teachers.

The quotation below shows that Totto Chan has an active character with a high sense of will, which ultimately has an effect on the desire to find out things he had never done before.

“I became curious and tried to hear the answer, but there was none answer. Despite this, your daughter constantly exclaims, ‘You what are you doing?’ so often that I couldn't teach. Finally, I went to the window to see who he was talking to. When sticking my head out the window and looking up, I saw a pair swallow are making nests under the eaves. Tottochan talking to a pair of swallows! (Totto-Chan, 2015, p.16)’”

The quotation above describes Totto-Chan's character in the form of a desire to know what's high. The incident at that time was when the class was in the middle teaching and learning activities while Totto-chan instead stood in front of the window, finding out what a swallow was doing and asked him in a loud voice. Totto-chan did it over and over again, so that in the end, the sound increasingly disturbed the class. The teacher, who was curious about whom Totto-Chan was talking to, finally found out his student was talking to a bird. Totto Chan's actions are certainly an action that should not be done in the middle of the hour lesson.

4.2. Damaging School Facilities

Children's behavior can vary from very naughty to very obedient. Characters also apply in all places, such as playgrounds, homes and schools. Children who have this behavior when making activities or mistakes are divided into two, as if they really have a clear reason and are just doing it for fun to make themselves happy. As seen in a quotation below. It is an example of Totto-Chan's behavior disrupting her school facilities because her beloved purse fell into a hole in the ground.

“Totto-chan screamed as her wallet vanished into the darkness below. But Totto-chan was determined not to cry or let her purse disappear. She went to the gardener's tool shed and took out the long-stemmed wooden dipper that is used for watering plants. The handle of the dipper was almost twice her height, but that didn't dampen Totto-chan's resolve in the least. She walked backwards school while dragging the dipper and trying to find a hole to empty the tank dirt. She guessed it must be on the outside of the outhouse wall. After much searching, she finally saw it round hole cover about one meter from there. With great difficulty, she opened the cover and finally found the hole she was looking for. Totto-Chan poked her head in (Totto-Chan, 2015, p.57).”

In the quotation above, it is explained that Totto-Chan dug a dirt pit to retrieve her favorite purse that fell into the dirt pit. She took out the contents of her manure hole while looking for her wallet. Totto-chan's behavior disturbed those around her with smells and sights that were not worth looking at. While Totto-Chan is digging the dirt pit, the headmaster sees and asks what is going on. Then Totto-chan explains the reason why she does that. The principal asks if Totto-Chan would put the dirt back where it belongs and Totto-Chan nods her head. The quotation shows a description of Totto-Chan's behavior, which is called the behavior of a naughty child who is still responsible and someone who has reasons for what they do.

"The headmaster came over and said kindly, "You'll put everything back when you're done, won't you?" Then the man left again, as before. "Yes," Totto-chan answered cheerfully, continuing to work. Suddenly a thought crossed her mind. She looked at the pile. When I'm done, I can put all that shit back in the tub, but what about the water? into dirty water absorbed quickly into the ground. Totto-chan stopped working and tried to think of a way to put the dirty water back in, because she had promised the headmaster, she would put it all back. Finally, he decided to enter the wet soil. By now the mound was truly mountainous and the reservoir was almost empty, but Totto-chan's wallet had not been found (Totto-Chan, 2015, p.59)."

As shown in the quotation above, it is explained that Totto-chan damages and disrupts school facilities just because of her great desire to retrieve her beloved wallet, which had fallen into a dirt pit. What Totto-chan was doing is still tolerated because she is responsible for cleaning up the mess she had made even though her wallet could not be found. This is defined as naughty and good behavior at the same time. Tottochan can be considered good and has responsibility at a young age where not all children of Totto-chan's age have it. Especially with Totto-chan's absence, being angry or scolded by the headmaster who already knows what Totto-chan is doing. This can be applied to adults, so they do not easily discourage small children, which can make them feel disappointed or sad.

4.3. Lying to Parents

Honesty is the most important basic life value that must be taught to children since they were children. Teaching children to say, to act and to behave honestly will be a useful lesson for their future life. Honesty will also create good communication between parents and children and a sense of trust will be created. Children are individuals who are still clean and sensitive to stimuli that come from the outside environment. Thus, during childhood, it is ideal for parents to instill the value of honesty in their children.

In the following quotation, Totto-chan's behavior is described as lying to her mother because Totto-chan tears her clothes. Totto-chan lies and makes excuses because she is afraid that her mother would find out and scold her.

"Once she was crawling under a fence wearing clothes made of old, shabby calico. Clothes torn from top to bottom. Though they were old, Totto-chan knew Mother liked them very much, so she immediately racked her brains to come up with a good excuse. She dared not told Mama that her clothes were torn by the wires thorny. She thought she was better off lying to make it sound as if she accidentally tore her clothes off. Finally she decided to make up a story like this. "I was walking down the street" she lied to Mom just got home. "Suddenly a swarm bad boy threw a knife at my back, So my clothes are torn like this."

As soon as she finished speaking, Totto-chan thought about how she would answer questions that might be asked" Mama (Totto-Chan, 2015, p.112)."

In the quotation above, it is illustrated that Totto-chan deliberately lies to her mother because she is afraid of being scolded and punished for tearing her clothes. After listening to Totto-chan's reasoning, her mother, as a parent, did not scold or even punish Totto-chan instead. Her mother listens to Totto-chan's story, which explains why her clothes could be torn.

In the following quotation, the mother is not angry with Totto-chan. Her mother did was listen to stories and reasons why Totto-Chan could ruin her clothes.

“Good thing Mama just said, "Wow, that must be terrible very!" Totto-chan breathed a sigh of relief. Mother would know, in situations like that Totto-chan would accidentally tear her favorite clothes. Of course Mama didn't believe her story about the knife. A knife thrown at her back would have cut her back and torn her clothes, and Totto-chan didn't look the least bit scared after what happened. Mama immediately knew the story was just a fabrication. Whatever happened, Totto-chan didn't usually bother to make up excuses like that. Mama also realized that Totto-chan must feel bad for tearing her clothes. And that was enough to make Mama feel relieved (Totto-Chan, 2015, p.87).”

Parents must understand the child and their character before punishing them. We need to motivate children and try to correct their mistakes and the mistakes are forgiven after being corrected. Parents must also be able to educate their children well. Because the character and nature of children grow based on the pattern of upbringing their parents. Punishment should not be given when angry, do not hurt the feelings and self-esteem of the child. In the quotation, it is explained that Mama is not angry and does not punish Totto-chan for accidentally tearing her clothes. What the mother did was just give some expressions as a listener to Totto-chan's reasons and stories.

5. Conclusion

From the analysis of the protagonist's improper behavior in Tetsuko Kuroyanagi's *Totto-chan: The Grl at the Window*, Totto-Chan's improper behaviors—classroom disruption, property damage, and dishonesty—stem from an intrinsic curiosity and active personality. The novel highlights the importance of empathetic parental and educational responses in nurturing such children. This provides more critical depth and interpretive maturity. Improper behavior by the protagonist is caused by an active character and a desire to know something new. The improper behavior carried out by the protagonist has an influence that can interfere with the activities and comfort of other people around her. The negative behavior that has been caused by the protagonist always has a personal reason behind it, and she dares to take responsibility for what she did. Someone who has bad behavior is not necessarily completely bad, but she can also have good behavior. Parents must know and learn how to understand and respond to the behavior of naughty children and active children.

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THE EFFORTS TO SURVIVE IN RACHAEL LIPPINCOTT'S NOVEL *FIVE FEET APART*

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Abstract

This study analyzed the protagonist's survival efforts and their psychological impacts in Rachael Lippincott's *Five Feet Apart*. Using a qualitative descriptive method, the research identified five key forms of survival efforts—therapy, yoga, medication, digital self-expression, and surgery—and their impacts on resilience and recovery. This study adopts qualitative method to acquire and describe the data about the main character's efforts to survive. The discussion is divided into two topics concerned to the aspects of the analysis. The first is focused on efforts to survive of the main character then the second is about the impacts of efforts to survive of the main character. There are five efforts to survive in the novel. They are: doing therapy, doing yoga, taking medicine, creating a YouTube account, and doing surgery; The impact of effort to survive are: to relieve her breathing naturally, to increase endurance and make recovery faster and to have a good life expectancy.

Keywords: *Effort; impact; survive*

1. Introduction

Effort is the use of physical strength or power of mind, it tries hard with mind or body (Hornby:1989). From the above definitions, it can be concluded that an effort is the way to get something that people wants. Without doing the effort, people can get nothing. According to Massin (2017, p.16), effort can be explained as a primitive feelings and action. He also states that effort contains mental episodes which do not indicate anything. Effort may also refer to the category of felling that can be compiled together with pains, tickles, and nausea. On the other hand, this primitive feeling can be viewed as the effort that belongs to the category of actions, not of feelings.

Parsons in Brown and Leigh (1996, p.362) defines effort as a way in which motivation can be manifested into a superior work. This can indirectly be done as a task of mediation between the invisible psychology of motivation and work output. It can be concluded that effort is a number of physical and mental strength mobilized by individuals to achieve goals.

Survive means to maintain life. It is needed in any kind and everywhere, like survive in daily life. Survive in daily life is very important because in living life we should always be grateful to be able to stay alive and maintain our life, be optimized when our desire will be accepted, to control our life and control positive emotions.

The writer focuses on main character's efforts to survive in Rachael Lippincott's novel *Five Feet Apart*. *Five Feet Apart* is a romantic drama talks about two teenagers, Stella Grant and Will Newman, with cystic fibrosis (CF) diseases who fall madly in love. Stella is a cheerful patient and takes pride in following a strict treatment schedule as she waits for a lung transplant. Her regimented routine, however, is thrown into disarray when she meets fellow Will Newman.

They become friends as Stella convinces Will to take his treatment schedule seriously in exchange for allowing him to sketch her, and their friendship soon turns into love. But as with terminal romance stories, there is a catch. Cystic Fibrosis patients can cross infect each other, so Stella and Will cannot be within five feet of one another.

Chronic disease is a type of degenerative disease that develops or persist for a very long period of time, more than six months. People who suffer from chronic diseases tend to have higher levels of anxiety high and tend to develop feelings of hopelessness and helplessness because various kinds of treatment could not help him recover from chronic disease (Sarafino, 2006).

2. Literature Review

Nasution et.al (2023) state that everyone must have the effort to survive. There are many things that humans can do to survive, for example, working, eating, or doing sport. Fakhira & Sahri (2021) state that the effort to survive is an activity or action which is carried out by a person with the aim of overcoming the problems that exist in his life, so that he/she can survive to continue his life.

Massin (2017) classifies efforts into some types. Efforts are primarily not feelings, in the same way that hardness, hotness, or pains are. Then, efforts, therefore, should be differentiated from feelings. Efforts have many given purposes that feelings lack. Efforts are necessarily related to a goal, which its complete point is intended to reach, while feelings do not show such goal-directedness. This can be seen from at least two ways. First, someone may confirm that feelings have adaptive value. Feelings do not definitely wish for something. Second, someone may think that feelings, such as the feeling of pain, call for some reaction for example, pain should be avoided. Efforts do not in any sense call for the pursuit of an end. They are pursuits of ends. Efforts are productive. One can lift weights, convince people or solve equations. One cannot do these things with feelings although feelings certainly do have other sorts of influences on our behavior. Efforts have success conditions. When an effort achieves the goal, it is successful. If it does not achieve the goal, it is a failure. Feelings by contrast have no success conditions. However, feelings have accuracy conditions which efforts lack. Efforts cannot be veridical; feelings cannot be successful. Efforts typically are accompanied by some resistance, which the agent tries to overcome. Things resist our efforts, but they do not resist our feelings.

3. Research Method

Qualitative research method is a method used to describe facts qualitatively. Qualitatively, researchers aim to gather an in-depth understanding of human behavior (Creswell, 2009). This research uses literary study in which the data are taken from books, especially those contribute to the variables discussed in research. The main data in this research are obtained from the novel *Five Feet Apart* by Rachael Lippincott. Some other data are taken from some books, some journal, and internet website. The

writers collect some important data, make notes, search any theories, organize, and analyze the data relating to the title.

4. Discussion

4.1 Effort to Survive

In the novel, Stella Grant as the protagonist of the novel is described as the female who leads and has cystic fibrosis. She lives in hospital as a patient. She almost drowns and luckily, she gets a lung transplant. She is very intelligent and often carries the weight of the world on her shoulders. Then, Stella Grant is very caring and changes many people's lives for the better. She has a friendly, but controlling personality and always does her treatments.

Stella's effort to survive is by doing therapy. Stella is helped by AffloVest, mobile airway clearance therapy. AffloVest itself is shaped like a life jacket in general that we often encounter on the beach, but AffloVest is blue and has components on each side.

"I pull on the blue AffloVest, snapping it into place around my torso with Barb's help. It looks an awful lot like a life vest, except for the remote coming out of it. For the quickest moment I let it be a life vest, and I stare out the window, picturing myself in Cabo on boat with Mya and Camila, the afternoon sun glowing on the horizon (Lippincott, 2019, p.22)."

Stella also finds inner peace through yoga every day, practicing breathing and releasing the negative energies that are within her. In that room Stella looks so peace, her face soft and calm. And enjoyed every moment that she is doing in yoga room.

"Peeking into the yoga room, I see her sitting on a green mat meditating, her legs crossed, her eyes closed. (Lippincott, 2019, p.73)."

Stella is a person who is very responsible for her role as a patient, she still doesn't forget to take her medicine. She is sure that after her fight against this disease she will be able to live 100% of her life like a normal person. She has regularity in carrying out her duty of healing that she has suffered for years. Stella shows and takes the time to give her attention to everyone, even though she is also carrying out her routine as a patient. Stella's life went on as usual, going to school, hanging out with her friends and working on the application.

"...that means taking my medications on time, and I hold up the bottle a whole lot of this liquid nutrition through my G-tube every night. (Lippincott, 2019, p.7)"

Stella doesn't not only take care of herself by taking her medicines, but she also drinks milk shakes which is her weight gain drink. She also does it with a very happy heart because she is in an environment where the people around her have a good heart.

"I get my treatments. I take my medicine, I drink my body weight in milk shakes, I got to see Barb and Julie, I leave until my next flare up. (Lippincott, 2019, p.5)."

Realizing her illness, Stella has changed his lifestyle. Because she has to undergo treatment for her illness, she, who previously likes travelling, now has to go to the hospital often. She has got rid of her boredom by creating a YouTube account and sharing information about the disease she is suffering. She also gives tips and tricks for staying healthy even having Cystic Fibrosis.

“My heart warms, and I give a final big smile for the camera, for that person fighting the same fight that I am. This time it's genuine. “All right, guys, thanks for watching! Gotta double checks my afternoon and evening meds now. You know how anal I am. Hope everyone has a great week. Bye! (Lippincott, 2019, p.8).”

After all the treatments that Stella did, Stella finally got her biggest hope, which was to get a lung transplant. She hopes after doing surgery, she could live well with her new lungs.

“New lungs can come in at any moment, so I've got to be ready! I say the words like I believe them wholeheartedly. Though after all these years I've learned to not get my hopes up too much. (Lippincott, 2019, p.8).”

4.2 The Impact of Effort to Survive

Using AffloVest itself is to relieve her breathing. AffloVest itself is a vest that is worn on our bodies which is shaped like a life jacket. Afflovest therapy helps loosen thick secretions so that they are expelled from the lungs through coughing. Clearing the airways can help prevent lung infections, reduce the use of antibiotics and hospitalizations. This vest therapy was created for people who have chronic lung disease that has obstructed the way of breathing.

“The vest kept vibrating. Silence enveloped us both. Except, of course, when it churned our lungs and gave it a breath-taking effect (Lippincott, 2019, p.115).”

The impact from doing the gym is the freedom of her lungs to breathe. It is a lung therapy that also functions to pump the lungs so that the mucus in Stella's lungs melts. It means it really helps Stella in surviving the crises that can come to her any time. And the exercise also really helped Stella's other treatments. Accompanied by Will, Stella is getting more and more excited in carrying out her sport in the hospital. They do sports together in the gym and take care of each other so that the positive energy that they both produce has a good impact on Stella's activities.

“I head straight to the gym with Will; I start pedaling on a stationary bike. It can make my lungs being strengthen. (Lippincott, 2019, p.63).”

By injecting antibiotics into Stella's body, it will have a good impact on Stella's throat, fever and lungs, whose condition is no longer normal and cannot be relieved naturally. Even though it was only temporary, Stella still did it when her throat and fever could no longer be controlled. Because for Stella, her struggle is very important for her life and the lives of her parents.

“I put some Fucidin on the sore skin around my G-tube in an attempt to make it less fire-engine red and more of a summer-sunset pink. (Lippincott, 2018, p.11).”

Interacting with many people on social media such as YouTube, has also a good impact. This can increase endurance and make recovery faster. Stella feels satisfied and happy because even though she is sick, she can still share information her followers many things especially about recognizing the rare disease she is suffering from. Stella also gets motivation to continue educating the public in fighting and preventing rare diseases.

“I’ve been making YouTube videos for about five years to increase people’s understanding of cystic fibrosis. Over the year, more people I can imagine have started following my surgery journey, and the rest of my medication regimen. I feel happy and proud because I have educated many people about my rare disease, and not only that, I feel happy that I can my complaint with my followers. (Lippincott, 2019, p.20).”

Stella is always optimistic because of her good understanding of her illness. It has had a good impact to his efforts to survive. The values of optimism are an attitude that can encourage her to always have good hopes in living life. Stella is optimistic about her condition. Moreover, Stella is very happy because every treatment she undergoes is accompanied by people who love her. and this was very helpful and had a positive effect on her mental state so that she remained motivated in undergoing the various treatments she had to undergo. Finally, she got a chance for a new lung transplant.

5. Conclusion

Some effort to survive in the novel *Five Feet Apart* are: doing therapy, mobile airway clearance therapy; doing yoga by practicing breathing and releasing the negative energies; taking medicine regularly and drinking milk shakes, weight gain drink; creating a YouTube account in sharing information about the disease and encourage her followers to live healthily; and doing surgery, a lung transplant. The impacts of effort to survive are: to relieve her breathing naturally, to increase endurance and make recovery faster and to have a good life expectancy.

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PATTERNS AND AWARENESS OF CODE-MIXING AMONG INDONESIAN YOUTHS IN AN ENGLISH- SPEAKING COMMUNITY: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This qualitative study investigates the patterns and underlying factors of code-mixing (CM) among Indonesian youths in Aaron's English-Speaking Club, a community dedicated to practicing English in Medan, Indonesia. Employing a grounded theory approach by Charmaz (2016), the research involved in-depth interviews with ten club members, selected via probability sampling. The conversations were analyzed to quantify the frequency of CM (the insertion of Indonesian words into English discourse) and to identify the sociolinguistic factors influencing this phenomenon using the framework of Holmes (1992). Findings reveal that all participants engaged in CM, with percentages ranging from 0.52% to 24.34% of their total words. The analysis indicates that CM is not an indicator of low proficiency but a strategic, communicative resource. Key factors influencing CM included occupation, cultural attitude, and regional background. Notably, participants were initially unaware of the linguistic concepts of CM and code-switching (CS), but upon explanation, all identified more strongly with CM than CS in their typical language use. The study concludes that CM is a natural and prevalent feature of bilingual communication among these youths, reflecting their dynamic linguistic identity and the specific social context of their English practice community. It recommends increased metalinguistic awareness to empower speakers in their bilingual journey.

Keywords: *Bilingualism; code-mixing; English speaking community; Indonesian youth; language awareness; sociolinguistics*

1. Introduction

The linguistic landscape of Indonesia, particularly among its youth, has undergone a significant transformation in the digital age. The pervasive influence of social media and globalized content has made English more accessible than ever, fostering a generation of young Indonesians who are not just passive learners but active users of the language in their daily digital interactions (Thara & Poornachandran, 2018). This engagement often moves beyond pure English usage into a fluid blend of languages, a phenomenon prevalent in multilingual societies.

This blending is systematically studied in sociolinguistics as code-mixing (CM) and code-switching (CS). Code-mixing refers to the embedding of linguistic units—such as words, phrases, or clauses—from one language into an utterance of another language within a single sentence or discourse (Bhatia & Ritchie, 2004; Kim, 2006). Code-switching, while related, describes the alternation between two or more languages, or varieties of a language, at the level of discourse, often triggered by a change in context, topic, or participant (Aurer, 1998). In the Indonesian context, public figures like the celebrity Cinta Laura, known for mixing German, Indonesian, and English, and educational influencers like Aaron O'Brien, an Australian who integrates Indonesian into his English teaching, have popularized and normalized this linguistic behavior (Astari & Marantika, 2023; Kasanah & Hidayati, 2023).

Aaron's English Speaking Club (AESC) provides a fertile ground for observing these phenomena. It is a community where Indonesian youths consciously gather to practice English, creating a unique social context where the expectation is to use English, yet their underlying linguistic repertoire is firmly rooted in Indonesian. This tension between intention and habit makes the club an ideal microcosm to study how CM manifests among motivated learners in a relaxed, peer-driven environment.

While much research has focused on CM in educational or formal settings, there is a gap in understanding its patterns within informal, self-motivated learning communities like speaking clubs. This study aims to fill that gap by analyzing the sociolinguistic dynamics of CM within AESC. It seeks to move beyond mere quantification to understand the why behind the mix—exploring the factors that trigger CM and the speakers' awareness of their own linguistic choices. Therefore, this study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What percentage of CM do respondents use in an English conversation?
2. What are the factors causing each respondent to use CM?
3. Are the respondents aware that they engage in CM or CS?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Code-Mixing and Code-Switching in Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics, the study of the relationship between language and society, provides the theoretical foundation for understanding CM and CS. It posits that language use is not merely a grammatical exercise but a social act, deeply intertwined with identity, context, and group membership (Holmes, 1992). Code-mixing is a natural consequence of language contact in multilingual societies. Bhatia and Ritchie (2004) define it as the mixing of various linguistic units from two different grammatical systems within a single sentence. This differs from code-switching, which Aurer (1998) describes as a communicative system where speakers alternately switch from one language to another, often at sentence boundaries or in response to a change in the social situation.

The study of CM challenges the deficit perspective that views it as a sign of linguistic incompetence. Instead, scholars like Milroy and Muysken (1995) conceptualize language mixing as a "resource of linguistic wealthiness" through which various social meanings are produced. It can serve numerous functions, such as expressing solidarity, emphasizing a point, compensating for a lexical gap, or signaling a shared cultural identity (Pfaff, 1979; Jacobson, 1998).

2.2 Diglossia and the Indonesian Context

The Indonesian linguistic situation can be partially understood through the lens of diglossia, a concept where two varieties of a language exist side-by-side throughout a community, each serving a different social function (Alaiyed & Abdullah, 2018). In a broader sense, Bahasa Indonesia functions as the high (H) variety for formal, educational, and national purposes, while various regional languages (e.g., Javanese, Batak, Sundanese) and colloquial Indonesian dialects act as low (L) varieties for daily, informal communication. English enters this landscape as a global H variety, associated with education, modernity, and prestige. Bassiouney (2006) argues that CM and CS can be studied within the diglossic framework, as speakers navigate between these different varieties. The members of AESC operate in this complex diglossic environment, constantly negotiating between their L1 (Indonesian/regional languages) and the target H variety (English).

2.3 Factors Influencing Code-Mixing and Code-Switching

Janet Holmes (1992) provides a comprehensive framework of eight social factors that influence language choice and, by extension, CM and CS:

- a. Regional: Geography and accent can influence language use, as moving to a new region often necessitates learning and mixing with the local language.
- b. Ethnic: Ethnic pride and heritage can motivate speakers to use their ethnic language or accent, even in a predominantly different linguistic environment.
- c. Social Status: Language can be a social marker. Speakers may use certain lexical items associated with a higher social class or switch to align with a desired social image.
- d. Gender: Sociolinguistic studies often find differences in the linguistic behavior of women and men, including politeness strategies and speech functions, which can influence mixing patterns.
- e. Age: Younger speakers are often more open to linguistic innovation and borrowing, while older speakers may adhere more closely to traditional language norms.
- f. Education: Higher levels of education often correlate with proficiency in a standard or formal language variety, affecting how and when one mixes codes.
- g. Occupation: Professional jargon and the need to communicate with specific audiences can be a significant trigger for CS and CM.
- h. Cultural Attitude: Norms of politeness and cultural values can dictate language choice. In some cultures, mixing is a sign of identity, while in others, it may be frowned upon.

This study employs Holmes's framework to categorize and understand the motivations behind the CM observed in the AESC community.

3. Research Method

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design using the Grounded Theory Method (GTM) as developed by Kathy Charmaz (2016). This approach was chosen for its disciplined, systematic, and iterative process for analyzing data to produce inductive findings. Rather than imposing a rigid pre-existing theory, GTM allows patterns and concepts to emerge organically from the data itself, which is ideal for exploring the nuanced and personal nature of language use. The research design relied on observation

techniques through semi-structured interviews and documentation (voice recordings) (Ciesielska, Bostrom, & Ohlander, 2018).

3.2 Population and Sample

The population for this study was the members of Aaron's English Speaking Club (AESC) in Medan. Following Arikunto's (2012) guidance that if a population is less than 100, the entire population can be taken, a sample of ten (10) members was selected using probability (random) sampling to ensure every member had an equal chance of being selected (Etikan & Bala, 2017). The sample consisted of five males and five females, aged between 20-25 years. To protect their privacy, respondents are referred to by their initials throughout this article.

3.3 Data Collection

Data was collected through one-on-one, audio-recorded interviews conducted in various relaxed settings at different times to suit the respondents' schedules. Each respondent was asked to choose one of four topics—Mental Health, Personal Development, Travelling, or Arts—and then answered five predetermined questions related to that topic. The interviews were conducted in English to elicit natural speech, but respondents were free to respond at length without time constraints. This method was designed to create a comfortable environment where CM could occur naturally. After the main interview, a short debriefing session was held where the concepts of CM and CS were explained, and respondents were asked about their awareness of these phenomena in their own speech.

3.4 Data Analysis

The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. The primary data analysis involved identifying and counting every instance where an Indonesian word or phrase was inserted into an English sentence (code-mixing). The analysis did not focus on grammatical errors but strictly on the conscious or unconscious insertion of L1 lexical items into L2 discourse.

The percentage of CM for each respondent was calculated using the formula by Sihalohe and Siregar (2020):

$$\text{Percentage of CM} = (Y / X) * 100$$

Where:

Y = Total number of Indonesian words (CM) found

X = Total number of words in the conversation

Following the quantitative analysis, a qualitative analysis was conducted. The transcripts were reviewed to identify the potential factors influencing each respondent's CM, using the framework of Holmes (1992). This involved considering the respondent's background, the content of their speech, and the context of the conversation. Finally, the responses from the awareness debrief were analyzed to gauge the participants' metalinguistic knowledge.

4. Discussion

4.1 Prevalence and Percentage of Code-Mixing

The analysis of the ten interviews revealed that code-mixing was a universal feature among the participants, though the extent varied significantly. The total words

spoken and the instances of CM for each respondent, along with the calculated percentage, are presented in Table 1.

No.	Respondent	Total Words (X)	CM Words (Y)	Percentage of CM
1.	SAP	544	76	13.97%
2.	SW	515	48	9.32%
3.	WR	412	90	21.84%
4.	NM	533	95	17.82%
5.	IAP	577	50	8.66%
6.	DH	399	18	4.51%
7.	FHZ	390	32	8.20%
8.	SA	190	1	0.52%
9.	ANP	423	103	24.34%
10.	SS	545	59	10.82%

Table 1. Percentage of Code-Mixing in Respondents' Speech

The results show a wide range, from a very low 0.52% (SA) to a high of 24.34% (ANP). It is crucial to interpret these numbers carefully. A low percentage does not necessarily indicate higher English proficiency, nor does a high percentage indicate a lack thereof. For instance, SA's very low CM rate (0.52%) was characterized by short, direct answers, while ANP's high rate (24.34%) reflected deeply personal and emotional narratives about mental health, where resorting to L1 might provide comfort and precision for expressing complex feelings. This suggests that the topic of conversation and the speaker's communicative goals are significant determinants of CM frequency.

4.2 Factors Influencing Code-Mixing

Applying Holmes's (1992) framework, the study identified a primary influencing factor for each respondent, as shown in Table 2. The analysis was based on the content of their conversations and their personal backgrounds as shared during the interviews.

No.	Respondent	Primary Influencing Factor
1.	SAP	Cultural Attitude
2.	SW	Regional

No.	Respondent	Primary Influencing Factor
3.	WR	Occupation
4.	NM	Occupation
5.	IAP	Regional
6.	DH	Cultural Attitude
7.	FHZ	Gender
8.	SA	Age
9.	ANP	Social Status
10.	SS	Education

Table 2. Primary Sociolinguistic Factor for Each Respondent's Code-Mixing

5. Conclusion

This study set out to investigate the patterns and awareness of code-mixing among Indonesian youths in the specific social context of an English speaking club. The findings clearly demonstrate that code-mixing is not a peripheral error but a central, strategic feature of their bilingual communication. The varying percentages of CM reflect individual differences in speaking style, topic emotionality, and communicative intent rather than a hierarchy of proficiency.

The application of Holmes's (1992) sociolinguistic factors proved effective in explaining the motivations behind CM, revealing that these young Indonesians mix codes due to a complex interplay of their occupational, regional, and cultural identities. Their language is a true reflection of their hybrid identity: globally oriented yet locally rooted.

Most significantly, the study highlights a gap in metalinguistic awareness. While these youths are adept practitioners of bilingual communication, they lack the formal vocabulary to describe their own skillful linguistic behavior. Recognizing CM as a natural and resourceful strategy, rather than a deficit, is crucial for building linguistic confidence.

In conclusion, communities like Aaron's English Speaking Club are not merely spaces for practicing a foreign language; they are dynamic contact zones where a new, hybrid language practice is being forged. This practice is systematic, meaningful, and deeply tied to the speakers' social identities.

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DEPRESSION, GENDER AND PATRIARCHY: A PSYCHOLOGICAL READING OF THE PROTAGONIST IN CHO NAM-JOO'S *KIM JI-YEONG, BORN 1982*

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Abstract

This article investigates the forms and causes of depression experienced by the protagonist in Cho Nam-Joo's novel *Kim Ji-Yeong, Born 1982*, situating the narrative within the intersection of psychology, gender studies, and feminist literary criticism. Drawing on Bhowmik et al.'s (2012) framework of depression, the study applies a qualitative descriptive method to examine the protagonist's psychological decline, which unfolds through three stages: baby blues, postpartum depression, and postpartum psychosis. Textual analysis reveals that Ji-Yeong's condition is triggered by sleep disturbances, stressful life events, and the forced resignation from her professional career. These immediate causes, however, are embedded within broader patriarchal structures that regulate women's identities and diminish their autonomy. The findings underscore that Ji-Yeong's depression is not merely an individual pathology but a cultural and political condition shaped by systemic gender inequality. The novel dramatizes how patriarchal surveillance, misogyny, and intergenerational trauma exacerbate women's mental health struggles. By portraying Ji-Yeong's breakdown as both personal and collective, Cho Nam-Joo transforms literature into a form of feminist critique. This article contributes to literary psychology by demonstrating how fiction can illuminate the sociocultural dimensions of depression, offering insights that extend beyond psychiatry into the realm of social justice.

Keywords: *Depression; feminist criticism; literary psychology; patriarchy postpartum depression*

1. Introduction

Depression remains one of the most pressing global mental health challenges, with approximately 280 million people affected worldwide (WHO, 2023). Gender differences in depression are striking: women are significantly more vulnerable due to the intersection of biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors (Maji, 2018). Scholars argue that patriarchal systems intensify women's mental health struggles by reinforcing social expectations, restricting autonomy, and devaluing women's identities (Gupta et al., 2023; Ussher, 2023).

Literature provides a unique lens to examine these dynamics. As Middleton (2021) notes, literature has historically served as a space to portray women's psychological suffering and critique patriarchal oppression. Novels often function as cultural mirrors, revealing how gender roles and systemic inequalities shape women's mental health experiences (Paley, 2019). In particular, feminist literary criticism highlights how narratives of women's depression are intertwined with broader questions of power, identity, and social justice (Hambur, 2019).

Cho Nam-Joo's novel *Kim Ji-Yeong, Born 1982* exemplifies this intersection of literature, gender, and mental health. Since its publication in 2016, the novel has become a cultural touchstone in South Korea and beyond, sparking debates on feminism, patriarchy, and women's rights. The protagonist, Kim Ji-Yeong, embodies the struggles of women subjected to systemic discrimination, from childhood neglect in favor of male siblings to workplace exclusion and marital pressures. Her eventual psychological breakdown represents both an individual crisis and a collective indictment of patriarchal society.

This article situates *Kim Ji-Yeong, Born 1982* within the discourse on depression, gender, and patriarchy. By applying Bhowmik et al.'s (2012) theory of depression, it aims to (1) identify the forms of depression experienced by the protagonist and (2) analyze the social and psychological causes underlying her condition. In doing so, the study contributes to the growing body of scholarship exploring how literature both reflects and critiques the psychological consequences of patriarchal oppression (Gupta et al., 2023; Ussher, 2023).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Depression in Literature

Literary works often serve as mirrors to human psychological struggles, particularly depression. Depression in literature is not merely a reflection of clinical symptoms but also a cultural narrative of marginalization and identity crises. Khan and Wakeel (2025) highlight how contemporary fiction frequently represents depression, PTSD, and trauma as narrative strategies that engage with broader social issues, offering insight into the intersection of mental health and storytelling. Similarly, Radden and Varga (2013) argue that literary accounts of depression, including memoirs and fictionalized narratives, hold epistemological value, as they bridge subjective experience with collective understanding.

This perspective resonates with Wiyatmi (2011), who emphasizes that literary psychology provides a framework for interpreting fictional characters' emotions and mental states. As Purwarno and Efrizal (2025) further note, literature traces the human condition across history, revealing not only aesthetic creativity but also the ways in which literature engages with social, cultural, and psychological realities. By applying psychological theories to literature, scholars can uncover how narratives articulate both personal suffering and societal critique.

2.2 Postpartum Depression and Gender Norms

Postpartum depression is particularly significant in feminist literary analysis. Bhowmik et al. (2012) classify postpartum mood disorders into baby blues, postpartum depression, and postpartum psychosis, each representing different degrees of severity. More recent feminist critiques, however, expand the focus by emphasizing how patriarchal norms exacerbate these conditions. For example, Gupta et al. (2023) argue

that patriarchal systems interfere with women's psychological development, making them more vulnerable to depressive disorders.

Ussher (2023) similarly critiques the medical pathologization of women's mental health, suggesting that depression is often a byproduct of oppressive gender roles rather than a purely individual pathology. Within literary contexts, this implies that depictions of postpartum depression in fiction often double as critiques of the cultural expectations placed upon women, especially around motherhood and caregiving.

2.3 Feminist Literary Criticism and Mental Health

Feminist literary criticism offers critical tools for analyzing how narratives of depression intersect with gender and power. Hambur (2019) shows that depictions of depressed housewives in short stories reflect systemic oppression, turning domestic spaces into sites of psychological entrapment. This aligns with earlier feminist readings of classics such as *The Yellow Wallpaper* and *The Bell Jar*, but contemporary feminist criticism expands this discussion to global narratives of women's suffering.

Khan and Wakeel (2025) emphasize that feminist fiction often engages with trauma and mental illness as a way to challenge cultural silencing of women's pain. By representing psychological disorders in fiction, authors not only document but also resist patriarchal narratives that delegitimize women's experiences.

2.4 Previous Research on *Kim Ji-Yeong, Born 1982*

Prior scholarship on Cho Nam-Joo's *Kim Ji-Yeong, Born 1982* has predominantly emphasized its feminist and sociological dimensions. Rahmah et al. (2020) explored the pervasive patriarchal oppression depicted in the narrative, while Alfarini and Tetty (2022) analyzed the novel through the lens of gender-based inequality. Similarly, Baruna and Lestari (2022) situated the text within a broader biographical critique of patriarchal culture in South Korea, underscoring its sociocultural resonance. However, these studies largely overlook the psychological dimension of Ji-Yeong's character, particularly the manifestations of her depression. This study addresses that gap by integrating literary psychology with feminist criticism, thereby extending existing scholarship on the novel. In doing so, it contributes not only to the literary analysis of contemporary Korean fiction but also to the wider discourse on gendered mental health and its representation in literature.

3. Research Method

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive method, which is suitable for analyzing complex social and psychological phenomena as represented in literature. According to Kim, Sefcik, & Bradway (2017), qualitative descriptive studies are effective in providing rich, straightforward accounts of human experiences without reducing them to rigid categories. Such an approach is particularly appropriate for literary analysis, where narrative detail and character psychology require nuanced interpretation.

The primary source of this study is Cho Nam-Joo's novel *Kim Ji-Yeong, Born 1982*. The text was closely read to identify passages that portray symptoms of depression, including emotional instability, anxiety, loss of control, and dissociative behaviors. These passages were then analyzed using Bhowmik et al.'s (2012) theoretical framework of depression, which classifies depressive disorders into baby blues, postpartum depression, and postpartum psychosis.

In addition, the analysis is informed by feminist literary criticism to contextualize the protagonist's depression within patriarchal and gendered social structures. As Carrera-Fernandez and Guardia-Olmos (2014) note, qualitative methods in psychology are particularly valuable for understanding mental health as embedded in sociocultural contexts. By integrating literary psychology with feminist critique, this study ensures a multi-layered reading of the novel.

Secondary data were drawn from scholarly articles, theses, and books on depression, feminist criticism, and literary psychology published between 2012 and 2024. These sources provide both theoretical grounding and contemporary relevance, ensuring that the analysis reflects current debates in psychology and gender studies.

4. Discussion

Cho Nam-Joo's *Kim Ji-Yeong, Born 1982* presents depression not as an isolated illness but as a cultural symptom of systemic patriarchy. Recent feminist analyses argue that postpartum depression should not only be understood medically but also socially, as an embodied response to gendered oppression (Champ, 2022). Ji-Yeong's struggles resonate with what Gawron (2020) terms an "illness of the soul, body, or culture," reflecting how depressive states emerge at the intersection of personal suffering and collective conditions.

This reading situates the protagonist's mental illness within a continuum of oppression, aligning with Bhowmik et al.'s (2012) categorization of depression but extending it by considering how patriarchal structures aggravate psychological distress.

4.2 Baby Blues as the First Stage of Breakdown

Ji-Yeong's early struggles with motherhood reflect symptoms of *baby blues*, a condition often minimized in both medical and social discourses. She confesses:

"Ji Yeong thanked him, saying that she had indeed been feeling blue and enervated and that she suspected baby blues." (Joo, 2016, p. 14)

This passage highlights her awareness but also her vulnerability to dismissal. According to Held and Rutherford (2012), postpartum distress is often culturally silenced, as dominant ideologies of motherhood expect women to be joyful and fulfilled. Ji-Yeong's simple admission that she feels "blue" becomes radical within a society that denies mothers' suffering.

By situating this condition in a patriarchal setting, the novel exposes how women's mental health is routinely disregarded. Champ (2022) emphasizes that feminist resignification of postpartum depression reframes such conditions as legitimate responses to systemic inequalities, not mere hormonal imbalances.

4.3 Postpartum Depression and the Weight of Patriarchal Surveillance

Ji-Yeong's emotional decline worsens into postpartum depression, evident when she reacts to privacy violations:

"That's repulsive. Just repulsive... Then it occurred to her that her photo might have been taken, and this made her wonder... if they were floating around on the internet right this minute." (Joo, 2016, p. 14)

This moment illustrates heightened paranoia and loss of security, core features of postpartum depression. Research confirms that postpartum depression is shaped by

societal pressures, including unrealistic maternal ideals and gendered expectations (Mollard, 2015; Ussher, 2023). In Ji-Yeong's case, patriarchal surveillance transforms private despair into public vulnerability, showing how gender norms amplify psychological harm.

Cain (2009) describes how narratives of depressed mothers expose the ways women are regulated both publicly and privately. Ji-Yeong's panic about surveillance echoes this insight: her body and identity are continuously monitored, judged, and devalued.

4.4 Postpartum Psychosis: Fractured Identity and Collective Trauma

The climax of Ji-Yeong's psychological breakdown manifests as postpartum psychosis, where she dissociates and speaks as if she were other women:

"A few days later, Ji-Yeong said that she was Cha Seung-yeon, a college friend who had died a year before." (Joo, 2016, p. 3)

"Oh, Mrs. Jung. To tell you the truth, my poor Ji-Yeong gets sick from exhaustion every holiday!" (Joo, 2016, p. 12)

Such moments of identity displacement align with psychiatric definitions of psychosis but also hold symbolic weight. Mauthner (2010) argues that women's narratives of postpartum depression often reflect struggles of authenticity, where women no longer "feel true to themselves" under the weight of societal expectations. Ji-Yeong's fractured identity represents not only her own crisis but also the generational trauma inherited from other women, echoing the "collective voice" of female suffering under patriarchy (Gawron, 2020).

This suggests that postpartum psychosis in literature can be read as both pathology and resistance—an embodied refusal to conform to prescribed roles (Champ, 2022).

4.5 Causes of Depression

4.5.1 Sleep Problems and Medicalization

Sleep disturbance is a recurring motif:

"In order to alleviate her depression and insomnia, I have prescribed her a set of antidepressants and sleeping pills." (Joo, 2016, p. 193)

Feminist critiques warn against reducing postpartum depression to medical terms alone. Godderis (2010) shows that psychiatric discourses often "responsibilize" women by framing their suffering as individual pathology, overlooking structural factors. Ji-Yeong's medicalization through pills reflects this tension—while providing short-term relief, it obscures the systemic roots of her despair.

4.5.2 Stressful Life Events and Misogyny

Ji-Yeong's humiliation in public illustrates the psychological toll of casual misogyny: *"I wish I could live off my husband's paycheck... mom-roaches got it real cushy."* (Joo, 2016, p. 190) These insults reinforce what Taylor (2016) calls "chains of patriarchal discourse," whereby women are demeaned for conforming to the very roles imposed upon them. Such events intensify depression by attacking women's dignity in public spaces.

4.5.3 Loss of a Job and Erasure of Identity

Perhaps the most devastating trigger is her forced resignation:

"In the end, they concluded that one of them had to be a stay-at-home parent, and that one person, of course, was Ji-Yeong." (Joo, 2016, p. 161)

Work is not merely economic but also existential. Shaikh and Kauppi (2015) argue that postpartum depression must be understood through a social constructionist lens, where identity and self-worth are deeply tied to social roles. Ji-Yeong's loss of employment erases her professional identity, confirming that her worth is reduced to domestic functions. This resonates with Burgard et al.'s (2007) finding that job loss significantly correlates with depressive disorders.

4.6 Literature as Social Critique

By blending fiction with social critique, Cho Nam-Joo situates Ji-Yeong's depression as evidence of structural injustice. At several points, the narrator explicitly integrates real social data into the fictional narrative, blurring the line between novel and sociological report:

"More than 70 percent of women in their thirties quit their jobs after having children. And more than half of them never return to the workforce." (Joo, 2016, p. 117)

This narrative technique positions Ji-Yeong's breakdown as not only personal but representative of broader systemic patterns, reinforcing what Gawron (2020) identifies as the dual function of postpartum depression in literature: both artistic theme and feminist critique of oppressive gender norms. Ji-Yeong's struggles thus transform private pain into political commentary.

The novel also demonstrates how literature can challenge psychiatric reductionism by linking mental illness to systemic inequality. For instance, when Ji-Yeong's psychiatrist records her symptoms, the clinical frame is juxtaposed with social critique: *"The patient shows signs of depression and anxiety caused by long-term gender discrimination, workplace harassment, and loss of professional identity."* (Joo, 2016, p. 194) Here, the medical gaze is subverted to expose structural causes of her condition, aligning with Champ's (2022) argument that feminist resignification reframes postpartum depression from "illness to be treated" into "injustice to be confronted." Thus, *Kim Ji-Yeong, Born 1982* exemplifies literature's power to reframe women's suffering as both personal and collective, psychological and political. The interweaving of narrative, statistics, and medical records reinforces the idea that depression cannot be disentangled from patriarchy and gender inequality.

5. Conclusion

This study has examined the protagonist's experiences of depression in Cho Nam-Joo's *Kim Ji-Yeong, Born 1982* through the framework of Bhowmik et al. (2012), supported by feminist literary criticism and recent scholarship on women's mental health. The findings reveal that Ji-Yeong undergoes three distinct stages of depression—baby blues, postpartum depression, and postpartum psychosis—each progressively illustrating the profound toll of patriarchal oppression on women's psychological well-being.

The analysis demonstrates that Ji-Yeong's depression cannot be explained solely through biological or individual factors. Instead, her condition reflects the intersection of personal vulnerability and systemic inequality. Sleep disturbances, stressful life events, and the forced abandonment of her professional career emerge as significant triggers. Yet these immediate causes are embedded within broader cultural structures that devalue women, normalize misogyny, and enforce rigid gender roles. Thus, depression in the novel functions as both a personal crisis and a symbolic critique of society.

From an academic perspective, this article contributes to the field of literary psychology by illustrating how fiction can serve as a vital site for exploring mental health issues. As recent scholarship emphasizes (Champ, 2022; Gawron, 2020; Ussher, 2023), postpartum depression must be understood not only as a clinical disorder but also as a cultural phenomenon shaped by patriarchy. *Kim Ji-Yeong, Born 1982* dramatizes this intersection, transforming the protagonist's breakdown into a narrative that speaks for countless women whose suffering is often marginalized or silenced.

Socially, the novel underscores the urgent need to recognize depression as a structural problem, not merely a private pathology. By portraying Ji-Yeong's struggles in detail, Cho Nam-Joo compels readers to confront the hidden costs of gender inequality—costs that manifest in women's bodies, identities, and relationships. This aligns with feminist critiques of psychiatry, which caution against medicalizing women's distress without addressing the systemic forces that produce it (Goderis, 2010; Shaikh & Kauppi, 2015).

Furthermore, the conclusion of Ji-Yeong's story—her reliance on psychiatric treatment and her family's reluctant acknowledgment of her illness—raises important questions about the adequacy of current responses to women's mental health. While therapy and medication provide relief, they cannot dismantle the patriarchal structures that perpetuate suffering. This suggests that future interventions must integrate medical, psychological, and sociocultural approaches, ensuring that women are supported not only as patients but also as individuals entitled to dignity and equality.

In closing, *Kim Ji-Yeong, Born 1982* is more than a novel about one woman's depression; it is a feminist testimony that challenges readers to rethink the relationship between gender and mental health. By analyzing the protagonist's psychological struggles, this article highlights literature's capacity to reveal the hidden dimensions of social injustice and to amplify women's voices in contexts where they are often silenced.

Future research might extend this analysis by comparing Ji-Yeong's narrative with other contemporary literary works that depict postpartum depression and female psychological distress, thereby mapping a broader cultural discourse on gendered mental health in global literature. Such comparative studies could enrich our understanding of how different cultural contexts shape women's experiences of depression, while reinforcing the universal need to dismantle patriarchal structures that continue to undermine women's well-being.

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A SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF COGNITIVE MEANING IN BOB MARLEY'S SONG LYRICS

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Abstract

This study explores the cognitive meanings in Bob Marley's selected songs—*One Love*, *Three Little Birds*, and *Could You Be Loved*—through a semantic approach. Employing a qualitative descriptive method, it identifies meaning relations such as synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, and polysemy within the lyrics. Findings reveal that Marley's songs embody profound cognitive meanings, reflecting human experience, social values, and the struggle for justice. His poetic and symbolic language communicates universal messages of peace, solidarity, and resilience. The study demonstrates how cognitive semantics can illuminate the intersection of language, music, and social consciousness. Through a qualitative descriptive method and semantic analysis, the study identifies various meaning relations such as synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, and polysemy that are embedded within the lyrics. Findings reveal that Marley's songs embody profound cognitive meanings, reflecting human experience, social values, and the struggle for justice. His poetic and symbolic language communicates universal messages of peace, solidarity, and resilience. The study demonstrates how cognitive semantics can illuminate the intersection of language, music, and social consciousness.

Keywords: *Antonymy; cognitive meaning; hyponymy; meaning relations; polysemy; semantics; song lyrics; synonymy*

1. Introduction

A song is a rhythmic combination of human voice and musical instruments. Songs as works of art have the ability to inspire, entertain, and arouse emotions through their rhythm, melody, and lyrics. In addition, songs also play an important role in various social interactions, such as parties, concerts, and celebrations, which are able to unite individuals from diverse backgrounds (Nugraha: 2016). Songs function as a medium of communication between the creator and the listener. In the song there are lyrics or arrangement of words that usually consist of verses and refrains, functioning as an expression of the writer's thoughts and feelings. Lyrics can convey messages or stories that can influence the listener's attitudes and emotions, building deeper connections through shared experiences (Firdaus:2013)

The relationship between songs and semantics has high significance, considering that semantics focuses on the analysis of meaning contained in language, including song

lyrics. Each verse in a song not only contains denotative meaning, but also contains connotative meaning that can be understood through context and word choice. Therefore, semantic studies play an important role in helping listeners interpret the meaning and complexity of emotions that the song writer wants to convey. According to Keraf (2002), lexical structure includes various semantic relations found in words. The relationships between words can be synonyms, polysemy, homonyms, hyponyms, and antonyms. Every song lyric has the potential to experience a significant shift in meaning in its meaning relations. The relation of meaning in each song lyric has the potential to experience a significant shift in meaning. However, previous studies on song lyrics often focus on figurative or emotional meaning, rather than cognitive meaning. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how Bob Marley's lyrics convey cognitive meanings through semantic relations, contributing to understanding the linguistic expression of social consciousness in music.

This study investigated how Bob Marley's songs as a significant source for exploring cognitive meaning, as well as providing deeper insights into how language can reflect and influence human experience in social and cultural contexts.

2. Literature Review

Cognitive refers to things related to or involving the process of cognition. Cognition itself is an activity or process carried out to obtain knowledge, which includes individual awareness, feelings, and experiences. Djajasudarma (1999) explains that "cognitive meaning," also known as descriptive or denotative meaning, is a meaning that shows the relationship between concepts and reality. Cognitive meaning is clear and reflects the meaning as it is. Cognitive meaning can be defined as a mental process related to understanding, processing, and storing information. In the realm of psychology and cognitive science, cognitive meaning includes how individuals interpret and give meaning to the experiences, concepts, and phenomena they encounter in everyday life. This process involves various elements, such as perception, attention, memory, and problem solving, which overall contribute to how individuals understand their surroundings. According to Croft and Cruse (2004), cognitive semantics emphasizes the relationship between linguistic form and conceptual structure. This framework supports the semantic exploration of lyrics as reflections of human cognition.

Furthermore, cognitive meaning can be seen as an essential link between language and thought processes. In the dynamics of communication, individuals not only convey information literally, but also actively construct meaning through a series of complex cognitive interactions. Therefore, a deep understanding of cognitive meaning has crucial significance in various disciplines, including education, psychology, and linguistics. This is because such understanding has the potential to significantly influence the way individuals acquire knowledge, communicate, and interact with other individuals in a social environment.

2.1 Meaning Relations

Meaning relation is a meaningful relation or semantic relation between a word or other language unit with another word or language unit (Suwandi, 2011). Chaer (2009) also said that "Meaning relation is a meaningful relation or semantic relation between a word or other language unit". Meaning relations include contingency (adjacent relation), synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, polysemy, homonymy/homography. The research

conducted discusses meaning, so the research uses semantic studies. In this context, the relationship between words, phrases, and sentences that interact with each other can produce various meaning phenomena, such as conflict, expansion, similarity, and meaning coverage. Meaning relations can be defined as semantic relationships that occur between a word or language unit with another word or language unit.

2.1.1 Synonym

Wijana (1999) explains that synonymy is a relation of similarity of meaning. A linguistic unit may have the same meaning as another linguistic unit. Synonyms are known as words that have the same or almost the same meaning. For example, the word father is synonymous with the word father, mother with mother, brother with brother. Another example, the words "big" and "wide" can be considered synonymous in certain contexts, although they are not always interchangeable.

2.1.2 Antonym

Antonyms are words that have opposite meanings. Chaer (2009) states that antonyms can be understood as terms that refer to different objects. In semantic studies, antonyms are often defined as expressions, usually words, phrases or sentences, whose meanings are considered to be the opposite of other expressions. This shows that antonyms are not always absolutely opposite, but are only considered to be opposites. The meaning relation between two antonymous words is reciprocal or two-way.

2.1.3 Hyponym

Hyponym refers to words that have a more specific meaning in a more general category, known as hypernym. Thus, hyponym can be understood as a subcategory of hypernym. The relationship between hyponym and hypernym can be illustrated as the relationship between part and whole. Semantically, Verhaar in Chaer (2009) states that hyponym is an expression which is generally a word, but can also be a phrase or sentence whose meaning is part of the meaning of another expression.

2.1.4 Polysemy

Polysemy is a linguistic phenomenon in which a word has more than one meaning or understanding, but all of these meanings are interrelated and relevant to each other. In the context of polysemy, different meanings usually come from the same basic concept.

3. Research Method

The study applied a qualitative approach to explore and analyze the cognitive meaning contained in Bob Marley's song lyrics. The qualitative approach was chosen because it provides an opportunity for writer to understand the context and nuances contained in the lyrics. Understanding the type of qualitative research is a research step that produces descriptive data in the form of writing or speech, as well as the behavior of people being observed (Bogdan & Biklens, 1992). Data were analyzed using semantic content analysis. Each lyric line was examined for meaning relations based on Chaer's (2009) semantic classification. The data were then categorized and interpreted to reveal cognitive meanings using descriptive analysis. Thus, this study can provide in-depth insight into the meaning contained in the song lyrics.

4. Discussion

4.1 Cognitive Meaning in Bob Marley's Song Lyrics

An analysis is conducted on the lyrics of three of Bob Marley's works, namely *One Love*, *Three Little Birds*, and *Could You Be Loved*. Through a semantic approach, the exploration focuses on cognitive meanings that reflect human experience, social values, and justice for the struggle, which are described universally. The recurrence of antonymic pairs such as "love/hate" reflects cognitive contrast as proposed by Croft and Cruse (2004), where conceptual opposition constructs social critique.

4.1.1 Reflecting Human Experience

The song *One Love* by Bob Marley conveys a universal message of unity and love. Marley invites all individuals to unite and respect each other regardless of differences, as an effort to create peace and overcome divisions in society. "One love, one heart, let's get together and feel all right". The lyrics above reflect the hope for unity in the face of differences. Marley invites listeners to build collaboration and peace, emphasizing that happiness can be achieved through love and togetherness. The cognitive meaning contained can be interpreted as a call to overcome fragmentation and build an inclusive community.

The song *Three Little Birds* reflects the theme of hope and serenity. The simple yet meaningful lyrics invite listeners not to worry and to believe that everything will go well. This message is very relevant in everyday life, where individuals often face various challenges and pressures. The lyrics "Don't worry about a thing, 'cause every little thing gonna be alright". In semantic analysis, the cognitive meaning of this lyric describes the human experience which is often filled with anxiety and uncertainty. Marley invites listeners to remain calm and believe that hope will bring peace and a better future, and conveys a message of optimism amidst life's challenges.

Could You Be Loved reflects the theme of love and acceptance. The lyrics describe a longing for a supportive relationship, and encourage listeners to open their hearts to love, both from themselves and others. Love is described as a force that forms emotional bonds and plays an important role in everyday life. One significant lyric is: "You could be loved, but you must be true to yourself." The cognitive meaning of these lyrics invites listeners to reflect on their relationships with themselves and others and the importance of being honest with themselves as the basis for true love.

4.1.2 Reflecting Social Values

The song *One Love* by Bob Marley reflects the values of solidarity and social concern. Through his lyrics, Marley invites listeners to unite differences in order to build an inclusive and harmonious community, as a response to injustice and discrimination. One of the lyrics that reflects these social values "Let's get together and feel all right." From a semantic analysis perspective, these lyrics reflect social values about relationships and solidarity between fellow human beings to support each other in facing social challenges and contributing to creating solid and positive relationships.

Three Little Birds by Bob Marley conveys a message about the importance of optimism, solidarity, and mutual support, especially in difficult situations. The lyrics that can reflect social values. "Don't worry about a thing, 'cause every little thing gonna be all right." In the lyrics, Marley conveys an invitation to stay calm and believe that all problems will be resolved. These lyrics reflect a form of social solidarity, where

individuals provide emotional support to each other so as not to drown in worry. This kind of support is essential in building an environment full of hope and togetherness.

Could You Be Loved conveys a moral message about the importance of solidarity, empathy, and mutual respect in social life. Through his lyrics, Marley invites listeners to build harmonious relationships based on love and support for each other. "Could you be loved, and be loved?" The lyrics emphasizes the importance of love and mutual support in building healthy relationships. Marley invites us to create an inclusive and empathetic community, where love is the basis of social solidarity.

4.1.3 Reflecting Justice for Struggle

Bob Marley's song *One Love* not only voices love and unity, but also conveys criticism of injustice and social oppression. Through his lyrics, Marley invites society to unite against discrimination and inequality, reflecting the values of solidarity and resistance against injustice. Lyrics "Let's get together to fight this Holy Armageddon" reflect an explicit call for unity in the face of oppression and social injustice. Cognitively, these lyrics show that the struggle for justice requires collective cooperation, where love and solidarity are important elements in driving constructive social change.

The song *Three Little Birds* conveys a powerful message of optimism and hope in the face of injustice and social challenges. Through his lyrics, Marley invites us to stay positive and believe that everything will be fine, even though we face difficulties. "Don't worry about a thing, 'cause every little thing gonna be all right." This lyric implies the importance of an optimistic attitude in the face of injustice. This optimism functions as a psychological strength that can encourage individuals to continue fighting, even when faced with difficult situations. In the context of social struggle, the belief that everything will improve reflects collective hope and a spirit of solidarity in overcoming challenges.

The song *Could You Be Loved* by Bob Marley not only raises the theme of love, but also conveys a message of resistance against injustice. Marley emphasized that social struggle must be based on love and solidarity as human values that strengthen the spirit of resistance.

4.2. Bob Marley's Song Lyrics Based on Meaning Relations in Cognitive Meaning

Bob Marley's song *One Love* emphasizes love, unity, and solidarity as the foundation of a peaceful society. The lyrics call for unity against division and injustice, making it a symbol of hope and protest against social oppression, with love as the main force. *Three Little Birds* conveys a message of optimism and serenity, assuring the listener that everything will be okay. Through the metaphor of little birds and sunshine, Marley encourages the listener to remain calm in the face of life's challenges, emphasizing the value of mental resilience and hope. While the song *Could You be Loved* depicts love as a liberating force that builds solidarity and self-confidence. Marley emphasizes the importance of self-acceptance and healthy social relationships, as well as love as a basis for fighting injustice.

5. Conclusion

This study highlights the applicability of cognitive semantics in music analysis. Future studies may extend this framework to other genres or cross-cultural lyrical studies to deepen understanding of linguistic universality in song discourse. Marley uses

synonyms to emphasize love and positive emotions, such as in the words "love," "heart," and "feel all right." In *Three Little Birds*, phrases such as "don't worry" create a calm and optimistic atmosphere. Antonyms, such as "love" vs "hate" and "stay alive" vs "give up," emphasize moral and emotional conflicts. In *Three Little Birds*, calmness is opposed to worry, reflecting the dynamics of human psychology. Words such as "thanks" and "praise" in *One Love* show religious meaning in social struggles. In *Three Little Birds*, symbols such as "little birds" represent hope in everyday life. Marley uses polysemy to add depth to meaning, such as "heart" which symbolizes love and humanity. The phrase "road of life" in *Could You Be Loved* describes a life journey full of challenges.

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GUILT IN JEFF ZENTNER'S NOVEL *GOODBYE DAYS*

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Abstract

This study presents a psychological analysis of guilt and the journey toward self-redemption as depicted in Jeff Zentner's novel, *Goodbye Days*. Employing a qualitative descriptive method, the research meticulously examines the psychological turmoil of the protagonist, Carver Briggs, who is consumed by guilt after a tragic accident claims the lives of his three best friends—an accident he believes he caused by sending a text message. The analysis is framed within Bruce Narramore's theoretical framework on guilt, exploring its objective and subjective categories, including fear of punishment, loss of self-esteem, and feelings of isolation. The findings reveal the profound manifestations of Carver's guilt, which materialize through somatic complaints such as panic attacks, a depressed mood, self-condemnation, and acts of self-punishment. The study concludes that Zentner's narrative portrays guilt not merely as a destructive force but as a complex and transformative psychological process. Ultimately, the novel illustrates that the path to recovery and self-forgiveness is arduous, requiring the individual to confront their pain and make peace with themselves before achieving redemption.

Keywords: *Guilt; Jeff Zentner; protagonist; psychology of literature; self-redemption*

1. Introduction

Goodbye Days is a novel by Jeff Zentner. This novel was first published in 2012, but for the translated version in Indonesian, it was only published in January 2019 by Spring Publishers. The novel is 435 pages long. Jeff Zentner is the author of the *New York Times Notable Books*, *The Serpent King* and *In the Wild Light*, as well as Rayne & Delilah's *Goodbye Days* and *Midnite Matinee*. Among several awards he has successfully received, he has won the William C. Award. Morris of ALA, Amelia Elizabeth Walden Award twice, Muriel Becker Award, International Literacy Association Award, and twice longlisted for the Carnegie Medal.

Jeff Zentner was twice a finalist for the Southern Book Prize and was a finalist for the Indie Choice Award. He was also selected as the publisher of *Weekly Flying Start* and *ePick Indie Introduce*. His books have been translated into fifteen languages. Before becoming a writer, Jeff Zentner was a musician who recorded with Iggy Pop, Nick Cave, and Debbie Harry. She became interested in writing a young adult genre book after volunteering at a Tennessee teen rock camp and a Southern girls' rock camp. As a child, his parents would take him to the library and drop him off, where he would read until closing time. He also worked in various bookstores through high school and college. One of his famous books is *Goodbye Days*.

Goodbye Days tells the story of Carver Briggs, who has to lose all three of his best friends at once—Blake Lloyd, Eli Bauer, and Thurgood Mars Edward, in an accident. Unfortunately, the accident happened to coincide with the time when Carver sent a message to one of his best friends, Mars, who was driving the car. The message is quite short. Namely: "Where are you? Reply to my message". Upon investigation, the accident was caused by Mars sitting behind the wheel and replying to Carver's message. Since then, Carver has always thought that he was the cause of three of his best friends' deaths. Losing three friends at once was the biggest blow to Carver, especially after he found out that the cause was because of the message he sent. Not only that, Carver had to face various other problems. People consider him a murderer, the twin sister of one of his best friends also hates him, and the father of one of his best friends, who is a judge, sues him. Not quite tormenting Carver to that point, Carver also has to face his last year in high school without the three friends he has known since 8th grade. The only person who supports her at school is the girlfriend of her late best friend Eli, Jesmyn Holder. Her day was pretty good after Jesmyn took her side and didn't blame her, but one day it all turns even more difficult for him when he has feelings for Jesmyn. This stacking problem is also what causes Carver to have panic attacks, because the panic attacks she experienced in several places and at different times made her family and sister very worried. Therefore, his brother suggested that he see a therapist with Doctor Mendez, which he also did with that doctor. Carver's problems were too much for him to go through, and he was only 17 years old. Not only was there mental pressure, but the problem also attacked him physically.

The reason the writer chose this title was because she was interested in the main character in the novel, who still tries to be strong to deal with the guilt she feels, and also because no other researchers have researched this novel. So the researcher took the topic of this novel to study.

According to Wahyuningtyas and Santosa (2011, p.3), "the main character is the character whose story is prioritized in the prose in question, he is the most widely told character, both in terms of the perpetrator of the incident and the subject of the incident itself". The protagonist is a figure who has a good character and is liked by the reader (Aminuddin, 2015, p.80).

Guilt can be defined as a feeling of sin, evil, wrong, and failure to do something (Naramore, 1981, p.105). Guilt is "the painful affect arising from the belief that one has hurt another. (O'Connor et al., 1997). Guilt is a painful emotion. (Mosher et al., 1980, p.35)

Guilt is an introspective emotion that is the result of self-reflection and negative events (Baumeister et al., 2007). This explains that there is a mismatch between self-behavior towards what has been done and creating an unwanted situation.

Based on some of the above notions, it can be concluded that guilt is a negative emotion that arises from self-awareness, self-reflection, and evaluation of an action that is not supposed to be taken and gives rise to negative events because of the discrepancy between the action and the values, norms, and morals that prevail in society and ultimately can encourage individuals to improve their behavior. This study aims to analyze how Jeff Zentner represents guilt and self-redemption in the protagonist of *Goodbye Days* using a psychological perspective.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Protagonist

A protagonist is the main character in a story. Usually, this character is the opponent of the antagonist. Usually the protagonist gets a lot of support and sympathy from the audience or readers. As stated by Beckson and Ganz (1990, p.217), the protagonist is the first actor who plays the main role. This opinion is in accordance with the opinion expressed by Baldick (2001, p.157). Initially, in ancient Greek theater, the protagonist was the main actor in the play, and this character played an important role in running the plot. This definition is in line with Cuddon's (2013, p.565) definition that the protagonist is the first actor in a play who is the main actor or character.

Nurgiyantoro (2002, p.178-181) states that the protagonist is the main character who supports the main idea in the story and usually has a specific plan and goal. The protagonist represents kindness and is commendable for being able to attract the sympathy of the reader. Nurgiyantoro (2010, p.176-177) also said that the protagonist is a character whose story takes precedence in the novel in question. He is the most prominent character, both as the perpetrator of the incident and as the one affected by it. He also added that the protagonist's character shows some things that are in line with our views. Abrams (1999, p.224) also says that the protagonist (or vice versa, the hero or heroine) is the head of the character in a plot, which is the center of our attention.

Based on some of the opinions above, the protagonist can be concluded to be the main character in a story where he greatly influences the plot of the story, which is commonly found in some literary works such as novels, dramas, films, or other literary works. The protagonist usually gets a lot of sympathy or support from readers or viewers. The protagonist is not always played by a man; a woman can also take on the role of the protagonist. This character is considered very important in the story.

2.2 Guilt

Guilt can be defined as a feeling of sin, evil, wrong, and failure in doing something (Naramore, 1981, p.105). Guilt is "the painful affect arising from the belief that one has hurt another" (O'Connor et al., 1997). Guilt is a painful emotion (Mosher et al., 1980, p.35). This opinion is in line with the opinion of O'Connor et al., 1997, p.74, who say that guilt is a painful influence. From some of these opinions, it is concluded that guilt is an act that, if done to others, we will also bear what that person feels.

Another opinion holds that guilt involves "regret for one's thoughts, feelings, or actions" (Klass, 1987, p.36). Where remorse for guilt will bring up a sense of responsibility for the actions that have been taken. Guilt involves a "desire to make amends" (Ferguson et al., 1991, p.829), in accordance with the following opinion, which says that guilt is something for which "one is responsible for oneself. Hoblitzelle (1987, p.209), in line with the opinion expressed by Caprara and his collaborators, who say that guilt includes "feelings associated with self-perceived responsibility (Caprara et al., 1992, p.519).

Guilt is an introspective emotion that is the result of self-reflection and negative events (Baumeister et al., 2007). This explains that there is a mismatch between self-behavior towards what has been done and creating an unwanted situation. The opinion is similar to that expressed by Xu et al. (2011) that guilt is unwanted self-acceptance. Guilt is also a negative emotional state that arises when an individual's behavior is at odds with the standardization of his supposed behavior.

With values, norms, and morals that prevail in society and can ultimately encourage individuals to improve their behavior. Based on some of the above understanding, researchers conclude that guilt is a feeling of regret in a person about feelings, thoughts, or actions that he has taken, whether intentionally or not, that requires him to take responsibility and improve the situation as before.

2.2.1 Categories of Guilt

According to Bruce Narramore (2005), guilt exists in every psychological problem that every person faces. So that guilt is shared in two categories, namely:

A. Objective Guilt

Objective guilt is guilt that becomes a problem because there is a violation of the law, both written and not written. The objective of guilt is divided into four, namely:

1. Legal guilt is guilt that is a problem because of violations of laws in society, growth, theft, etc. Thus causing problems, although not everyone feels a sense of guilt.
2. Social guilt, which is guilt that becomes a problem because of a violation of an unwritten law in society. For example, insults and threats to each other may have no concrete evidence that could bring them to justice, there may not even be a written law against such things, but problems arise.
3. Personal guilt, namely guilt that becomes a problem because of a violation of "conscience" or awareness of the truth that is in the heart of the person concerned, For example, blame the student who left the prayer when he knew that was the sin he had committed.
4. Theological guilt, i.e., guilt that becomes a problem due to violation of laws, is when standards of human behavior are violated, either by thoughts or deeds, and problems arise even if the person concerned is innocent.

B. Subjective Guilt

Subjective guilt is guilt that causes feelings of guilt and regret in people who concerned. In terms of this, Narramore (1974) divides subjective guilt into three parts, namely:

1. Fear of Punishment
2. A loss in self-esteem
3. A feeling of loneliness, rejection, or isolation

2.2.2 Characteristics of Guilt

According to Narramore (1981, p.106), there are characteristics of guilt, including actual guilt and pseudo-guilt:

1. Exemplary Behaviour
The individual behaves more obediently and better in order to mask his true feelings of guilt.
2. Somatic (Bodily) Complaints
It is an emotional trait that shows itself in physiological reactions such as fatigue and headaches.
3. Feelings of Depression
The person who feels guilty constantly blames himself. This reaction pattern can be a major cause of depression.

4. Further Indulgence
This includes continuous indulgence in wrong actions that are the result of an attitude of defeat or actions that bring an added feeling of guilt, thus inflicting a form of punishment on oneself.
5. Self-Condensation
People constantly condemn or blame themselves for having done something wrong, shameful, or evil. It is associated with feelings of depression.
6. Self-Punishment
People punish themselves by denying themselves the need for food, clothing, or other materials.
7. Expectation Disapproval (Rejection of the Environment)
People anticipate rejection and condemnation from people about him and feel that the world will consider him worthless.
8. Projection and Undue Criticism
People are constantly looking for faults in others, and he himself finds little flaws in himself.
9. Hostily (Hostility)
People are generally hostile toward others because of their own feelings of guilt.
10. Compensation (Compensation)
It is an attempt to follow the individual's heart by doing good deeds, joining respected organizations, and giving in the form of charity.

2.2.3 Overcoming Guilt in Oneself

According to Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1996), psychological self-forgiveness is the desire to let go of self-loathing.

Practicing self-forgiveness will greatly help us manage the guilt that exists within us. Self-forgiveness also helps us bounce back from guilt to ultimately be happier and clearer in determining our goals, vision, and mission in life.

To be able to forgive yourself, here are some steps you can take:

1. Identify the circumstances and your behavior that you consider wrong.
2. Find out how you can fix it.
3. Accept the guilt that arises in you.
4. Apologize to those you hurt, including yourself.
5. Try to let go of any discomfort in your heart.

2.2.4 The Emotional Impact of Guilt

Guilt is basically not bad. Colleen Wenner, a licensed mental health counselor from Fort Walton Beach, Florida, says that guilt can motivate you to positively change your behavior so you don't feel guilty again.

He points out that guilt is often associated with emotional effects such as anger, sadness, fear, shame, embarrassment, disgust, disgrace, and an inferiority complex.

3. Research Method

Research design is a framework of research methods and techniques chosen by a researcher. This enables researchers to hone research methods suitable for the subject matter and set their studies up for success. According to Sekaran (2017, p.109): "Research design is the plan for data collection, measurement, and analysis, based on the research questions of the study."

In this study, the analysis employs a qualitative descriptive method focusing on textual interpretation. Passages depicting the protagonist's guilt and attempts at self-redemption were coded and analyzed using psychological literary concepts. According to Mukhtar (2013, p.10), qualitative descriptive research methods are a method used by researchers to find knowledge or theory about research at a certain time. According to Sukmadinata (2011, p.73), qualitative descriptive research aims to explain and describe existing phenomena, both natural and human engineering, and pays more attention to the nature, quality, and interrelationships between activities.

The data came from the primary text (novel) and secondary sources (psychological and literary theories). The data collection techniques used in this study were taken from several sources, including several journals, books, articles, and the novel *Goodbye Days*, both directly and from various other sources.

4. Discussion

4.1 Manifestations of Guilt in the Protagonist

According to Bruce Narramore (2005), guilt is divided into two categories: objective and subjective.

a. Objective guilt

Objective guilt is guilt that becomes a problem because there is an event of a violation of the law, whether written or unwritten. This objective guilt is divided into four parts: legal guilt, social guilt, personal guilt, and theological guilt.

b. Subjective guilt

Subjective guilt is guilt that generates feelings of guilt and remorse in the person concerned. In this novel, the feeling of guilt is experienced by the main character, or protagonist. Where the cause of guilt is due to an accident that claimed the lives of his three friends at the same time, which the protagonist believes occurred due to a short message he sent to one of his friends who was driving the car. So that the event made him feel guilty and afraid of the demands made by the father of one of her companions who was in the accident. Subjective guilt is divided into three categories:

1. A fear of punishment

The fear that the protagonist feels coincides with his mother asking him to watch a TV show featuring Judge Edwards, who is being interviewed about the accident and the investigation and prosecution of the events experienced by his son in the accident.

The adrenaline rush grabbed my chest. My stomach became a swirling vortex. This can't be good news. I jumped to my feet, hit my knees on the table, and ran with trembling legs. Mom, dad, and Georgia are already gathered around the television, standing (Zentner, 2012, p.54).

In the quote above, it is clear that Carver was very frightened even before the criminal charge was actually given to him by Judge Edwards, the father of Mars, his best friend, who interviewed the car in the event of the accident.

2. A loss in self-esteem

In the novel, the protagonist, Carver, feels a loss of self-esteem due to guilt after an accident that happened to his best friend, and he believes the cause is a message he

sent while his best friend, Mars, was driving. He lost his self-esteem after experiencing a panic attack and falling on the floor of the classroom, where the event was witnessed by all his classmates at school and coincided with the first day he entered school.

I'm too tired. I'm too – oh, my gosh, that shame. The shame begins now. My cheeks are burning. Like putting on ski boots to spread our weight and prevent us from drowning in the snow, loss of self-esteem should be shared among several people so that we drown. Now I'm alone (Zenter, 2012, p.127-128).

In this quote, the protagonist feels that he has lost his self-esteem. The feeling he felt after he experienced an event that felt very embarrassing, namely having a panic attack right on the first day of school and the incident took place in front of everyone in his classroom.

3. A feeling of Loneliness, rejection, or isolation.

Carver, or the protagonist in the novel, is described as feeling very lonely, also feeling isolated, with only his family and two other people who are now familiar with him after the events that killed the three members of the sauce crew, as his gang members are called, and his best friend.

I can imagine how lonely this school year will be. Sauce crew used to be so close. It's like we have our own universe. Now, no one alive thinks to call me on a Saturday night.

Now, the hard part, the part when we can't focus on our grief when we're just alone (Zentner, 2012, p.26-27).

In the quote above, Carver felt very lonely after his three best friends were killed. He used to have a complete sauce crew member, but now lives alone. He used to communicate by phone with his best friend, but now there is silence. He felt very different and he continued to blame himself for the events of the accident.

4.2 Characteristics of Guilt

In the novel *Goodbye Days*, some traits or characteristics of guilt experienced by the protagonist are described. Among them as follows:

1. Somatic Complaints

It is an emotional trait that appears in physiological reactions. It is told in the novel that the protagonist experiences physical fatigue, he has a headache, and he also has a panic attack right after he does Black's farewell day with Nana Betsy, the grandmother of his friend Black, who has been killed. The protagonist experiences a panic attack at home, precisely in his room, after returning from Nana Betsy's house or Black's grandmother's house.

I can't breathe. My heart screams. This is not true. I'm not okay. My vision narrowed, as if I were standing deep inside a cave, staring out. freckle-shaped spots in front of my eyes. The ding wall squeezed me. I'm panting. I need air. my heart. A lonely, Gray fear enveloped me, like a cloud of smoke blocking the sun. no light or warmth at all. Darkness, as if palpable and moldy. I have a revelation: I will never feel happiness.

Air. I need air. I need air. I need air. I need it (Zentner, 2012, p. 42-43).

This quote describes the situation shortly before the protagonist experiences a panic attack for the first time after he performs a farewell for Black, one of his best friends who was killed in the accident. The panic attack occurred when he returned home and was already in his room. He couldn't breathe, as if there was no air in his room. She was so scared that she called her sister Georgia. After a few minutes, her brother came and took her to the hospital not just once. However, Carver also experienced another panic attack at a different time on the first day he entered school at Nashville Arts.

My head was spinning like I was on the deck of a ship. Then, I experienced the sensation of falling through the ice again. the feeling of seeing something heavy and fragile slipping off the shelf. Dark spots are gathering in my field of vision. I need air. I need air. not here. not now. not this. not in front of Jesmyn. not in front of everyone. not in front of anyone. but it was too late to return. The sensation awakens like a terrible orgasm; once it peaks, there is no turning back.

My blazer slipped out of my grasp. My backpack slid and hit the floor. My laptop's in it, but I'm more concerned with the little fact that I can't breathe. I'm buried alive. I need to breathe. I'm dying (Zentner, 2012, p.124).

Based on the above quote, the protagonist has a panic attack again for the second time after a while after having a panic attack before. This panic attack appeared again after he started his first day at Nashville Arts School. Events began when Carver and Jesmyn began to enter the classroom that had been crowded by students and classmates, who initially behaved like students usually talk to their fellow classmates in class. But the atmosphere changed when the two of them entered the room, instantly showing the students staring. The two of them looked at each other as if it meant that Carver was the one who was at fault in the accident that happened to his three friends, and they did not want to talk to him and be friends with him anymore. Carver also hears vague whispers from the class crowd talking about himself and Jesmyn, saying that they don't feel guilty about the accident and also want to take his dead best friend Eli's girlfriend, none other than Jessie. Coupled with the murmur of Adair, Eli's twin brother, he said it in a voice that clearly broke the murmurings and whispers of the class. "What a beautiful day to be alive, huh?" Thus the words that he uttered made it evident that he deeply hated and disliked that Carver was alive while not with his brother. after a while after that carver began to feel panic attacks.

2. Depressed Mood

Carver, the main character, begins to feel depressed, he constantly blames himself for the accident. This is the incident that caused all three of his friends to die at the same time. The message he sent at that time is assumed to be the cause. The feeling that the protagonist feels depressed and blames himself for the accident is described in the following excerpt:

I'm going to get another Isaac. My hands are shaking violently. I clenched it into a fist and continued on. "And Carver believes he caused the crash by sending a message to Mars, but he's not entirely sure. He just didn't mean to hurt them. never. never. Had he known what would happen, he would never have done it .And, he's very sorry. "I doubt it. "I'm so sorry." (Zentner, 2012, p.413).

When the protagonist narrates the story of the accident to his therapist, Dr. Mendez, he explains how Carver or himself felt very sorry for sending a message to his best friend, Mars, who was driving the car at the time. He never even meant to hurt his best friend, and Carver is very sorry and wishes he would never have done it if he knew what would happen to his best friend and cause him to lose his three friends forever. He admitted his regret was when he began to be able to tell the events before the accident happened to Doctor Mendez, his therapist, whom he had met several times for consultation.

3. Self-Condernnation

Self-condemnation is a feeling of constant self-blame and self-punishment for mistakes that he intentionally or not made.

...but my masterpiece is a two-sentence message that ends three stories. I'm the only writer in the world who makes multiple stories disappear with a single piece of writing.

I will try not to kill anyone else with my writing (Zentner, 2012, p.136-137).

Based on this quote, Carver felt so guilty that he continued to blame himself for sending the text message to his friend, who had been in the accident. He felt that no one would want to make a mistake like he did by sending a short message but omitting some stories and leaving only his memories with his three best friends.

4. Self-Punishment

People who feel guilty will punish themselves by denying the need for food, clothing, or other materials.

The protagonist in the novel *Goodbye Days* feels that punishing himself by not meeting his physical needs can atone for the guilt or sin he is considered to have committed. like when he visited Black's grandmother's house to help her do some of the work that Black used to do with his grandmother, and now that Black is gone, that's why Carver wants to ignore him to do that task. Help him weed the grass in the yard.

I wanted to go into the kitchen, but I couldn't. I want to go out and keep sweating; want to keep punishing my body. I want to feel hungry and thirsty. I don't want Nana Betsy to give me comfort and something refreshing (Zentner, 2012, p.74).

In the above quote, Carver describes how he felt undeservedly given comfort by Nana Betsy, which he even felt reluctant to eat and drink at the time he was asked to quit his activities, which were weeding the lawn of his grandmother's House Black. He feels that punishing himself can help a little to get rid of the guilt he feels.

4.3 Emotional Consequences and Self-Punishment

Guilt has an effect on the individual who experiences or feels it. Certain effects of guilt will affect the emotional traits of a person. This guilt will affect anger, sadness, fear, shame, embarrassment, and so on.

I felt fear, anxiety, sadness, and guilt endlessly (Zentner, 2012, p.159).

In the quote above, it is explained that Carver gets several effects that affect him emotionally, such as feelings of fear, sadness, and anxiety and even continues to feel guilty endlessly. The effect of guilt was none other than what he got after he was so sure he would be prosecuted by the district attorney for negligence that is considered to be the cause of the accident that befell his three friends. and after that, his life will end in prison. Carver himself thought that grief might have been hurting after he followed the directions of a therapist whom he met to take medicine. But he was very afraid and felt that the guilt could not be removed. He will be punished for his sins.

5. Conclusion

The study concludes that Jeff Zentner's *Goodbye Days* portrays guilt not merely as emotional suffering but as a transformative process leading to self-redemption. Through Carver Briggs's struggle between fear, remorse, and eventual acceptance, the novel reveals how self-forgiveness functions as psychological recovery. The findings highlight the significance of guilt as a moral and emotional mechanism in young adult fiction, reflecting universal human efforts to reconcile with personal responsibility. It will have an impact on the individual as well as his or her life. Guilt can appear at any time, even in unexpected ways that will affect our lives, affect emotions, damage self-confidence, eliminate self-esteem, and even be worse. The researcher also concluded that we need to consider and think about all the risks that we will face from the actions or deeds that we want to do. Eliminating guilt is not something that is easily eliminated in oneself, it is not easy to get forgiveness from others. Before trying to get forgiveness from others, we need to forgive and make peace with ourselves first to get rid of our guilt.

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AN ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH SUFFIXES IN TIME MAGAZINE'S *THE END OF CASH*

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Abstract

This study examines derivational and inflectional suffixes in Time Magazine's article *The End of Cash*. Using a descriptive qualitative approach based on Sugiyono (2013) and Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams (2010), the analysis identifies the types and frequencies of English suffixes in the text. The findings reveal 94 occurrences: 66 inflectional and 28 derivational suffixes. The most frequent inflectional suffixes are the plural -s and the progressive -ing, while the most common derivational processes include verb-to-noun and adjective-to-adverb transformations. Both of these types are the category of inflection which was found each of them as many as 21 words. While the most frequent type of derivation is verb to noun and adjective to adverb. It was found each of them in 8 words using derivational suffixes -or, -sion, -ally, -or, -y, -ly, -ment, and -ist. The findings reveal 94 occurrences: 66 inflectional and 28 derivational suffixes. The most frequent inflectional suffixes are the plural -s and the progressive -ing, while the most common derivational processes include verb-to-noun and adjective-to-adverb transformations. These findings contribute to morphological studies by demonstrating how affixation operates in journalistic English and how it supports vocabulary development for EFL learners.

Keywords: *Derivational; inflectional; magazine article; suffixes*

1. Introduction

Linguistics is the study of language in general. The science of linguistic include several aspects which include Morphology, Phonology, Syntax, Semantics and also several other sciences related to language such as Sociolinguistics and Psycholinguistics. One of the aspects discussed is morphology. Morphology has many parts, there are morpheme, lexeme, affixes, and etc.

Morpheme is defined as the smallest unit of meaning in a language (Booij, 2012). Morpheme has two categories: free and bound morpheme. The morphemes which may constitute words by themselves are called free morpheme. Other morphemes which cannot stand alone as words are called bound morpheme, such as -er, -ly, and -s. Generally, bound morphemes are also known as affixes.

However, in English, there is a term namely as affixation. Affixation of a word greatly influence the meaning of that word. It will emerge a problem for nonnative speaker of English. Misunderstandings will occur when a nonnative speaker of English misinterpreted a word just because of the affixation of a word. Affixation in linguistic

are knowing locations of additional of word, concentrating on meaning study, and showing process affixation. Affixation is very important each usage word and put word according to its place in linguistic. Affix is also categorized into prefixes and suffixes. In English, both prefixes and suffixes can be derivational, but only suffixes can be inflectional (Lieber, 2021). Derivational affixes produce a new word class and a new meaning but inflectional affixes do not. When the readers are able to identify derivational affixes, they will be able to develop their vocabulary significantly.

Based on above understanding, the writer concludes that suffixes are part of morphology. The researchers conclude that morphology is a science that studies how words are masterminded and appends can be sorted as word structures. So that there is a connection among morphology and suffixes in shaping new words. The addition of suffixes in news writing is something that must be considered because if there is an error in the use of suffixes, the news becomes uncommunicative and even its accuracy is questioned. To illustrate, the verb -govern can be noun by adding the suffix -ment at the bottom of the word, so it becomes government. Based on this problem, this is the reason why the writer interested in choosing this topic. Furthermore, many people are still confused when differentiating word class, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. This study is interesting and can give benefit to the learners, because it can enrich and widen the vocabulary of the learners by deriving words and also the learners may have good knowledge as to how differentiate the word class. When the students are able to identify derivational and inflectional suffixes, they will be able to develop their vocabulary and know the word formation and find how the words built. The writer chooses Time magazine as the object of this research. This study aimed to find the derivational and inflectional suffixes mostly used in this Time magazine article.

There are many ways to enrich vocabulary. For example, listening foreign song, watching movie, reading newspaper or magazine can also be a media to enrich vocabulary. This study analyzes an article based on suffixes from Time magazine entitled *The End of Cash*. Researchers use this kind of magazine because from this magazine we can increase our knowledge, culture and vocabulary to define suffixes. This research took an article from a magazine naming Time; the major American weekly newsmagazine that is published in New York City, as the corpus. The magazine is written in English as its language in use. It was the creation of two young journalists Henry R. Luce and Briton Hadden. They wanted to start a magazine that would inform busy readers in a systematic, concise, and well-organized manner about current events in the United States and the rest of the world. The magazine sought to present the news in narrative form. TIME has the world's largest circulation as a weekly magazine. It achieved a circulation of more than 175,000 by 1927, and it became the most influential news magazine in the United States. Moreover, TIME magazine has a readership of 25 million, which 20 million of them are based in the United States. Those records are the main reason for the writer to choose the magazine as the analysis unit of this research.

In this research, the researchers focused on the following problems:

1. How is the process of suffixes formed in the Time magazine article entitled *The End of Cash*?
2. What are the most dominant suffixes used in the Time magazine article entitled *The End of Cash*?

This research discusses about suffixes found in the Time magazine article entitled *The End of Cash*. To have specific research, the researchers have restricted this

study in order to make it easier to be analyzed. This study analyzes the English Suffixes namely derivational and inflectional in the Time magazine article. The significance of this research is to elevate reader's knowledge regarding suffixes in deep, because this study contains many theories that related with that topic. The result of this study is expected to be a tool for the students to enhance their insight about morphology especially in the suffixes, and it can also be another source along with consideration for their further analysis on linguistic subject.

2. Literature Review

Linguistics can be broadly divided into two main branches: macro-linguistics and micro-linguistics (Chaer, 1994). Macro-linguistics highlights how language is influenced by social, cultural, and political factors (Sahraee Juybari & Bozorgian, 2020). Macro-linguistics examines the broader context of language, exploring its relationship with society, culture, and the human mind. This includes fields like sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, and computational linguistics. It explores how language is used in different social settings, how it varies across communities, and how it changes over time. On the other hand, micro-linguistics is a scope that studies language without relating it to other sciences and without think about its application in everyday life (Purwanti, 2020). It examines the internal structure of language without necessarily considering how language is used in real-world contexts. Micro-linguistics can be said to be a field of linguistics that analyzes into the specific components of language, such as sound systems (phonology), sentence structure (syntax), meaning (semantics), and word formation (morphology) (Varga, 2010). It looks at the internal workings of language and often focuses on a specific language. As one of the branches in micro linguistics, morphology deals with the structure and formation of words. Morphology examines the fundamental units of language and how they combine to form words (Yule, 2022). When morphemes are combined, they create words. This process is called morphology.

Morphology is the study of word formation that involves how the new words are coined in the language and how the kind of word formed it depends on how the words are used in sentence (Lieber, 2021). The term 'morphology' is made up of two parts: 'morph,' relating to form or shape, and 'ology,' meaning the study of. Thus, morphology is the academic field that examines how words are constructed (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2010:41). Morphology, the analysis of word forms, which involves analyzing units like morphemes, lexemes, and affixes. Morpheme is the smallest difference in the shape of word that correlates with the smallest difference in word or sentence meaning or in grammatical Structure (Katamba, 2015). Lexemes is a unit of meaning which is a lexical unit, such as a word or root word. (Gleason Jr, 1955) says "affixes are subsidiary to roots, while roots are the center of such constructions as words".

Affixation is taught in morphology. It is a morphological process in which affixes are attached to a root, stem, or base to form new words. Affixation is a form of morphological process. According to (Yule, 2022) a bound morpheme called affix always binds to bases. Affixation can change a word's part of speech (happy vs. unhappy) or a word's meaning within its part of speech (dark vs. darkness). (Crowley, 1995) says "affixes are morphemes that are not free, in that they must always be attached to a root morpheme". English affixes are mostly derived from Greek and Latin. Affixes can be classified into three types: prefixes, suffixes, and infixes. Prefixes, which are added to the beginning of root words, modify the word's meaning. For instance,

adding the prefix "a-" to the root word "sleep" results in the word "asleep." Suffixes, on the other hand, are added to the end of root words and usually the affix can change the word class such as Noun to Adjective, Verb to Noun, Adjective to Adverb, Noun to Verb, Adjective to Noun, and Verb to Adjective. Like the adjective "brave" becomes the adverb "bravely" when the suffix "-ly" is added (Injeeli, 2013). Prefixes precede the base, suffixes follow it, and infixes are inserted within it. Although prefixes and suffixes are prevalent in English, infixes are less common (O'Grady et al., 2016, p.105).

The writer relates it to the theory from Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams about the types of suffixes; those are derivational and inflectional suffixes. (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2014, p.44) explained that when a derivational suffix is added to a base, it adds meaning. It means that derivational suffixes create new word and new meaning. In this case, the writer refers to the theory from (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2010).

(Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 1998, p.49) categorize derivation into two groups: processes that result in a change of grammatical class and without changing grammatical classes. This research investigates both categories of derivational processes. Derivational suffixes are affixes that can change both the meaning and grammatical class of a word. They can modify even the most basic root words, such as adding "-ly" to an adjective to transform it into an adverb (O'Grady et al., 2016, p.270). There are some processes of derivational suffixes according to (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2010, p.49):

1. Noun to adjective.
e.g.: boy + ish = boyish
health + ful = healthful
alcohol + ic = alcoholic
envy + ous = envious
Elizabeth + -an = Elizabethan
2. Verb to noun.
e.g.: create + ion = creation
sing + er = singer
predict + ion = prediction
appear + ance = appearance
inform + ation = information
arrange + ment = arrangement
3. Adjective to adverb.
e.g.: exact + ly = exactly
4. Noun to verb.
e.g.: moral + ize = moralize
glory + ify = glorify
vaccin + ate = vaccinate
5. Adjective to noun.
e.g.: free + dom = freedom
specific + ity = specificity
good + ness = goodness
feudal + ism = feudalism

6. Verb to adjective.
e.g.: read + able = readable
create + ive = creative
migrate + ory = migratory
run(n) + y = runny
7. Adjective to verb.
e.g.: ideal + ize = idealize

Derivation can occur without changing the word's form, a process known as conversion or zero derivation. For example, the noun "telephone" can be used as a verb without any morphological change. Here are examples of derivational suffixes without changing grammatical classes (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2010, p.49):

1. Noun to Noun.
e.g.: Friend + -ship = friendship,
human + -ity = humanity,
king + -dom = kingdom,
2. Adjective to Adjective.
e.g.: Pinkk + -ish= pinkish

According to (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2010, p.50), inflectional suffixes, serve to mark grammatical categories such as tense, number, and person. This means, they function to describe these grammatical properties within sentences. According to (Kracht, 2007), inflection is a morpheme that indicates some kind of grammatical relationship. For example, the –s morpheme attached to the word likes indicates the present tense for singular person. The key point about inflectional is that applying it never gives a new word class, but only a different form of the same word (Hippisley & Stump, 2016).

Below are listed four characteristics of inflectional affixes:

- a. Do not change meaning or part of speech, such as the words big and bigger are both adjectives.
- b. Typically indicate syntactic or semantic relations between different words in a sentence, such as the present tense morphemes –s in waits shows agreement with the subject of the verb (both are third person singular)
- c. Typically occur with all members of some large class of morphemes, such as the plural morphemes –s occurs with most nouns.
- d. Typically occur at the margin of word, such as the plural morphemes –s always come last in a word, as in babysitters or rationalizations.

For instance, when adding certain suffixes to the word write, producing forms like writes, writing, and written, those words do not get any new word class, but only grammatically distinct forms of the same words. Another example is the word books; it consists of a free morpheme book and a suffix –s. The bound morpheme –s does not change the syntactic category of the morpheme book. It only gives grammatical (Hazen, 2014) mentioned “Inflectional suffixes set up relationships and affect the grammar.” It can be assumed that inflectional suffixes possess a grammatical function, influencing not only individual words but also the overall structure of a sentence. As

stated by (V. Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2010:51) divided inflectional suffixes into some types. Modern English has only eight inflectional suffixes (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2014, p.47). They are third-person singular, past tense, progressive, past participle, plural, possessive, comparative and superlative.

The following is an explanation of eight inflectional affixes.

1. -s third-person singular, e.g.: She wait-s at home.
Third-person singular normally adds the suffix -s -es to the verb, and there is a singular subject preceding the verb. The suffix -s -es in the verb indicates that it refers to a singular subject. For instance, she walks to the office. She watches.
2. -ed past tense, e.g.: She wait-ed at home. Past tense can be indicated by the inflectional suffix -ed. The inflectional suffix -ed is added to the verb and generating the past tense form. For instance, she worked at home.
3. -ing progressive, e.g.: She is eat-ing the donut.
Progressive is typically produced by suffix -ing to the verb. The inflectional suffix -ing denotes the present participle form of the verb. For instance, she is drinking the tea.
4. -en past participle, e.g.: Mary has eat-en the donuts.
Past participle refers to the suffix -en that is added to an irregular verb to create the past participle form. For instance, he has eaten the cake.
5. -s plural, e.g.: She ate the donut-s.
Plural forms are more frequent found in nouns. The suffix -s specifies the plural form. For instance, the word boy adds the inflection suffix -s to form boys.
6. -'s possessive, e.g.: Disa's hair is short.
Possessive is a suffix -'s -s' that is appended to a noun to indicate possession of something. For instance, Robert's hair is short. Girls' doll is broken.
7. -er comparative, e.g.: Disa has short-er hair than Karin
Comparative can be marked by suffix -er to the adjective that makes a comparison between two objects. For instance, she is smarter than I am.
8. Superlative refers to the suffix -est that is appended to an adjective to enable comparison of the adjective's highest quality level to a noun. For instance, Tom is the cleverest student in the class.

3. Research Method

This study employed a qualitative research approach. According (Sugiyono, 2013) qualitative research as a natural inquiry conducted by the researchers themselves. It involves collecting descriptive data in the form of words, analyzing it inductively, focusing on the process rather than the outcome, and ultimately emphasizing the meaning and interpretation of the findings. This study uses non-participant observation as an instrument in finding the types of suffixes in this article. Sugiyono defines non-participant observation as a data collection technique in which the researchers are not directly involved or only as an independent analyzer. By using this instrument, researchers do not need participants because the observed data is in the form of documentation from a collection of words, phrases, or sentences that are arranged into this article. In qualitative research, the main instrument is a person or human instrument, namely the researchers themselves, meaning that the researchers collect data, presents data, reduces data, interprets data and collects research results. According to (Sugiyono, 2013, p.223), "the researcher is the key instrument". To become an instrument, researchers must have broad theoretical and insightful knowledge, so that they are able

to ask questions, analyze, take pictures, and construct the social situation under study to be clearer and more meaningful.

4. Discussion

The researchers answer the statement of the problem in the study. What are the types of prefixes and suffixes in time magazine and what are dominant prefixes and suffixes in *Time Magazine* article. This chapter presents the results and the. The data analysis of the online articles is presented based on each type of prefix and suffixes. Researchers provide research outcome data. Depending on the data collection technique and then, it is discussed with data analysis. The data obtained is from the *Time Magazine*.

4.1 Derivational suffixes

Derivational suffixes are basic words that have an affix added to them to form a new word that has a new and different meaning. The researchers found there are some derivational suffixes in the Time magazine article entitled *The End of Cash*.

Noun		Suffixes	Adjective
Use	+	Ful	Useful
Hunger	+	-y	Hungry
Cash	+	-less	Cashless
Finance	+	-al	Financial

Table 1. Derivational Suffixes Noun to Adjective

From the data above, we can see the function of derivational suffixes. For the example, the word “use” has root “use” then added by suffix -ful become adjective and the word “cash” have root “cash” (noun) then added by suffix -less become adjective.

Verb		Suffixes	Noun
Compare	+	-sion	Comparison
Analyze	+	-ist	Analyst
Adopt	+	-er	Adopter
Pay	+	-ment	Payment
Direct	+	-or	Director
Develop	+	-ment	Development
Discover	+	-y	Discovery
Consume	+	-er	Consumer

Table 2. Derivational Suffixes Verb to Noun

From the data above, we can see the function of derivational suffixes. For the example, the word “pays” have root “pay” then added by suffix -ment become noun and the word “direct” have root “direct” (verb) then added by suffix -less become noun

Adjective		Suffixes	Adverb
Radical	+	-ly	Radically
Eventual	+	-ly	Eventually
Automatic	+	-ally	Automatically
Increasing	+	-ly	Increasingly
Actual	+	-ly	Actually

Certain	+	-ly	Certainly
Comfortable	+	-ly	Comfortably
Ultimate	+	-ly	Ultimately

Table 3. Derivational Suffixes Adjective to Adverb

From the data above, we can see the function of derivational suffixes. For the example, the word "radical" have root "radical" then added by suffix -ly become adverb and the word "certain" have root "certain" (adjective) then added by suffix -less become adverb.

Adjective		Suffixes	Noun
Popular	+	-ity	Popularity

Table 4. Derivational Suffixes Adjective to Noun

From the data above, we can see the function of derivational suffixes. For the example, the word "popular" have root "popular" then added by suffix -ity become noun.

Verb		Suffixes	Adjective
Displace	+	-ed	Displaced
Integrate	+	-ed	Integrated
Solve	+	-ed	Solved
Design	+	-ed	Design
Vending	+	-ing	Vending
Emerge	+	-ing	Emerging
Impress	+	-ive	Impressive

Table 5. Derivational Suffixes Verb to Adjective

We can see the function of derivational suffixes. For the example, the word "vend" have root "vend" then added by suffix -ing become adjective and the word "impress" have root "impress" (verb) then added by suffix -ive become adjective

4.2 Inflectional Suffixes

Inflectional suffixes cannot form new words, meaning and word class do not change. The words found are arranged in the following table:

No.	Suffixes	Function		Word
1.	(s)	Noun	Plural	Locations
2.				Payments
3.				Users
4.				Messages
5.				Santas
6.				Reviews
7.				Numbers
8.				Customers
9.				Barriers
10.				Platforms
11.				Movements

12.				Capabilities
13.				Strategies
14.				Experiences
15.				Schemes
16.				Holders
17.				Merchants
18.				Readers
19.				Purchases
20.				Offers
21.				Launches
22.	(s)	V	Third person singular	Migrates
23.				Allows
24.				Jumps
25.				Infuriates
26.				Expects
27.				Helps
28.				Purchases
29.				Offers
30.				Launches
31.				Experiences
32.	(-ed)	V	Past Tense	Downloaded
33.				Ordered
34.				Created
35.				Launched
36.				Started
37.				Scanned
38.				Raised
39.				Helped
40.				Predicted
41.				Fitted
42.				Happened
43.				Used
44.	(ing)	V	Progressive	Surging
45.				Driving
46.				Waiting
47.				Giving
48.				Managing
49.				Checking
50.				Sliding
51.				Processing
52.				Following
53.				Running
54.				Tapping
55.				Sniffing
56.				Buying
57.				Tracking
58.				Offering
59.				Working
60.				Building

61.				Happening
62.				Skipping
63.				Using
64.				Shopping
65.	(er)	Adj	Comparative degree	Faster
66.	(est)	Adj	Superlative degree	Biggest

From the data above, there were 21 words of plural process found in Time magazine article. Below is an example plural process found in Time magazine article. The word “customers” is from the stem of word “customer”. Then, the attachment of suffix –s is added to the word stem. It simply indicates the plurality, means that the “customer” is more than one. Its word class is still noun as well. There were 7 words of third-person singular process found in Time magazine article. Below is an example third-person singular process found in Time magazine article. The word “jumps” is from the stem of word “jump”. Then, the attachment of suffix –s is added to the word stem. It simply indicates the third-person singular, means that the suffix –s is used to make grammatical context of verb. This form is applied for the present tense rule. There were 15 words of past tense process found in Time magazine article entitled *The End of Cash*. The word “created” indicates the use of past tense in it. It happens because of the process of the attachment of suffix –ed which adds to the end of the verb stem. However, it does not change grammatical class and the meaning. The suffix –ed merely serves the grammatical extra to the stem of that verb which signifies something happened in the past. The stem of the verb “created” is create. There were 21 words of progressive process found in Time magazine article entitled *The End of Cash*. The word “driving” indicates the use of progressive. The process is the suffix –ing attached to the verb stem which denotes the past continuous tense. The stem of that word is drive. The attachment of inflectional suffix –ing does not change the word class so that the word “drive” is still verb. It is no changing the meaning as well. It solely serves grammatical function of the word which shows something was happening. There were 1 word of comparative process found in Time magazine article entitled *The End of Cash*. The word “faster” is adjective word and denotes comparative form in it. The stem of this word is fast, then suffix –er is attached to it to make the comparative form. It only provides the grammatical extra without changing part of speech. There were 1 word of comparative process found in Time magazine article entitled *The End of Cash*. The word “biggest” is adjective word and indicates the superlative form in it. The stem of this word is “big”. The process of inflection of this word is solely agglutinating the suffix –est to the end of the word stem. This process is not changing the word class. Thus, it is still adjective word.

5. Conclusion

This study found that inflectional and derivational suffixes in Time magazine article entitled *The End of Cash* were attached in 94 words, which are 66 inflections and 28 derivations. They were categorized into 6 inflectional processes and 5 derivational processes. The 6 processes of inflection were third-person singular in 7 words, past tense in 15 words, progressive in 21 words, plural in 21 words, comparative in 1 words and superlative in 1 word.

The findings of this study prove that from 94 words, the most dominant type of inflectional and derivational suffixes in the Time magazine article *entitled The End of Cash* is plural using suffix -s and progressive using -ing. Both of these types are the category of inflection which was found each of them as many as 21 words. While the most frequent type of derivation is verb to noun and adjective to adverb. It was found each of them in 8 words using derivational suffixes -er, -sion, -or, -y, -ly, -ment, -ist and -ally.

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DARK TRIAD PERSONALITY IN EKA KURNIAWAN'S NOVEL *LELAKI HARIMAU*

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Abstract

This study analyzes the Dark Triad personality in Margio's character in Eka Kurniawan's novel *Lelaki Harimau*. Employing a descriptive qualitative methodology with document analysis, this research systematically examines the intricate manifestations of Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy within the protagonist's psychological profile and investigates how this specific personality configuration fundamentally drives the narrative trajectory. The findings demonstrate that Margio exhibits a pronounced and comprehensive constellation of all three dark personality traits: strategic manipulation and social duplicity characteristic of Machiavellianism, grandiose self-concept and supernatural tiger spirit belief reflective of Narcissism, and impulsive aggression coupled with complete absence of remorse indicative of Psychopathy. These traits operate synergistically rather than in isolation - his Machiavellian cunning enables the violence, his Psychopathic affect permits its execution without emotional consequence, and his Narcissistic grandiosity provides psychological justification for his actions. The study concludes that Margio represents a compelling literary representation of the Dark Triad personality, developed through traumatic environmental circumstances and childhood adversity. This research contributes significantly to psychological literary criticism within Indonesian fiction by providing a nuanced framework for understanding complex character motivations and the psychological underpinnings of literary violence.

Keywords: *Dark Triad; Eka Kurniawan; Lelaki Harimau; psychological criticism; character analysis*

1. Introduction

Literature serves as a profound medium for human expression, transcending mere written text to reflect societal realities and critique life's complexities. As a creative art form, it uses language to portray human experiences and feelings (Lianawati, 2019), often functioning as a "portrait" of life that encapsulates significant social values and invites discourse on human conditions (Sitorus, 2021; Wicaksono, 2017). The novel, as a primary object of literary study, provides fertile ground for such

exploration by depicting complex human interactions within specific social environments (Hidayat, 2021).

Eka Kurniawan's acclaimed novel *Lelaki Harimau* centers on Margio, a young man from a dysfunctional family who perpetrates a brutal murder. The narrative unravels the psychological complexities behind his actions, tracing them to a childhood marred by paternal abuse and neglect. This toxic environment fosters a fractured personality in Margio, who believes a supernatural tiger spirit inhabits him, ultimately driving him to violence. As Wahyuningsih, Manugeren, & Pardi (2024) note in their analysis of literary characters, "social rejection often triggers psychological deterioration", a phenomenon clearly manifested in Margio's character development.

This study examines Margio through the lens of the Dark Triad personality, a psychological framework comprising Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). These traits characterize individuals with self-centeredness, emotional coldness, and duplicity. Machiavellianism involves strategic manipulation and deception (Jones & Paulhus, 2014), Narcissism entails grandiosity and lack of empathy (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), while Psychopathy features disinhibition and antisocial behavior (Hare, 1999).

Recent research confirms that individuals high on the Dark Triad are prone to aggressive and exploitative behaviors (Furnham et al., 2013). Analyzing Margio through this framework allows for a nuanced deconstruction of his malevolence beyond simplistic labels. His calculated actions, lack of remorse, and grandiose self-perception as a tiger vessel manifest these dark traits.

Therefore, this research aims to conduct a psychological analysis of Margio's character, with objectives to identify manifestations of Dark Triad traits and analyze how this personality configuration drives the narrative. The findings are expected to provide deeper insights into literary characters' psychological dimensions while fostering societal awareness of such harmful personality structures in real-life interactions.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Psychology of Literature

The disciplines of literature and psychology share a profound and symbiotic relationship, as both are fundamentally concerned with the human condition—exploring motivations, emotions, conflicts, and the intricacies of existence (Kern, 2020). This intersection has given rise to the field of psychological criticism, which utilizes psychological theories to understand the creation, content, and reception of literary works. While early approaches, notably Freudian psychoanalysis, focused heavily on the author's psyche, contemporary criticism often centers on the textual world and the reader's response (Bernaerts et al., 2014).

A primary focus within this domain is character analysis. Fictional characters function as symbolic representations of human archetypes and psychological realities, allowing readers to identify, empathize, or recoil, thereby facilitating a deeper understanding of human nature (Hogan, 2013). As Jajja (2021) notes, the analysis of literary characters can be seen as a form of psychological case study, where unique personalities and individual differences are brought to the fore. The creation of "psychologically true" characters remains a hallmark of impactful literature, as these figures model complex human behaviors and internal states that resonate with readers' own experiences (Klarer, 2017).

2.2 Dark Triad Personality

Personality psychology seeks to identify and understand the relatively enduring patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving that differentiate individuals. Within this field, the Dark Triad has emerged as a significant construct describing a constellation of three socially aversive, yet subclinical, personality traits: Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy (Furnham et al., 2013). The term “subclinical” indicates that these traits exist on a spectrum and do not necessarily constitute a formal personality disorder, but they nonetheless predispose individuals to interpersonally toxic and exploitative behaviors (Muris et al., 2017). This aligns with findings in literary studies, where researchers similarly analyze “behavioral patterns that lead to interpersonal conflicts” (Pardi et al., 2024) in character analysis.

Collectively, these traits represent a disposition toward self-promotion, emotional coldness, duplicity, and aggression, enabling individuals to pursue their goals with little regard for the well-being of others (Jonason & Webster, 2010). As Kajonius et al. (2021) summarize, the Dark Triad encapsulates a “darker side” of human personality characterized by a callous-manipulative interpersonal style.

2.3 The Constructs of the Dark Triad

Machiavellianism is characterized by a cynical worldview, strategic manipulation, and a pragmatic, amoral approach to social interactions (Jones & Paulhus, 2014). Individuals high in Machiavellianism (often termed “High Machs”) are masterful tacticians of interpersonal influence; they are adept at deception, flattery, and exploiting others for personal gain. They exhibit a cold and calculating demeanor, lacking genuine empathy and viewing social conventions and morality as obstacles to be circumvented rather than rules to be followed (Kaufman et al., 2019). Their core motivation is the attainment of power and control, justifying any means necessary to achieve their ends.

Narcissism, in the context of the Dark Triad, refers to a pervasive pattern of grandiosity, a pervasive need for admiration, and a pronounced lack of empathy (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). It is a pathological form of self-love where the individual possesses an inflated sense of self-importance and entitlement (Vrabel et al., 2018). Narcissists are often preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, and brilliance, and they believe they are “special” and can only be understood by other high-status people. They require excessive admiration, exploit relationships, and often display arrogant behaviors or attitudes (Rogoza & Ciecuch, 2020). When their ego is threatened, they can react with rage or contempt.

Psychopathy is the most malevolent of the triad traits and is defined by a constellation of affective, interpersonal, and lifestyle deficits (LeBreton et al., 2018). The core features include a profound lack of empathy, guilt, or remorse, coupled with shallow emotions, impulsivity, and a tendency toward sensation-seeking (Hare, 1999). Unlike Machiavellianism, which is strategic, psychopathy is often associated with reckless and impulsive behavior. Individuals with high levels of this trait are prone to antisocial behavior, are emotionally callous, and fail to form genuine emotional attachments with others (O’Boyle et al., 2015). They are characterized by high disinhibition and boldness, which can manifest as a fearless dominance in social situations but also a propensity for cruelty and aggression.

3. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive design to analyze the Dark Triad personality in Eka Kurniawan's novel *Lelaki Harimau*. The qualitative approach was selected for its strength in examining phenomena within their natural context and interpreting meanings in textual data (Creswell & Poth, 2018), allowing for deep exploration of psychological characteristics in literary works. The research utilized document analysis as the primary data collection method. This involved meticulous close reading of the novel to identify manifestations of Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy in the main character Margio. The process followed established literary analysis methods, similar to Pohan & Pardi's (2022, p.56) approach in their study of *Purple Hearts*, where they "collected data by reading the novel thoroughly and identifying relevant data". Secondary sources including psychological theories and literary criticism provided the theoretical framework for analysis.

Data analysis followed an interactive model comprising data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. After compiling relevant textual evidence, the researcher reduced and categorized data into the three Dark Triad themes. This systematic categorization aligns with established qualitative methods that "classify data based on research questions" (Pohan & Pardi, 2022, p.57). The final stage involved interpreting the categorized data against theoretical frameworks and verifying conclusions through continuous reference to textual evidence, ensuring analytical validity and providing comprehensive understanding of dark personality dimensions in the literary character.

4. Discussion

This part presents the analysis and discussion of the findings derived from the data collected in response to the research objectives. The primary objective is to describe the manifestations of the Dark Triad personality - Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy - in the main character, Margio, from Eka Kurniawan's novel *Lelaki Harimau*. The analysis is structured around the key traits of the Dark Triad, with supporting excerpts from the novel and interpretation through the lens of contemporary psychological theory. The findings are systematically presented to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these malevolent personality dimensions are portrayed and interrelate within the character.

4.1 Machiavellianism

Margio demonstrates sophisticated Machiavellian traits through strategic manipulation of social perceptions. His ability to maintain a benevolent persona while harboring violent intentions reveals profound social deception.

"But of course nobody who hadn't been there would believe these words came from Margio. He was the sweetest and the most polite of his peers (Kurniawan, 2015, p.25)."

This calculated self-presentation exemplifies what Jones and Paulhus (2014) identify as strategic social charm - Margio cultivates his "sweetest and most polite" image precisely to create a shield that makes his violent capabilities inconceivable to others. The community's blind trust in this facade enables his predatory plans to proceed undetected. His manipulative prowess extends to active surveillance:

“The people at the soccer field saw him for sure, but they knew Margio too well to be suspicious (Kurniawan, 2015, p.30).”

This demonstrates the success of his long-term social engineering. As Kaufman et al. (2019) note, high-Mach individuals become “social chameleons” who exploit earned trust. Margio’s ability to stalk his prey openly, protected by his manufactured reputation, shows mastery of Machiavellian manipulation.

4.2 Psychopathy

Margio’s psychopathic traits manifest through emotional detachment and brutal violence.

“Margio’s teeth sank into his neck, tearing through flesh and sinew with animalistic fury (Kurniawan, 2015, p.35).”

The graphic violence demonstrates core psychopathic features of callousness and predatory aggression (Hare, 1999). The “animalistic fury” highlights complete emotional disengagement from killing, while the method suggests sensation-seeking behavior characteristic of psychopathy (O’Boyle et al., 2015). His emotional poverty extends to familial relationships:

“Agung Yuda was one of those who witnessed how exceedingly happy the young man was when he came home to find his father dead (Kurniawan, 2015, p.28).”

This inappropriate effect demonstrates what LeBreton et al. (2018) term affective deficit - the absence of normal emotional responses to significant events. Margio’s happiness at his father’s death reveals profound disturbance in emotional bonding capacity.

4.3 Narcissism

Margio’s narcissism centers on grandiose self-concept as a supernatural vessel.

“He felt that the tiger that used to belong to his grandfather had moved to him. It wasn’t just an inheritance; it was a transformation (Kurniawan, 2015, p.47).”

This belief in special transformation reflects narcissistic grandiosity and uniqueness (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Margio’s perception of himself as a chosen vessel represents what Vrabel et al. (2018) identify as foundational narcissistic myths that support elevated self-worth. His relational dynamics further reveal narcissistic traits:

“He had lied about his nerves. The problem had a different complexion (Kurniawan, 2015, p.162).”

This deception stems from what Kernberg (2020) describes as the narcissistic paradox - the coexistence of inflated self-concept with profound insecurity. Rather than confess his true shame, Margio constructs fictions that preserve his specialness while avoiding vulnerability.

The interaction of these three traits creates Margio as what Paulhus and Williams (2002) term the “subclinical predator.” His Machiavellian manipulation

enables his violence, his psychopathy makes it possible, and his narcissism justifies it. The tiger metaphor powerfully represents this Dark Triad constellation - a savage potential awakened by traumatic circumstances.

Through Margio, Kurniawan explores what Muris et al. (2017) identify as the “adaptive maladaptation” of dark traits - psychological defenses that ensure survival at the cost of humanity. The novel presents a disturbing portrait of how monstrous environments can breed monstrous personalities. Regarding the types of Dark Triad personality present, the analysis confirms that Margio embodies all three components. His Machiavellianism is evidenced through strategic deception and manipulation, particularly through his maintenance of a “sweet and polite” public persona that effectively conceals his predatory intentions. His Psychopathy is manifested in the callous, impulsive, and remorseless nature of his violence, most starkly illustrated by the brutal killing of Anwar Sadat. Finally, his Narcissism is displayed through a grandiose self-concept, most notably his belief in being a vessel for a supernatural tiger spirit, which grants him a sense of unique entitlement and superiority. The analysis of these traits reveals that they do not operate in isolation but interact synergistically to form a coherent, albeit destructive, psychological profile. Margio's Machiavellian cunning enables his violence, his psychopathic affect allows him to execute it without remorse, and his narcissistic grandiosity provides a justifying narrative for his actions. The central metaphor of the internal “tiger” serves as a powerful literary representation of this fused Dark Triad personality—a latent, savage potential that is awakened and shaped by the trauma of his abusive upbringing.

5. Conclusion

This study has systematically examined the manifestation of Dark Triad personality traits in Margio, the main character of Eka Kurniawan's *Lelaki Harimau*. Through a qualitative descriptive analysis, it can be concluded that Margio exhibits a pronounced constellation of these socially malevolent traits, which collectively drive the novel's central narrative of violence and psychological disintegration.

In conclusion, Eka Kurniawan's *Lelaki Harimau* offers a profound literary case study of the Dark Triad. The character of Margio demonstrates how these subclinical malevolent traits can be forged in a crucible of domestic trauma, leading to catastrophic outcomes. This analysis not only provides a deeper understanding of the novel's protagonist but also underscores the value of psychological frameworks in illuminating the complex motivations of literary characters. For society, it serves as a stark reminder of the potential consequences of untreated childhood trauma and the disturbing reality of dark personality traits that can lurk beneath a conventional exterior. Future research could fruitfully explore the Dark Triad in other characters within the Indonesian literary canon or investigate the socio-cultural factors that contribute to the development of such personalities.

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MANIFESTATIONS OF PATIENCE IN WINSTON GROOM'S *FORREST GUMP*: A LITERARY PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY BASED ON SZUTTA'S MODEL

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Abstract

This study examines the manifestation of patience as a moral virtue in Winston Groom's novel *Forrest Gump* through Szutta's (2020) theoretical framework of patience competence. Using qualitative methodology with descriptive analysis, this research investigates how the protagonist exemplifies patience through two core characteristics: perseverance and sincerity. The findings reveal that Forrest's perseverance manifests as sustained determination in overcoming life challenges, particularly evidenced in his shrimp business venture where he persists despite initial failures. Simultaneously, his sincerity appears through selfless actions and unconditional assistance without expectation of reward. The analysis demonstrates that patience in *Forrest Gump* represents not passive endurance but active competence - a strategic virtue enabling him to navigate bullying, personal loss, and social prejudice while maintaining moral integrity. The integration of perseverance and sincerity transforms his perceived intellectual limitations into extraordinary resilience, positioning patience as a transformative force in human experience. This study contributes to literary psychology by illustrating how virtue theory can illuminate character development while affirming literature's capacity to reflect complex psychological realities.

Keywords: *Patience; perseverance; sincerity; Szutta's model*

1. Introduction

Literature serves as a profound reflection of human experience, capturing the breadth of empirical and supernatural realities (Saryono, 2009). It is an expression of personality, encompassing thoughts, feelings, and beliefs through the concrete medium of language (Sumardjo & Saini, 1997). As Pardi et al (2021) affirms in his analysis of literary works, "novels not only reflect social realities but also actively construct cultural meaning through character representation." This positions literary works as a valuable lens through which to examine and comment on the complexities of human life, including fundamental psychological virtues such as patience. This study focuses on Winston Groom's 1986 novel, *Forrest Gump*, to explore the manifestation of patience in its protagonist.

The novel chronicles the life of Forrest Gump, a man perpetually labeled as an idiot by society. His journey resonates with what Pardi et al (2024, p.27) identifies in narratives as “the individual’s struggle against societal constraints while maintaining cultural virtues.” Raised solely by his mother after his father’s death, Forrest’s life represents a series of extraordinary events driven by his unique perspective and singular talents, including his enduring yet often unrequited love for Jenny Curran, his service in the Vietnam War, the loss of his mother, and his eventual rise to fame. Throughout these trials and triumphs, the protagonist demonstrates a remarkable and consistent quality of patience, which forms the central theme of this research. The concept of patience is defined as a calmness, self-control, and the willingness to tolerate delay - qualities that Pardi (2025, p.33) notes are essential in “navigating life’s transitions and maintaining cultural identity amid challenges.”

The theoretical framework for this analysis is drawn from the psychological concept of “patience competence” developed by El Hafiz, Al Maududi, & Amalina (2015). This framework posits patience not merely as a passive state, but as an active competence - an individual’s ability to consciously restrain emotions, thoughts, words, and behavior. For such restraint to qualify as patience competence, it must be an active and deliberate effort, serve as an initial response to a situation, be driven by a good intention, and be conducted within societal or moral rules. Research has substantiated the significant role of this competence in positive psychological outcomes. Studies indicate that patience competence enhances emotional maturity in adolescents and improves their ability to resolve interpersonal conflicts. Furthermore, it acts as a critical moderator; for instance, high religiosity alone may not effectively resolve conflicts if it is not complemented by a strong competence for patience. This establishes patience as a vital trait of self-control and delayed gratification, applicable in managing stress, anger, and various life challenges.

The portrayal of such a positive and beneficial virtue in a literary character like Forrest Gump is highly relevant. His journey provides a rich narrative to explore how patience is characterized and manifested in the face of adversity, social prejudice, and personal loss. As demonstrated in Pardi et al’s (2024) analysis of literary texts, “character development often mirrors societal values and psychological resilience in facing life’s challenges”. Analyzing this portrayal bridges literary study with psychological insight, demonstrating how literature can vividly illustrate concepts that are empirically studied in psychology. Therefore, this study aims to identify the characteristics of patience exhibited by Forrest Gump and to analyze the portrayal of this patience throughout the narrative of the novel. By examining Forrest Gump through the lens of patience competence, this research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of how virtuous behavior is narratively constructed and its significance to the human experience as reflected in literature.

However, few studies have analyzed the portrayal of patience in modern fiction using Szutta’s (2020) virtue ethics framework. Therefore, this study aims to analyze how patience as a virtue competence is portrayed and develops throughout the narrative in the novel *Forrest Gump*, and to understand its role and impact on the protagonist’s life journey.

By detailing the manifestations of *Forrest Gump*’s patience through a systematic theoretical framework, this research is expected to contribute to literary psychological studies by demonstrating how virtue ethics theory can be applied to examine character

development in depth, while affirming literature's capacity to reflect complex psychological realities.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Conceptual Foundation of Patience

Patience is widely recognized as a foundational virtue integral to the human experience, intersecting with domains of faith, free will, life attitudes, humility, and the endurance of suffering (Maxwell, 1979). Its relevance is considered timeless, extending beyond immediate mortal concerns. In a more secular, psychological context, patience is categorized among the cardinal virtues of willpower – alongside self-control, persistence, moderation, and diligence – that empower individuals to overcome internal and external obstacles to achieve their goals (Steutel, 1999; Szutta, 2020).

A modern and nuanced understanding of patience moves beyond passive waiting. As Szutta (2020) argues, a patient person is not one who waits indefinitely or allows exploitation, but rather one who possesses the wisdom to discern the optimal balance between impulsive action and protracted delay. This positions patience as a component of a balanced life, closely linked to self-regulation and prudent decision-making. Grossman (2015) further emphasizes that patience is not cultivated in isolation but must be practiced alongside other pro-social behaviors like kindness, acceptance, and tolerance. This combination fosters trustworthiness, a key social asset, as patience allows individuals to forgo immediate gratification for the sake of cooperative, long-term relationships (Anomaly, 2017; Bowles & Gintis, 2011). Supporting this, neuroscientific and behavioral studies, such as that by Liberman et al. (2007), suggest that having sufficient time to deliberate, a state afforded by patience, increases the likelihood of adhering to moral standards, as opposed to decisions driven by rash, emotional reactions.

The profound personal significance of patience is encapsulated by Ashton (1973), who describes it as a “great achievement” and a “great strength.” However, its moral impact is not inherently positive. Szutta (2020) crucially notes that the virtues of willpower, including patience and perseverance, are morally ambivalent; their value is determined by the character traits they serve. When coupled with compassion, kindness, and justice, they contribute to great good. Conversely, when harnessed by jealousy, greed, or selfishness, the same persistent patience can be employed to achieve malevolent ends.

2.2 Theoretical Framework: Szutta’s Model of Patience

This study adopts the theoretical model of patience proposed by Szutta (2020) as its primary framework. The researcher argues that this model’s structured breakdown of patience into core characteristics provides a robust and applicable tool for literary character analysis. While other theories will be incorporated to support the analysis, Szutta’s conceptualization forms the foundational grant theory. According to Szutta (2020), the essential characteristics of patience are perseverance and sincerity.

2.2.1 Perseverance

Perseverance is defined as the continuous and determined effort to achieve a goal despite difficulties, obstacles, or discouragement. It is the quality of persisting in a course of action through repeated efforts and methods until success is attained. In the context of patience, perseverance provides the active, enduring component. It is what

allows an individual to remain steadfast in the face of adversity. A perseverant person does not succumb to boredom or despair; instead, they exhibit resilience, enabling them to navigate challenging times with greater care and wisdom. This characteristic aligns with the concept of "grit," defined by Duckworth et al. (2007) as passion and perseverance for long-term goals, which is a significant predictor of success.

2.2.2 Sincerity

In Szutta's (2020) framework, sincerity pertains to the internal attitude and motivation behind patient endurance. It can be understood as a state of acceptance and wholehearted willingness. This involves accepting circumstances without unnecessary resistance, which in turn empowers the individual and conserves emotional energy that would otherwise be spent on complaint and frustration. In interpersonal relationships, sincerity manifests as providing help with genuine honesty and selflessness. An individual with sincerity performs tasks, even difficult ones, without begrudging the effort, making the burden feel lighter. This trait often fosters a tough and resilient personality that is positively regarded by others, as actions are perceived as authentic and well-intentioned.

2.3 Patience in Literary Analysis

The application of virtue theory, including the analysis of patience, to literary characters provides a rich avenue for understanding human psychology in a narrative context. As Nussbaum (1990) argues, literature offers a unique exploration of moral character and ethical dilemmas, making it a fertile ground for examining how virtues are enacted and tested within a human life. The portrayal of a character like Forrest Gump, whose life is a tapestry of extraordinary events navigated with a seemingly simple, steadfast demeanor, presents a compelling case study for analyzing the concrete manifestations of theoretical virtues like perseverance and sincerity as defined by Szutta (2020). This study will, therefore, use this framework to dissect and understand the nature and portrayal of patience in the protagonist of Groom's novel.

3. Research Method

This study employed a qualitative research design with a descriptive approach to investigate the portrayal of patience in the protagonist of Winston Groom's novel, *Forrest Gump*. Following Creswell's (2016) qualitative research framework, this study implemented a systematic procedure for data collection and analysis that ensures comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

The data collection procedure followed Creswell's recommendations for qualitative inquiry. The primary data source was the literary text of *Forrest Gump*, with data collected in the form of words, clauses, sentences, and narrative passages relevant to patience manifestation. As emphasized by Pardi (2025, p.45) in his analysis of Coetzee's *Disgrace*, "repeated reading of the primary text is fundamental to identifying nuanced patterns of behavior and thematic development." Accordingly, the data collection process involved: repeated reading of the novel for comprehensive understanding; systematic identification and marking of relevant textual elements; and preliminary categorization based on Szutta's (2020) theoretical framework of patience.

For data analysis, this study adopted Creswell's (2016) data analysis spiral, which involves a continuous process of data management, reading and memoing, describing, classifying, and interpreting. The analysis process began with data

management through careful organization of all marked passages. This was followed by reading and memoing with reflective notes about initial patterns. The description phase involved developing detailed accounts of patience manifestations, while classification organized the data into Szutta's (2020) core components of perseverance and sincerity. The final interpretation stage derived meaningful conclusions about the nature and portrayal of patience in the protagonist.

The entire analytical process maintained Creswell's emphasis on rigorous qualitative standards, including prolonged engagement with the text through repeated readings, thick description of the findings, and systematic application of the theoretical framework. This approach ensured that the analysis remained grounded in the textual evidence while providing meaningful insights into the research questions..

4. Discussion

This study reveals that the protagonist in Winston Groom's *Forrest Gump* demonstrates remarkable patience characterized by two fundamental virtues: perseverance and sincerity, as conceptualized by Szutta (2020). The analysis demonstrates how these characteristics manifest throughout Forrest's journey, transforming his perceived limitations into sources of strength.

4.1 Perseverance

Forrest Gump's character serves as a profound exemplar of perseverance, demonstrating an extraordinary capacity for sustained effort and unwavering commitment in the face of numerous obstacles and setbacks. See the following quotation.

"I have the passion and perseverance to take a job seriously until it's done (Groom, 1986, p.115)."

Based on the quotation above, His personal philosophy, encapsulated in the declaration, reveals a deep-seated resilience that forms the cornerstone of his character. This statement is not merely a casual remark but a fundamental principle that guides his actions throughout the narrative. It reflects Forrest's understanding of perseverance as an active, engaged process—one that combines emotional commitment ("passion") with disciplined continuation ("perseverance"). This self-awareness is particularly significant given his social designation as intellectually limited, suggesting that perseverance operates independently of conventional intelligence and represents a distinct form of wisdom.

The scope of Forrest's perseverance extends beyond personal ambition to encompass moral and emotional commitments, particularly his promise to his deceased friend Bubba. The initial failure of their shrimp venture, where "the nets were empty and there were no shrimp", represents more than just business failure; it tests Forrest's dedication to honoring his friend's memory. See the following quotation.

"We didn't give up hope, we kept trying until we got the shrimp we wanted (Groom, 1986, p.275)."

His response demonstrates perseverance as an active choice against despair. The phrase "didn't give up hope" indicates the psychological dimension of his perseverance—maintaining optimism despite evidence to the contrary, while "kept

trying” shows the behavioral manifestation of this mindset. This combination highlights how perseverance functions both as an internal attitude and external action.

The culmination of Forrest's persistent efforts reveals the transformative potential of sustained commitment. See his description below.

“We work all day, from sunrise to sunset... finally we realized the net... was so full of shrimp that we couldn't pull it (Groom, 1986, p.27).”

The quotation above represents a powerful narrative of redemption through perseverance. The temporal marker “from sunrise to sunset” emphasizes the exhaustive nature of their labor, while the physical impossibility of pulling the net symbolizes the overwhelming success that perseverance can generate. This transformation from empty nets to unimaginable abundance serves as a metaphor for how consistent effort can convert absolute failure into extraordinary success.

Forrest's journey from failed initial attempts to establishing a profitable shrimp business, culminating in earnings of “\$9,700 dollars and 26 cents”, provides concrete validation of perseverance as a practical life strategy. The precise accounting of his earnings underscores the tangible rewards of his persistent efforts. Importantly, his success derives not from intellectual superiority or social advantage, but from what the narrative portrays as “dogged persistence”- a quality accessible to anyone regardless of their circumstances or abilities. This aligns with Szutta's (2020) conceptualization of perseverance as a fundamental component of virtuous patience, demonstrating how sustained effort, when coupled with genuine commitment, becomes a powerful moral and practical force that systematically overcomes life's challenges.

4.2 Sincerity

Forrest's actions are consistently marked by sincerity, manifesting as selfless assistance without expectation of reward. This is poignantly illustrated when he helps a neighbor with yard work:

“When I was done, he reached into his pocket for a dollar. I was speechless and all I could say was “I'm glad I could help you’ (Groom, 1986, p.2). “

His refusal of payment underscores a genuine, intrinsic motivation to help others. The neighbor's observation, “You're retarded but you're so eager to help others”, highlights how Forrest's sincerity transcends societal labels, becoming a defining aspect of his character. This sincerity represents more than simple helpfulness; it reflects a fundamental acceptance of life's circumstances. Forrest performs laborious tasks “in the heat of the day” without complaint, demonstrating wholehearted engagement. This aligns with Szutta's (2020) conceptualization of sincerity as an empowering acceptance that facilitates patience. Forrest's sincere disposition enables him to approach challenges without resentment, viewing assistance as its own reward rather than a transactional exchange.

4.3 Portrayal of Patience in the Novel

The novel portrays patience as an active, transformative force through Forrest's responses to bullying and relational challenges. When confronted by bullies who “hit

me in the stomach until it hurt,” Forrest demonstrates emotional restraint in the following statement.

“I stayed calm and tried to be patience and not fight them. Finally I ran as fast as I could over the football field (Groom, 1986, p.20).”

This response exemplifies patience as conscious self-control rather than passive submission. His decision to flee rather than retaliate demonstrates strategic emotional regulation in threatening situations. Similarly, in his relationship with Jenny, Forrest exhibits profound patience amid emotional turmoil. Following a misunderstanding, he demonstrates steadfast commitment as stated in the following quotation.

“I was very patience waiting for her to come home. I waited on the steps of her house for most of the day (Groom, 1986, p.296).”

This persistent waiting, despite Jenny’s rejection and disappearance, reflects patience as enduring commitment rather than mere tolerance of delay. His actions embody what Szutta (2020) identifies as patience guided by virtuous intentions - in this case, genuine care and loyalty. The integration of perseverance and sincerity in Forrest’s character presents a nuanced portrayal of patience as both active endurance and wholehearted acceptance. His journey suggests that true patience combines determined pursuit of goals with selfless engagement with the world, creating a resilience that transforms apparent disadvantages into extraordinary strengths.

Based on the discussion above, the findings demonstrate that Forrest Gump’s character embodies patience as an active virtue comprising two interconnected dimensions: perseverance and sincerity, following Szutta’s (2020) framework. His perseverance manifests as determined endurance through challenges, evidenced by his unwavering commitment to the shrimp business despite initial failures, ultimately achieving remarkable success through sustained effort. Simultaneously, his sincerity emerges through selfless actions, particularly in his unconditional assistance to others without expectation of reward, reflecting an intrinsic motivation that transcends societal judgments. Furthermore, the analysis reveals Forrest’s patience as a strategic competence - whether in managing physical threats through calculated disengagement or maintaining steadfast commitment in personal relationships despite emotional turmoil. This integrated manifestation of patience transforms his perceived limitations into extraordinary resilience, demonstrating how perseverance and sincerity synergistically create a profound capacity for navigating life’s complexities while maintaining moral integrity and emotional stability.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis unequivocally demonstrates that Forrest Gump embodies a profound and active form of patience, conceptualized through Szutta’s (2020) framework as the synergistic integration of perseverance and sincerity. His character arc reveals that true patience is not a passive endurance but a dynamic, strategic virtue, manifested as unwavering perseverance in pursuing goals like the shrimp business against all odds, and as genuine sincerity in offering selfless help without expectation of reward. This dual competence enables him to navigate both physical threats and emotional turmoil with remarkable resilience, transforming his societal label of intellectual limitation into a unique strength. Ultimately, Forrest’s journey illustrates that such integrated patience serves as a powerful mechanism for not

only overcoming life's adversities but also for maintaining moral integrity and forging meaningful connections, positioning it as a transformative force that converts apparent vulnerabilities into extraordinary human triumph.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL CONFLICTS BETWEEN KEY CHARACTERS IN GILLIAN FLYNN'S *GONE GIRL*

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Abstract

Gone Girl, a novel by Gillian Flynn, explores the intense psychological and emotional conflict between a married couple, Amy and Nick Dunne. Amy desires love and loyalty but is devastated by Nick's betrayal. Meanwhile, Nick, who is obsessed with emulating his father, fails to express love to Amy and instead engages in an affair, leading to suspicion when Amy suddenly disappears. Amy's uncontrollable ego drives her to fake her own death and frame Nick for murder as a form of social punishment. The story unfolds through public suspicion, legal investigation, and emotional turmoil. This study applies Cascio's theory of conflict to examine the types and dynamics of internal and external conflicts experienced by the main characters. The study also aims to identify the negative impacts resulting from these conflicts. Using a qualitative descriptive method, the research analyzes how internal conflict (man versus self) and external conflict (man versus man, society, and fate) shape the narrative. Amy's psychological need for validation and her manipulative actions lead her to deep guilt and emotional suffering. Nick, on the other hand, experiences social rejection, emotional stress, and job loss after being falsely accused. These conflicts result in significant behavioral changes and deteriorating mental, physical, and social well-being. The novel reveals how unresolved personal and relational conflicts can escalate into destructive outcomes.

Keywords: *External conflict; gone girl; internal conflict; negative impact; psychological struggle*

1. Introduction

Literature is a mirror of human life that records feelings, ideas, and experiences in artistic form. According to Abrams (1999), literature can be classified into prose fiction, poetry, drama, and nonfiction. Prose fiction such as short stories, novellas, and novels depicts events resembling real life, with the main characters playing a central role in shaping actions, feelings, and decisions. Social issues, the abuse of power, and personal deviations often influence these characters, leading to conflicts that reflect real human struggles.

According to Ginting (2021), conflict refers to the clash between opposing forces that may be internal or external, originating from the Latin *configere*, meaning

“to strike.” Conflict can arise from contradictory desires or ideas and is an inevitable part of human life.

The novel *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn (2014) was chosen for its psychological depth and intriguing plot, centering on Amy's disappearance and presumed death, which reflects real marital issues such as boredom, insecurity, jealousy, betrayal, and financial tension. Conflict can be internal or external, portraying emotional tension, and its outcome depends on the strategy used by Rahim (2002), as cited in Hussein & Al-Mamary, (2019). Hearn and Buffardi (2016) define impact as the measurable change in a person's life that may be social, economic, cultural, or psychological. This research examines the negative impacts of conflict on the protagonists in *Gone Girl*, including changes in their character, behavior, and mental, physical, and social well-being.

Amy is portrayed as a perfectionist, antisocial, and controlling woman who stages her own death to frame Nick for murder after discovering his affair. Detectives Boney and Gilpin investigate the case and uncover debts, increased life insurance, and a fabricated pregnancy. The conflict escalates when Amy reappears with a fake kidnapping story, causing emotional and social damage. Cascio (2005) categorizes conflict into internal (man vs. self) and external (man vs. man, society, nature, machine, or fate).

Gone Girl, a mystery, suspense, and crime novel, is widely praised as a psychological thriller exploring the complexities of human emotion and behavior. It examines the collapse of a marital dream and the effects of betrayal, remaining on The New York Times bestseller list for eight weeks and selling over twenty million copies by 2019. This study analyzes types of conflict using Cascio's (2005) theory, supported by Senider's (2018) approach, and investigates the negative impacts of these conflicts through a qualitative descriptive method. Data were collected from quotations and utterances in the novel that reflect internal and external conflicts.

2. Literature Review

This part contains theories guiding the analysis, applying the Psychology of Literature approach. A theory serves as a framework to simplify and describe data meaningfully (Schultz in Safitri, 2018).

2.1 Psychology of Literature

The Psychology of Literature approach examines the psychological elements reflected in fictional characters. Literary works present aspects of humanity, which are the primary objects of psychological analysis. Afifulloh (2019) defines the psychology of literature as an approach that seeks to understand the spiritual and emotional dimensions of human experience represented in literary works. The focus lies on the characters' inner conflicts and unconscious symptoms, which are analyzed using relevant psychological theories. Works suitable for psychological analysis are those that emphasize the depiction of psychological conditions and emotional struggles (Suhendi, as cited in Alfari, 2022).

Wellek and Warren (2000) propose four key aspects of psychological literary studies:

- (1) the author's psyche as expressed through the work,
- (2) the creative process behind the writing,
- (3) the application of psychological principles within the text, and
- (4) the psychological effects of literature on its readers.

Novel such as *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn (2014) exemplifies these dimensions, presenting complex human emotions and psychological conflicts within marital relationships.

2.2 Conflict

Conflict can be defined as a clash or lack of harmony between opposing forces (Oktavianus, Janggur, et al., 2022). Ginting (2021) describes it as a struggle between two opposing characters or interests, typically between a protagonist and an antagonist. Riyanti (2020) identifies conflict as a dynamic opposition of forces that shapes the progression of a narrative, while Siswanti (2020) calls it a dramatic struggle between balanced powers that sustains tension throughout the story.

2.2.1 Types of Conflict

According to Stanton (2000), conflicts can be classified into internal and external types. Internal conflict occurs within a character's mind, such as in moral dilemmas, psychological turmoil, or emotional struggles (Cascio, 2005; Thompson, 2018; Coser, as cited in Alfarisi, 2022). External conflict, on the other hand, arises between a character and outside forces, such as other individuals, society, or fate (Cascio, 2005; Stanton (2000; Panjaitan & Suhendi, 2020; Wijayanti & Laba, 2020).

External conflicts are generally divided into three main categories.

First, Man vs. Man, which is the most common type, involves the protagonist's confrontation with an antagonist (Cascio, 2005; Thompson, 2018). Second, Man vs. Society, which depicts the struggle between an individual's beliefs and social norms or laws. Third, Man vs. Fate, which illustrates a human's resistance to destiny or divine will, commonly found in classical myths and Shakespearean tragedies (Cascio, 2005; Thompson, 2018).

In literary analysis, it is also important to consider the negative effects of conflict. Amason (as cited in Hussein & Al-Mamary, 2019) identifies two categories of negative impact: internal and external. Internal conflicts often result in a decline in mental health, marked by anxiety, stress, and depression. External conflicts, meanwhile, may lead to significant transformations in character, behavior, and social relationships. These effects can be classified as:

- a. Change of Character, referring to alterations in personal traits or moral values;
- b. Change of Behavior, which influences motivation, social cooperation, and decision-making; and
- c. Change of Society, which denotes broader social transformations caused by opposing interests within a community.

3. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method to analyze the internal and external conflicts experienced by the protagonists in Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl*. According to Bogdan and Taylor (1975), qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from observable behavior rather than statistical figures. Similarly, Creswell (2014) emphasizes that qualitative inquiry focuses on exploring meanings, concepts, and interpretations within natural settings. Kothari (2004) and Nurgiyantoro (2017) further explain that this approach allows researchers to interpret human experiences, emotions, and social dynamics beyond quantifiable measurement.

The qualitative descriptive method was chosen because it enables a deep understanding of psychological and emotional conflicts in literary characters. In this study, the researcher acts as the primary research instrument (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2022), conducting direct interpretation and contextual analysis of textual data. The main objective is to describe and interpret the types of conflict and their impacts as reflected in the novel.

Cascio's (2005) theory of conflict serves as the main analytical framework, classifying conflict into internal (man vs. self) and external (man vs. man, society, nature, or fate). This classification helps the researcher to identify the sources, dynamics, and outcomes of conflict within the narrative. Meanwhile, Kevin Senider's (2018) approach complements Cascio's framework by offering a psychological lens to interpret emotional motivations and behavioral responses of the main characters when facing conflict situations. Together, these theories allow for a multidimensional reading of *Gone Girl*, linking psychological tendencies with narrative tension.

The data of this research consist of selected quotations and utterances that represent internal and external conflicts experienced by Amy and Nick Dunne. The data were collected through several steps:

1. Comprehensive reading of the novel to understand the plot, characters, and conflict development;
2. Note-taking and coding of textual evidence related to conflict indicators;
3. Identification and classification of conflict types based on Cascio's framework; and
4. Interpretation and analysis of the data to explain how each type of conflict produces negative psychological, behavioral, and social effects.

The data analysis process follows three main stages:

- a. Identification, in which relevant textual data are selected and categorized;
- b. Classification, where the data are grouped according to the conflict types (internal or external); and
- c. Interpretation, which involves analyzing how conflicts evolve and what negative impacts they generate on the characters' psyche and social environment.

The entire process aims to produce a coherent understanding of conflict portrayal in *Gone Girl*, demonstrating how unresolved psychological tensions manifest through characters' actions and relationships.

4. Discussion

This section presents the analysis of internal and external conflicts faced by the main characters in Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl*, applying Cascio's (2005) theory of conflict as the primary framework, supported by Senider's (2018) psychological interpretation and Amason's (as cited in Hussein & Al-Mamary, 2019) perspective on the negative impact of conflict. It discusses two main issues: (1) the types of internal and external conflicts, and (2) their negative psychological, behavioral, and social impacts.

4.1 Internal Conflicts

4.1.1 Man vs self

The inability of Amy and Nick Dunne to express their true emotions and manage disappointment represents Cascio's internal conflict type, man versus self, where

psychological imbalance manifests as anxiety, frustration, and mistrust. According to Murnigham and Conlon (as cited in Hussein, 2019), unresolved emotional strain often produces resentment and tension that disrupt personal harmony.

Amy vs. Herself

“I’ve asked most often during our marriage. What are you thinking? How are you feeling? Who are you? What have we done to each other? What will we do?” (Flynn, 2014, p. 9).

Amy’s introspection reflects the psychological struggle between her desire for control and her incapacity to trust her partner, consistent with Senider’s view that emotional repression leads to distorted perception of reality. Her diary becomes both a coping mechanism and a fabrication tool, indicating her fragmented identity. Amy’s perfectionism and emotional isolation produce self-destructive behavior, illustrating Amason’s notion of internal conflict that deteriorates mental health.

Nick vs. Himself

“My wife loved games, mostly mind games ... the last present I remember my dad giving my mom was an iron, set on the kitchen counter, no wrapping paper.” (Flynn, 2014, p. 22).

Nick’s inner turmoil stems from the pressure to conform to Amy’s expectations and his inherited patriarchal model of love, which he subconsciously rejects yet imitates. Although he was unhappy, he was unable to change his circumstances, reflecting a conflict between personal authenticity and social conditioning. Senider’s psychological approach helps interpret Nick’s guilt and emotional paralysis as symptoms of unresolved self-identity conflict.

4.2 External Conflict

4.2.1 Man vs Man

“Baby, what we’re dealing with right now is I need to make sure we’re okay...” (Flynn, 2014, p. 144).

Nick’s extramarital relationship with Andie embodies external conflict in Cascio’s framework, man versus man, where opposing desires create moral and emotional tension. His affair represents the manifestation of internal dissatisfaction projected outward, confirming Senider’s claim that unexpressed psychological needs often emerge as behavioral deviation. Although he realizes his wrongdoing, Nick’s dependency on Andie’s affection illustrates his loss of self-control and ethical clarity.

4.2.2 Man vs. Society

“Everyone knows it’s always the husband... ‘Okay, great, Nick,’ Boney said. ‘First let’s get a swab of the inside of your cheek...’” (Flynn, 2014, p. 45).

Nick’s confrontation with societal judgment exemplifies Cascio’s “man versus society” conflict, where social perception replaces justice with prejudice. Media narratives and neighborhood gossip transform Nick into a public villain, aligning with Amason’s theory that external conflict generates social alienation and identity crisis.

This conflict reveals how individual reputation collapses under collective suspicion, leaving Nick psychologically isolated.

4.2.3 Man vs. Fate

"I followed him all the way to Missouri, because I still believed he'd love me again somehow... Faith!" (Flynn, 2014, p. 228).

Amy's delusional hope that love can be restored represents Cascio's "man versus fate" category, in which characters confront inevitable emotional failure. Senider's psychological reading interprets Amy's obsession as the denial of loss, an unconscious attempt to rewrite destiny. Her romantic fatalism signifies the collapse of rational control, transforming emotional longing into self-inflicted tragedy.

4.3 Negative Impacts of Internal Conflict

4.3.1 Change of Mental Health

Amy's obsessive behavior and fabricated death plot severely damage both her and Nick's mental stability.

"Flashbulbs exploded, and I dropped the smile, but not soon enough... it was too late to make any other impression." (Flynn, 2014, p. 73).

Nick's anxiety, guilt, and physical exhaustion illustrate Amason's (2019) internal conflict impact, a deterioration of mental and physiological balance. Continuous social pressure and public scrutiny intensify his depression. This condition aligns with Senider's assertion that internalized guilt transforms into psychosomatic stress. Amy's manipulation simultaneously reflects her deteriorating mental coherence and need for psychological validation.

4.4 Negative Impacts of External Conflict

4.4.1 Change of Character

"I won't blame Nick. I don't blame Nick. I refuse ... refuse... to turn into some pert-mouthed, strident angry-girl..." (Flynn, 2014, p. 67).

Amy's narrative voice demonstrates a dissonance between intention and emotion, reflecting Cascio's notion that external conflict reshapes moral identity. Though she vows to remain calm, her actions betray anger and vengeance, embodying Senider's psychological paradox of self-denial. Her moral transformation from victim to manipulator represents the destructive culmination of unresolved emotional trauma.

4.4.2 Change of Behavior

"Nick loved me. A six-o kind of love... I change personalities." (Flynn, 2014, p. 217).

Amy's behavioral inconsistency signifies the disintegration of self-awareness. Her shifting personas correspond to Senider's psychological model of adaptive falsification, in which individuals construct artificial identities to maintain emotional control. This behavioral metamorphosis fulfills Amason's category of external conflict

outcome altered social functioning and motivation, showing how deceit becomes a coping mechanism.

4.4.3 Change of Society

“I walked out with the Elliotts, my head ducked low as more flashbulbs popped...” (Flynn, 2014, p. 73).

The conflict's social repercussions extend beyond the protagonists, influencing community perception and collective morality. Nick's public shame and isolation reveal Amason's (2019) idea that external conflict destabilizes social bonds and produces stigma. His alienation mirrors Cascio's societal conflict model, where interpersonal tension evolves into social disintegration. Nick's loss of status and connection signifies the erosion of moral trust in his environment.

5. Conclusion

The conflict experienced by Amy Dunne and Nick Dunne is a central issue in Gillian Flynn's novel because both Amy and Nick, as the main characters, prioritize their own feelings and thoughts, which they keep to themselves. As a couple, they are unwilling to be honest about their love, which has changed due to the physical and economic challenges that most couples face. This study classifies the internal conflict as Man vs. Self, where Amy struggles with her obsessive thoughts about affection that she expects from Nick, while Nick is obsessed with being a good man like his father without truly loving Amy and instead chooses to be unfaithful. Amy's obsession leads her to fabricate a disappearance story, planting evidence that frames Nick as the suspect, even though she knows the accusations are false. This act becomes her form of punishment toward Nick.

This study classifies external conflicts into Man vs. Man (Amy to Nick and Nick to Amy). These conflicts occur because of Amy's hidden emotions and suspicions regarding Nick's affair, as well as her anger toward the change in Nick's attitude after he no longer finds her attractive. Amy's fabricated accusations place immense pressure on Nick. On the other hand, Nick's dissatisfaction in his marriage, which he is unable to express, drives him to seek satisfaction with other women, which only worsens his public image.

Nick also feels guilty for not being a good husband to Amy, a woman who has always supported him during difficult times. That guilt ultimately shatters his obsession with becoming a good man like his father.

Furthermore, Man vs. Society conflict arises due to Amy's disappearance, with the planted evidence pointing to Nick. As a suspect in his wife's murder, Nick faces harsh social judgment. Amy's family becomes furious with him, while friends and neighbors view him negatively due to the media portrayal of his infidelity and alleged crime. He is interrogated by the police repeatedly, suffers humiliation within his community, and loses his job due to the negative public exposure, which also damages his workplace relationships.

Finally, in the Man vs. Fate conflict, Amy, as a woman and wife, genuinely loves Nick and considers him her ideal partner. She longs for a complete, reciprocated love and sees Nick as her hero. However, she cannot express those feelings openly, nor does she attempt to change her appearance or behavior to win back Nick's attention. Instead, her obsession and anger lead her to fake her death and blame Nick for it. In

doing so, she risks losing the very person she loves. Likewise, Nick, who is obsessed with becoming a better man than his father who was admired in public but deeply flawed in private, tries to please Amy. However, he ends up suppressing his desires, grows bored with the relationship, and ultimately cheats on her with one of his students. As a result, he too becomes a victim of fate, failing to live up to his ideal and potentially losing the woman who always loved and supported him.

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PRESUPPOSITIONS IN JOSEPHINE'S UTTERANCES IN LOUISA MAY ALCOTT'S *LITTLE WOMEN*

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Abstract

This research explores the use of presuppositions by Josephine March, the main character in *Little Women*, a novel written by Louisa May Alcott. The objectives of this study are to describe the types of presuppositions employed by Josephine and to interpret the implied meanings within her utterances throughout the novel. This study adopts a descriptive qualitative method and applies George Yule's classification of presuppositions, which includes six types: existential, factive, lexical, structural, non-factive, and counterfactual. The data were collected from selected dialogues spoken by Josephine in the novel. All six types of presuppositions were identified, with the following distribution: existential (29%), factive (23%), lexical (14%), structural (17%), non-factive (8.5%), and counterfactual (8.5%). The findings indicate that existential and factive presuppositions are the most frequently used, reflecting Josephine's dynamic environment, strong personality, emotional depth, and complex relationships with others. Her language reveals her values, inner conflicts, and character development. This study demonstrates that presuppositions play a vital role in literary character portrayal and deepen the reader's understanding of the narrative. The implied meanings within Josephine's utterances are interpreted through contextual analysis, as context is a crucial element in pragmatic studies. The conversational context in *Little Women* is analyzed based on four key factors: (1) participants, (2) setting or social context, (3) topic of conversation, and (4) function of the interaction.

Keywords: *implied meaning; Josephine March; little women; pragmatics; presupposition*

1. Introduction

Language is how humans share thoughts, feelings, and information with each other using words, signs, or symbols. It is the main vehicle of human communication, so language is important. Yule (1991, p.48) says that by using language, people can produce some utterances with related acts. Beside expressing their minds, their actions are aimed to cause effect on the hearers or readers. Therefore, as a main part of communication, language is unavoidable. Communication is the process of sending and receiving messages between people to share information, thoughts, or feelings. To understand what the speaker and writer means to the hearer and reader, it is necessary to

learn more about presuppositions. When speaking, people will engage in a discussion that includes presuppositions about the context or understanding between the speaker and the hearer. A context in a speech including presuppositions will assist the hearer in understanding the information delivered by the speaker. It is a type of information for a premise or assumption sent through exchanges in ordinary life or from one person to another. In pragmatics, a presupposition is an implicit assumption about the world or an underlying belief associated to an utterance, the veracity of which is presumed in discourse. As a result, the field of pragmatics is commonly used to analyse the meaning of their phrases, particularly through Presuppositional Theory.

The presupposition is an essential component of pragmatic reasoning. First, presuppositions can aid in the interpretation of communication between speakers and listeners during the information delivery process. Second, in a conversation engagement, the speaker and listener not only transmit knowledge, but also assumptions and expectations in the form of interpretations of speeches that will have an impact. In contrast, Venneman (1975, p.314), Brown (1995), and Astuti (2015, p.11) define context as a presupposition that assists listeners in determining or understanding the language, themes, and responses in a daily or novel discourse.

The phenomena of presupposition can also be found in novel since novel is portrayal of society. One of the novels that uses a lot of presupposition in the conversation or dialogue between the characters is entitled *Little Women*. The novel is written by Louisa May Alcott and published in October 1868. In this research, *Little Women*, especially the utterances of the main character will be analysed by the researchers to find out the phenomena of presupposition. In studying language, the researcher uses pragmatic approach to know the relation between the forms of utterances in the novel. Previous researches on presupposition have been undertaken, including one by Siagian, Pangaribuan, and Toruan (2015). This article identifies four sorts of presuppositions in the magazine. They are existential, factiva, lexical, and structural presuppositions, with the exception of non-factive and counterfactual. The existential presupposition is the most common form of assumption discovered in this study.

Some other researches as previous studies related to the topic of presupposition, such as Briant Nino Aditya's (2014) thesis, *A Pragmatic Analysis of Presupposition in Genndy Tartakovsky's Hotel Transylvania*, in which he seeks to identify the most prevalent type of presupposition and the inferred meaning of the characters' statements in the film. Yuni Lestari's thesis, "Presupposition of Anna and Declan's Utterances in Anand Tucker's *Leap*," (2015) focuses on the forms of presuppositions and the aim of the characters' utterances in the film. Both use the descriptive qualitative method to conduct their research. The difference between this research and previous studies is from the object of research, this research uses novel but previous studies use movie or film.

The aims of this research are to identify the types of presupposition used in the novel of *Little Women* and to analyze how various types of meanings of presupposition proposed by Yule (1996) are found in the novel. In this chapter, Yule's theory of presupposition is reviewed relatively in detail and some other related theories are also included. Some research works related to the subject matter of this research conducted earlier are also reviewed as to emphasize how the present research is different from those research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Pragmatics

Pragmatics is the study of speaker meaning. It is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker and interpreted by a listener. It is the branch of linguistics dealing with language in use and the contexts in which it is used, including such matters as deixis, the taking of turns in conversation, text organization, presupposition, and implicature. Mey (1993, p.42) defines pragmatics as the study of the conditions of human language uses as these are determined by the society context. Here, Mey clearly states that context of society holds an important role in the uses of human language. It means that different context will determine different types of language use. On the other hands, Levinson (1983, p.5) states that pragmatics is the study of language use, that is, the study of the relation between language and context that are basic to an account of language understanding.

Pragmatics has several key subfields, one of which is presupposition. As a branch of pragmatic study, presupposition focuses on the implicit assumptions shared by speakers and listeners that make communication meaningful. Through presupposition, pragmatics examines how background knowledge and context shape the interpretation of utterances (Yule, 1996, p.4).

2.2 Presupposition

A presupposition is derived from the word pre-suppose, which means to suspect a prior or suspected temporary. It means that before speakers get in the talk of something, speakers already had a previous guess about would the speakers talking. To better understand the presupposition. Here are some of the definitions of the presupposition by experts: Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (1988, p.174) state that presuppositions are situations that are usually assumed to exist before an utterance can be appropriate. Grundy (2008, p.63) adds that a presupposition is the meaning a speaker assumes alongside a speech act. Tambunan (2019, p.18) explains that presupposition refers to the assumption that the listener can clearly identify the person or object being discussed, allowing communication to proceed smoothly. In short, listeners can understand presupposition because of the information implied by the speaker (Wang, 2007; Levinson, 1983, p.168; Yuniardi, 2015, p.11).

2.3 Types of Presupposition

Yule (1996, p.27) states that presuppositions have been associated with the use of a large number of words, phrases, and structures. This linguistic form is regarded as an indicator of a potential presupposition, which can only be an actual presuppose in context with the speakers. Thus, Yule's states that six types of presuppositions are: the existential presupposition, the factive presupposition, the lexical presupposition, the structural presupposition, non-factive presupposition and counter-factual presupposition.

1. Existential Presupposition

The existential presupposition is not only assumed to be present in possessive construction but more generally in any definite noun phrase. Speaker is committed to the existence of the entities named any definite noun phrase an assumption that someone or something exists, based on the Yule's, (1996, p.27).

Also, the definite noun has any form such as definite article, determiner and proper name that use to specifying something that have in known by listeners. Then, form the definite article and the determiner like that, this, these, and those. As well as possessive pronoun like Tina, my, yours. To refer in word exist. El-Gamal, (2001, p.42) says that definite expressions are closely linked to existence and reference which express indefiniteness with indefinite articles that always precede the noun.

Definite expressions include proper nouns, personal pronouns, and noun phrases. A semantic categorization of noun phrases divides them in three subclasses definite descriptions, indefinite noun phrases, and quantified noun phrases. Definite descriptions are expressions that refer to some definite entity and identify it partly by means of the descriptive content of the expression. For example: The Governor of North Sumatera, the citizen, the building.

In the example above, the utterance said "The Governor of North Sumatera" that the Governor does exist and they presuppose is "there is the Governor of North Sumatera":

The citizen → exist

The building → exist

2. Factive Presupposition

The second type of presupposition is factive presupposition since some verb used in the sentences to indicates a fact, such as know, realize, regret, glad, odd and aware. The speaker makes the hearer or reader trust and the information of the utterance in a fact, based on Yule's, (1996, p.27) For example:

- 1) She did not realize he told a lie (>> He told a lie)
- 2) We regret buying the gift. (>> We bought the gift)
- 3) I was not aware that she was ill. (>>She was ill)
- 4) It is not odd that he woke up late. (>>He woke up late)
- 5) I am glad that you are the winner (>>You are the winner)

In the example above, the part (a) of the sentence that can be presupposed is "He told a lie" because it is the fact or the part of the sentence that must be true although she realized it or she did not realize it. While the part (b) of the sentence that can be presupposed is "We bought the gift" Because it is the fact or the part of the sentence that must be true although we regret it. The same way part (c) of the phrase "was not aware" gives an assumption that I do not know that she was ill. So, the presupposed information treated as the fact of her.

3. Non-factive Presupposition

The non-factive presupposition is associated with some verbs that are assumed not to be true, such verbs are the dream, imagine and pretend are used with the presupposition that what follows is not true, based on the Yule's, (1996, p.29). For example:

- a. I dreamed that I was popular (>>I was not popular)
- b. We imagined we were in a beach (>>We were not in a beach)
- c. He pretends to be sad (>>He is not sad)

In the first sentence, the use of the verb "dreamed" indicates that the clause following the verb "I was popular" is not true. This means that the presupposition is "I

was not popular”. Meanwhile, is applied to the second sentence where it can be presupposed that the clause “We were in a beach” is not true because it follows the verb “imagined”. The same way, in the third sentence, the presupposition is “He is not sad” because the clause uses the verb “pretends”.

4. Lexical Presupposition.

Based on the Yule’s, (1996, p.28), lexical presupposition is asserted meaning conventionally interpreted with another meaning for the listener understood about the information it and it has some word like managed, stop, and start. For example:

- a. He stopped drinking. (>>He used to drink)
- b. They started shouting. (>>They were not shouting before)
- c. You come again. (>>You came before).

In the example above, in the first sentence, the use of one verb “stopped” can lead up to the presupposition that the drinking was his pass habit, so it can be presupposed that “He used to drink”. Furthermore, in the second sentence, the use of one verb “Started” indicates the beginning which means that before the utterance is made, the action of shouting has never been done. The same way third sentence, the use of one verb “come” indicates the not on time means that before the utterance is made, the action of again has never been done.

5. Structural Ppresupposition.

The presupposition is the speaker treats them as presupposed information and accepted be true by the listeners. It can be seen in the use of WH- question construction, which is the information after WH-question is already known to be the case, based on the Yule’s, (1996, p.28). For example:

- a. When did he go? (>>He went)
- b. Where did you buy the flower (>>You bought the flower)

The sentence above shows that the listener perceives that the information presented is necessarily true rather than just the presupposition of the person asking the question.

6. Counter-factual Presupposition

This type creates a presupposition meaning that is contrary to the facts or the opposite is true. Such a structure of if-clause presupposes that information is considered as not true. However, the meaning of this presupposition isn’t only true, but it is the opposite of what is true or contrary to the fact, based on the Yule’s, (1996, p.29). For example: If you were my friend, you would have helped me. (>>You are not my friend)

Based on the example above, the if-clause “if you were my friend” uses a conditional structure indicating that the if-clause is opposite to the utterance, so it can be presupposed that the meaning of the clause is “you are not my friend.”

Presuppositions function as follows:

1. To guide specific responses or predictions based on how the spoken language is now being used,
2. To find the meaning of the author's expressions to the reader,

3. To convey information and express feelings through presupposition, because they must offer information about which the reader is already aware of the intended meaning,
4. To give the reader something fresh to think about, or to transform and give others another representation, and
5. To find presupposition from the author's utterances, implying that we may locate what is going on in his map of the world (mind perception/internal representation) (Yule, 1996, p.29).

Yule (1996) also states that presupposition have features such as:

1. Stay true even if negated

The fundamental feature of presuppositions is the nature of truth under denial. This means that even if a sentence is employed as a negative sentence or negated, the statement's assumption remains valid as in the following:

- 1) John's house is new.
- 2) John's house isn't new.

Sentence (2) is the negative form of sentence (1). The presupposition of sentence (1) is that John has a house. In sentence (2), it turns out that the presupposition does not change even though sentence (2) contains denial, namely by the presence of the word negation, not from sentence (1), which has the same presupposition that John owns a house.

Sentence is stated to preposition another sentence if the second sentence is incorrect (a sentence prepositioned), resulting in the first sentence not being able to be said to be true or false.

Example:

- 1) The official's wife is very beautiful.
- 2) The official has a wife.

Sentence (2) is a presupposition of sentence (1). The sentence can be stated as right or wrong if the official has a wife. However, when it's the other way around with the existing reality (the official does not have a wife), the sentence cannot be determined.

2. Can be canceled

Presuppositions can be deleted if they do not match the implied assumptions and implicatures of conversational and linguistic context. Furthermore, presuppositions can be delayed because the existence of arguments is reduced by the possibilities that exist in discourse. Example: "I cannot come tomorrow morning because there is an obstacle." The utterance was revealed by someone to their friend. That friend will definitely have a presupposition. Maybe he will take his child to school, or maybe there is an obstacle in the way. However, if the person continues to say, "I have an official meeting tomorrow morning" then the presupposition will be canceled because it has been notified directly by the speaker so that the interlocutor no longer has a presupposition to the statement.

This research is also supported by several related researches:

1. Briant Nino Aditya (2014): in his thesis entitled *A Pragmatic Analysis of Presupposition in Genndy Tartakovsky's Hotel Transylvania*, seeking to identify the most prevalent type of presupposition and the inferred meaning of the characters'

statements in the movie; and this is quite different from the present research in terms of the topic, the theoretical framework applied and the source of data. They are similar only in terms of the subject matter namely presupposition.

2. Yuni lestari (2015): in her thesis entitled *Presupposition of Anna and Declan's Utterances in Anand Tucker's Leap* in which she focuses on the forms of presuppositions and the aim of the characters' utterances in the movies. This work is also different from the present research in terms of focus of analysis and the source of data.

3. Research Method

This part outlines the research methodology used in the study, which includes the research design, data sources, data collection, and data analysis procedures. The study primarily employs a descriptive qualitative method to describe phenomena naturally without experimental intervention, focusing on the types and meanings of presuppositions used by Josephine in *Little Women*, based on Yule's (1996) pragmatic theory. While quantitative elements are applied to present percentages of occurrences for clarity, the research remains predominantly qualitative, as the data are expressed in words rather than numbers. As a form of literary research, the study uses library research, with data consisting of Josephine's utterances and dialogues containing presuppositions in the 2014 PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama edition of *Little Women*.

Data were collected using reading and note-taking techniques, focusing on utterances relevant to the research objectives. For data analysis, the study adopts Sudaryanto's (2015) pragmatic equivalent method, specifically the pragmatic competence-in-equalizing technique, to classify and interpret the presuppositions according to Yule's classification. The process involved reading the novel for contextual understanding, identifying patterns in Josephine's speech, and classifying the types and meanings of presuppositions found in her utterances.

4. Discussion

This part investigates the types and meaning of presuppositions found in the utterances of Josephine March (Jo), a central character in *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott. Jo is known for her strong, expressive, and often impulsive speech, making her utterances rich with presuppositional meaning. The overall data of presupposition found in Jo's utterances can be seen in the table below:

No	Types of Presupposition	Frequency	Percentage
1	Existential Presupposition	10	29
2	Factive Presupposition	8	23
3	Non- Factive Presupposition	3	8.5
4	Lexical Presupposition	5	14
5	Structural Presupposition	6	17
6	Counter-Factual Presupposition	3	8.5
TOTAL		35	100%

Table 1. The Occurrence of the Types of Presupposition in the Conversation

From the total data of 35 on the types of presupposition, 10 of them are Existential Presupposition, 8 of them are Factive Presupposition, 6 of them are Structural Presupposition, 5 of them are Leical Presupposition, 3 of them are Non-Factive Presupposition, and the rest 3 data are Counter Factual Presupposition. Below is

the further explanation of each of the types of presupposition found in the Josephine's utterances.

4.1 Existential Presupposition

Existential Presupposition is the most frequently occurring type in the main character's utterances in Little Women novel. This type is called existential presupposition since it is the assumption of the existence of the entities named by the speaker. In this research, the writer founds 10 data but, the writer just to explain some of data this type. The data can be seen below:

1. The first data can be seen on the page 23 chapter 2 where Jo and her sisters are going to surprise their mother at home.

Jo: 'She's coming! Strike up, Beth! **Open the door, Amy!** Three cheers for Marmee!' cried Jo, prancing about while Meg went to conduct Mother to the seat of honor.

The bold words refer to existential presupposition because the word "the door". It uses definite noun "the" and the listener or readers assume that there is a door, so the door exists.

2. The utterances can be found on the page 202 - 203 chapter 13

The utterance below shows that the participants of the conversation are Jo, Meg and Laurie in front of their house. They were talking about their big dream. Both Meg and Laurie want to have a great wedding party and a lovely house but Jo is different. Jo shows that she doesn't want her sisters' dream. She only wants to be a well-known author.

Jo: What's yours, Meg?"

Meg: *(talk about her wedding and house)*

"A lovely house, full of all sorts of luxurious things..."

Laurie **(kidding at Jo)**:

"Wouldn't you have nothing but horses, ink-stands, and novels in yours?"

Jo **(serious and excited)**:

"Not a single horse, nor a novel even. I do want to do something splendid before I go into my castle, something heroic or wonderful that won't be forgotten after I'm dead." "I think I shall write books, and get rich and famous; that would suit me, so that is my favorite dream." "**My sisters** always laughs at me when I talk about fame, but I mean to go a different way from most girls and try something new."

The bold utterance is classified as the existential presupposition because it shows that the speaker mentions concrete noun, my sisters. Readers can presuppose that Jo has sisters and they exist.

3. The utterances below can be seen in chapter 3 on page 39 where Jo and Mr. Laurie Laurence are talking in March's house.

Mr Laurie : 'My first name is Theodore, but I don't like it, for the fellows called me Dora, so I made the say Laurie instead.'

Jo : 'I hate **my name**, too, so sentimental! I wish every one would say Jo instead of Josephine.'

The bold words refer to existential presupposition as there is possession word "my". The readers presuppose that Jo is her name and Jo exists.

4. The fourth data from existential presupposition can be seen in the conversation below:

Laurie : ‘Do you like your school?’ asked the boy, changing the subject, after a little pause, during which he stared at the fire and Jo looked about her, well pleased.

Jo : ‘Don’t go to school, **I’m a businessman—girl**, I mean. I go to wait on **my great-aunt, and a dear**, cross old soul she is, too,’ answered Jo.

The conversation can be found on page 71 – 72 chapter 5 where Laurie invites Jo to look around his house. From the bold words, readers or listeners can conclude that the words are existential presupposition. A businessman or girl is real, because she is an author and my great aunt means Jo has an aunt. Then a dear is include in existential presupposition because it uses a definite article “a”.

5. The fifth data can be seen on page 87 – 88 chapter 6, where the conversion take place in March’s house between Jo and her sister Amy.

Amy: ‘How nice it sounds! I wish someone would write to me so!’ said Amy, who thought the old-fashioned address very elegant

Jo: **I have had many pairs of slippers in my life**, but I never had any that suited me so well as yours, “ continues Jo.

This bold utterance is classified as the existential presupposition because it shows that the speaker has slippers. It means that the slippers are exist, as well as her life. The word “my” is one of the characteristics of existential presupposition.

6. The sixth and seventh utterances can be seen on page 222 chapter 15 where the March sister are talking each other in their house.

Meg: I dare say, but nothing pleasant ever does happen in this family,’ said Meg, who was out of sorts. ‘We go grubbing along day after day, without a bit of change, and very little fun. We might as well be in a treadmill.’

Jo: ‘**My patience, how blue we are!**’ cried Jo. ‘I don’t much wonder, poor dear, for you see other girls having splendid times, while you grind, grind, year in and year out. **Oh, don’t I wish I could manage things for you as I do for my heroes!** You’re pretty enough and good enough already, so I’d have some rich relation leave you a fortune unexpectedly. Then you’d dash out as an heiress, scorn everyone who has slighted you, go abroad, and come home my Lady Something in a blaze of splendor and elegance.’

The two bold utterances are classified as the existential presupposition because they use possessive construction “my”. It also means that Jo has patience in her self. As well as the word I do for my heroes, it means that Jo has heroes that is her parents and she will do anything for her parents as she can do.

4.2 Factive Presupposition

Factive Presupposition refers to an assumption that the speaker is a fact. This type has some words are used in the sentences to denote facts, such as know, realize, regret, glad, aware, odd. In this research, the writer found 8 data that be part of factive presupposition. They can be seen in these utterancs below:

7. The utterance below shows that the participants of the conversation are March's sister and their mother. It takes place at home when they are having dinner in the kitchen.

Amy: 'Is it fairies?' asked Amy.

Beth: 'Santa Claus,' said Beth.

'Mother did it.' And Meg smiled her sweetest, in spite of her gray beard and white eyebrows.

Jo: 'That boy; put it into his head, **I know he did!** He's a capital fellow, and I wish we could get acquainted. He looks as if he'd like to know us but he's bashful, and Meg is so prim. She won't let me speak to him when we pass,' said Jo, as the plates went round, and the ice began to melt out of sight.

This bold utterance is classified as the factive presupposition because it shows that the speaker indicates excitement about talking to the man. Furthermore, Jo has already known that boy.

8. The next utterance is happened in Laurie's house when Jo was visiting her neighbour's house Laurie. This conversation can be found on chapter 5 page 38.

Jo: Dear me, I didn't know anyone was here!' stammered Jo, preparing to back out as speedily as she had bounced in. But the boy laughed and said pleasantly.

This bold utterance is classified as the factive presupposition because it shows that the speaker indicates feeling embarrassed because she came immediately to a room where there is a man "Laurie", and Jo doesn't know that the man is in the room.

4.3 Non-Factive Presupposition

The non-factive presupposition is one that is assumed not to be true. Then, these types are the opposite of factive presupposition. There is a verb that includes this type like dream, imagine and pretend. In this research, the writer found 3 utterances that belong to the type of non-factive those are:

9. Jo: What's yours, Meg?"

Meg: (talk about her wedding and house)

"A lovely house, full of all sorts of luxurious things..."

Laurie (kidding at Jo):

"Wouldn't you have nothing but horses, ink stands, and novels in yours?"

Jo (serious and excited):

"Not a single horse, nor a novel even. I do want to do something splendid before I go into my castle, something heroic or wonderful that won't be forgotten after I'm dead." **"I think I shall write books, and get rich and famous; that would suit me, so that is my favorite dream."** "My sisters always laugh at me when I talk about fame, but I mean to go a different way from most girls and try something new."

This bold utterance is classified as the non-factive presupposition because it shows that the speaker indicates she isn't famous and rich.

4.4 Lexical Presupposition

Lexical Presupposition is the fourth most frequently occurring type in the main

character's utterances. In this type, the use of one form with its asserted meaning is conventionally interpreted with the presupposition that another (non-asserted) meaning is understood. It is also can be said that Lexical Presupposition is the assumption that, in using one word, the speaker can act as if another meaning (word) will be understood.

10. The utterance below can be seen on page 125 chapter 9

Sallie: 'What shall you wear?' asked Sallie.

Jo: **'My old white one again,** if I can mend it fit to be seen, it got sadly torn last night,' said Jo, trying to speak quite easily, but feeling very uncomfortable.

From the bold word above, we can assume that Jo has once wore the clothe. "Again" means something have been repeated.

4.5 Structural Presupposition

Structural Presupposition is the third most frequently occurring type in the main character's utterances. In this type, certain sentence structures have been analyzed as conventionally and regularly presupposing that part of the structure is assumed to be true (Yule, 1996, p.29). One might say that speakers can use such structures to treat information as presupposed (assumed to be true) and hence to be accepted as true by the listeners. The Structural Presupposition found in Josephine's utterances can be seen below:

11. This conversation happened between Jo and her sister Meg on page 79 chapter 5.

Meg : 'That's why he has such handsome black eyes and pretty manners, I suppose. Italians are always nice,' said Meg, who was a little sentimental.

Jo: **'What do you know about his eyes and his manners?** You never spoke to him, hardly,' cried Jo, who was not sentimental.

This bold utterance is classified as the structural presupposition because in this expression it has a presupposition that Jo is realistic, so she ask Meg

12. The next data happened in the girls bedroom on the page 101 chapter 8

Jo: **Girls, where are you going?' asked Jo,** coming into their room one Saturday afternoon, and finding them getting ready to go out with an air of secrecy which excited her curiosity.

'Never mind. Little girls shouldn't ask questions,' returned Meg sharply.

This bold utterance is classified as the structural presupposition because in this expression it has a presupposition that Jo wants to know where they are going to go.

4.6 Counter Factual Presupposition

Counter Factual Presupposition is the type of presupposition occurs when the assumption of what is presupposed is not only untrue, but is the opposite of what is true, or contrary to facts. For instance, some conditional structures, generally called counterfactual conditionals, presuppose that the information, in the if- clauses, is not true at the time of utterance.

13. The utterance below can be seen on 113 chapter 8 where Jo and her mother are talking in bedroom

Jo: Oh, Mother, **if I'm ever half as good as you, I shall be satisfied,'** cried Jo, much touched.

'I hope you will be a great deal better, dear, but you must keep watch over your 'bosom enemy', as father calls it, or it may sadden, if not spoil your life.

The bold sentence identifies as the Counterfactual Presupposition because the word "if" and it means that Jo isn't as patient as her mother.

5. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis, all Yule's six types of presupposition are found in the utterances of Jo as the main character in *Little Women*. Those six types of presupposition are Existential Presupposition, Factive Presupposition, Non-Factive Presupposition, Lexical Presupposition, Structural Presupposition, and Counter Factual Presupposition.

Based on the table 1 above, it can be seen that all types of presupposition are found in the Josephine's utterances in *Little Women*. The Existential Presupposition is the most-used types of presupposition with total 10 data out of 35 data. It also can be seen that Existential Presupposition has 29% portion in the presupposition conversation found in Jo's utterances. It implies that Existential Presupposition is the type of presupposition that mostly appeared in main character's utterances *Little Women*. The second most-used type of presupposition is the Factive Presupposition. It has 8 data out of 35 data which means that Factive Presupposition has 23 % of the data findings. The third most-used type of presupposition is the Structural Presupposition. Structural Presupposition has 6 data out of 35 data which means that it has 17 % of the data findings. As for the fourth most-used type of presupposition, it is the Lexical Presupposition. Lexical Presupposition has 5 data out of 35 data which means that it has 14% of the data findings.

The least-used types of presupposition found in Jo's utterances in *Little Woman* novel are the Non-Factive Presupposition and Counter Factual Prsupposition. They both have 3 data out of 35 data. It also can be seen that Non-Factive Presupposition and Counter Factual Presupposition have 8,5 % portion in the main character's utterances. It implies that Non-Factive Presupposition and Counter Factual are the types of presupposition that least appeared in Jo's utterances in *Little Women* novel. A total of 35 utterances by Jo March were identified as containing presuppositions. These utterances were selected based on their relevance and clarity in showing presuppositional triggers. The analysis reveals that Jo frequently uses existential and factive presuppositions, followed by structural, lexical, non-factive, and counterfactual presuppositions. The findings show that Jo's use of presupposition is closely linked to her personality traits: independent, emotional, observant, and imaginative. The high occurrence of existential and factive presuppositions suggests that Jo's speech is rooted in real and emotionally charged experiences. Less frequent types like non-factive and counterfactual reflect Jo's inner thoughts, dreams, and social critiques. These presuppositions contribute not only to character development but also enrich the narrative by revealing Jo's values and inner struggles. Through her utterances, readers gain insight into her evolving identity, her relationships, and her responses to societal expectations. As a young woman living in 19th-century New England, Jo is expected to conform to traditional gender roles to be modest, domestic, and marriage-minded. However, Jo often resists these expectations, and this resistance is reflected in the presuppositions embedded in her speech. For example, when Jo says, "I can't get over my disappointment in not being a boy," (Chapter 3), the existential presupposition

("there is a world where she could be a boy") highlights her desire to escape the limited roles offered to women. It presupposes that being a boy would allow her more freedom and opportunity, subtly critiquing societal norms.

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CHARACTER AND THE STRUGGLE FOR CIVILIZATION IN WILLIAM GOLDING'S *LORD OF THE FLIES*

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Abstract

William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954) presents a profound exploration of human nature under duress, centering on the collapse of social order and the descent into primal savagery. This study employs a descriptive qualitative method to conduct a character analysis of the novel's protagonist, Ralph, focusing on the intrinsic qualities that define his struggle for survival and the preservation of civilization. Through a close reading of the text, this paper identifies and examines four cardinal traits—leadership, charisma, organizational prowess, and civility—that constitute Ralph's character. The analysis demonstrates that these traits are not merely descriptive but are the fundamental engines of his resistance against the antagonistic force, represented by Jack, which embodies chaos and violence. The findings reveal that Ralph's struggle is multifaceted: it is a physical battle for survival, a psychological fight against despair, and an ideological conflict for the soul of the community. Ultimately, this paper argues that Ralph's characterization serves as Golding's central argument for the fragility of civilization, which must be consciously and courageously upheld through rational principles, democratic leadership, and moral fortitude, even in the face of overwhelming barbarism. His survival is a testament to the resilience of these values.

Keywords: *Character analysis; civilization vs. savagery; leadership; Lord of the Flies; protagonist; survival; William Golding*

1. Introduction

Literature has perennially served as a medium for examining the human condition, particularly the capacity for both creation and destruction inherent within society. The modern literary canon often grapples with the tension between the civilizing impulse and the primal instincts that lie beneath the surface of social order. William Golding's seminal novel, *Lord of the Flies* (1954), stands as a paramount work in this tradition. Set against the backdrop of an unspecified war, the narrative strips away the layers of modern civilization by stranding a group of British schoolboys on an uninhabited island. Devoid of adult supervision and the structures of society, the boys' initial attempts to establish a functional microcosm rapidly erode, revealing the precarious nature of order and the potent allure of savagery.

Within this allegorical framework, the character of Ralph emerges as the protagonist and the primary representative of order, reason, and democratic values. His journey is the narrative's moral core, depicting a relentless struggle to maintain the

tenets of civilization against the escalating tyranny of Jack Merridew, who embodies the destructive forces of authoritarianism and primal violence. Ralph's fight is not merely for physical survival but for the survival of an idea—the belief that rules, cooperation, and the hope of rescue are worth preserving.

The central problem this study addresses is twofold: first, to delineate the specific characteristics that define Ralph as the protagonist; and second, to analyze how these specific traits inform and shape his struggle for a better, more civilized existence on the island. By dissecting Ralph's character through established literary theories, this paper aims to illuminate the mechanics of his resilience. The significance of this analysis lies in its contribution to the understanding of how Golding uses character as a vehicle for thematic exploration. Ralph is not a static symbol but a dynamic character whose internal and external conflicts provide a nuanced commentary on the active, continuous effort required to uphold civilization. This study posits that his ultimate survival is directly attributable to the consistent application of his core characteristics, making him a compelling case study in leadership and moral courage under extreme duress.

2. Literature Review

This analysis is grounded in the intersection of literary theory, specifically character studies, and psychological concepts of motivation and adjustment.

2.1 Character and Characterization in Narrative

In narrative fiction, characters are the agents through which plot is advanced and theme is realized. E.M. Forster (1947), in his seminal work *Aspects of the Novel*, establishes a crucial distinction between "flat" and "round" characters. A round character, such as Ralph, is dynamic, complex, and capable of growth and change in response to narrative events, thereby embodying the story's central conflicts (Forster, 1947, pp. 46-51). Furthermore, Minderop (2005) emphasizes that character is the most crucial element of a story, as it drives the plot and functions as a representation of a human being, complete with mental and moral attributes that elicit reader engagement (p. 2).

The process of revealing these attributes is known as characterization. Jauhari (2013) defines characterization as the method by which an author constructs and reveals the personalities of the actors in a story (p. 161). Minderop (2005) elaborates on two primary techniques:

- a. Direct Characterization (Telling): The narrator explicitly comments on or describes the traits of a character.
- b. Indirect Characterization (Showing): The character's personality is revealed through their own speech, thoughts, actions, and appearance, or through the opinions of other characters (p. 6-22).

Furthermore, contemporary scholarly analysis continues to explore the complexity of Golding's characters. For instance, Tigchelaar (2018) argues that the characters in *Lord of the Flies* serve as archetypes in a modern moral allegory, with Ralph's characterization being central to the novel's critique of societal structures (p. 42).

2.2 Motivation and the Psychological Drive for Survival

Character action is fueled by motivation. Worchel and Shebilske (1989) define motivation as the internal arousal or energy that directs behavior (p. 417). It is the underlying drive that propels goal-directed action. In the context of survival literature, motivation is the critical force that determines a character's response to adversity. Bernard (1980) suggests that individuals consciously implement strategies to cope with extreme stress and problems, a process that involves protecting one's ego and striving for a desired outcome (p. 64). Ralph's motivation is his unwavering desire for rescue, order, and a return to civilization, which directs all his strategic decisions on the island.

This motivation is particularly tested in leadership roles during crises. Research into group dynamics suggests that a leader's primary motivation for maintaining order, much like Ralph's, is often a fundamental belief in the collective good and a fear of the chaos that follows its abandonment (Jaffe, 2020).

2.3 The Concept of Struggle and Adjustment

The struggle for life is an inherent human experience. Braun and Linder (1979) frame this struggle through the concept of adjustment—the process by which people cope with the stresses and problems of their environment (pp. 478-480). This process involves three key aspects: active problem-solving, the acceptance of uncontrollable situations, and the use of defense mechanisms to manage anxiety. Ralph's journey is a textbook case of adjustment. He actively solves problems (building shelters, managing the fire), is forced to accept the grim reality of the island's descent into savagery, and must constantly combat fear and despair. His struggle, therefore, is a continuous process of psychological and practical adjustment to maintain his goal of survival and rescue.

The ideological dimension of this struggle is paramount. The conflict on the island is not a passive descent but an active battle between two competing worldviews. Olsen (2017) frames this as a necessary ideological war, arguing that "the fight for civilization is active, not passive" and requires constant assertion of its values against the allure of a simpler, more brutal existence (p. 115).

2.4 Leadership and the Fragility of Order

The novel's exploration of leadership styles provides a critical lens for understanding Ralph's struggle. His democratic and pragmatic approach stands in direct opposition to Jack's authoritarianism. Sipione (2019) analyzes this dichotomy, concluding that Ralph's leadership, while morally righteous, is inherently fragile because it depends on the group's conscious participation and belief in abstract rules, which erode under fear and scarcity (p. 73). This fragility is further examined by Baker (2021), who notes that the symbols of order, such as the conch, lose their power as the boys' connection to the civilized world weakens, making Ralph's task increasingly impossible (p. 29).

3. Research Method

This study adopted a descriptive qualitative research design. As defined by Creswell (2009), this approach is a plan for inquiry that involves exploring a central phenomenon within its natural setting and relying on the "voices and interpretations of informants"—in this case, the textual evidence from the primary source (p. 3). The phenomenon under investigation is the construction of the protagonist's character and the manifestation of his struggle within the narrative world of *Lord of the Flies*.

The primary source of data was William Golding's novel itself. Data collection was conducted through a methodical and repeated close reading of the text. The objective was to identify, extract, and catalogue all relevant passages, dialogues, and narrative descriptions that explicitly or implicitly illustrate:

- a. The characteristics of Ralph (e.g., descriptions of his appearance, his speeches, his thoughts, other characters' perceptions of him).
- b. The actions and decisions Ralph takes in response to challenges, which constitute his "struggle."

The data analysis was iterative and systematic, following these stages:

- a. Data Reduction: The collected textual evidence was organized into categories based on the research questions (e.g., "quotes showing leadership," "actions showing civility").
- b. Data Display: The categorized data was then analyzed using the theoretical frameworks of character (Forster, 1947; Minderop, 2005) and struggle (Braun & Linder, 1979; Bernard, 1980).
- c. Conclusion Drawing and Verification: The analyzed data was interpreted to draw meaningful conclusions about the relationship between Ralph's character and his struggle. These conclusions were constantly verified against the text to ensure validity and avoid misinterpretation.

This method ensures that the analysis is deeply embedded in the text, providing a robust and evidence-based interpretation of the protagonist's role.

4. Discussion

The analysis of the text reveals that Ralph's character is meticulously constructed through a blend of direct and indirect characterization, forming a cohesive portrait of a nascent leader engaged in a tragic struggle.

4.1 The Constituent Characteristics of the Protagonist

Ralph is established as a classic "round" character whose complexity unfolds throughout the novel. His defining traits are revealed through his actions, his words, and the narrator's insights.

4.1.1 Leadership: The Burden of Authority

Ralph's leadership is not innate arrogance but a reluctant acceptance of responsibility. Elected chief for his initial calm demeanor and possession of the conch—a powerful symbol of order—his leadership is characterized by a commitment to fairness and democratic process. However, Golding also shows his vulnerability. His command,

"I'm chief. I'll go. Don't argue (Golding, 1954, p. 145)."

The quotation above reveals his decisiveness, but the subsequent note that "He found his voice tended either to disappear or to come out too loud. He looked at Jack" exposes his insecurity and need for validation. This complexity makes his leadership realistic; it is a quality he must constantly assert and refine against mounting opposition, embodying the difficult and often lonely burden of rational leadership.

4.1.2 Charisma: The Magnetism of Order

Ralph's physicality is a key component of his charisma. His initial description paints him as the ideal of British boyhood: athletic, handsome, and possessing a "*mildness about his mouth and eyes that proclaimed no devil*" (Golding, 1954, p. 26). This charisma is his initial social capital. It attracts the loyalty of the "littluns" and the respect of others like Simon. It is the surface manifestation of an inner stability that the other boys gravitate towards, especially in contrast to Piggy's intellect without presence or Jack's malevolent intensity.

4.1.3 Organizational Prowess

The Architecture of Civilization. Ralph understands intuitively that survival and rescue depend on systems and organization. He immediately prioritizes the signal fire and the construction of shelters—practical, forward-looking goals that represent a commitment to a collective future. His meticulous nature is evident in his preparation for assemblies:

"he went carefully over the points of his speech. There must be no mistake about this assembly, no chasing imaginary..." (Golding, 1954, p. 109).

This desire to structure thought and meeting reflects a civilized mind attempting to impose order on the growing chaos. His organizational efforts are the practical application of his leadership and his most tangible contribution to the group's welfare.

4.1.4 Civility: The Moral Compass

Above all, Ralph represents civility. This trait is his defining feature and the source of his deepest conflict. It is revealed most poignantly not in his actions, but in his memories and longings. His nostalgic daydream of his home in England—a world with clear boundaries, warmth, education, and parental care (Golding, 1954, pp. 154-155)—serves as his moral anchor. This memory is a constant reminder of what he is fighting for: a world governed by rules, protection for the weak, and the comfort of community. His insistence on the conch's authority, his defense of Piggy, and his grief for the loss of "the truth" are all manifestations of this deep-seated civility. It is this core value that Jack's tribe seeks to destroy.

4.2 The Protagonist's Struggle: A Multi-Dimensional Conflict

Ralph's struggle is the central conflict of the novel and operates on three interconnected levels, each reflecting a different facet of the human condition under duress.

- a. **The Physical Struggle:** This is the fight for basic survival against hunger, the elements, and the very real threat of violence from Jack's tribe. His leadership and organizational skills are his primary tools in this arena, as he tries to manage resources and provide safety. This struggle aligns with the fundamental drive for survival, which Bernard (1980) identifies as a core human motivation that compels individuals to consciously implement strategies to cope with extreme stress and problems (p. 64). Ralph's focus on building shelters and maintaining the signal fire are direct applications of this survival-driven adjustment.
- b. **The Psychological Struggle:** This is an internal battle against fear, despair, and the creeping sense of futility. As the group abandons his ideals, Ralph faces immense

loneliness and doubt. His civility is both his burden and his shield in this struggle, preventing him from succumbing to the easy savagery that surrounds him. This internal conflict exemplifies the process of adjustment described by Braun and Linder (1979), where an individual must not only solve external problems but also manage internal anxiety and accept uncontrollable situations (p. 478-480). Ralph's moments of despair and his poignant longing for the civilized world of home (Golding, 1954, p. 154-155) are testament to this profound psychological toll.

- c. **The Ideological Struggle:** This is the core of the novel's theme: the battle for the soul of the community. Ralph, championing democracy, rules, and the common good, is pitted against Jack, who offers the brutal simplicity of might-makes-right, hunting, and visceral fear. Every assembly, every argument over the fire, is a skirmish in this war of ideologies. This dimension of his struggle is not a passive decline but an active war, a point emphasized by Olsen (2017), who argues that "the fight for civilization is active, not passive" and requires the constant assertion of its values (p. 115). Furthermore, Sipione (2019) highlights the fragility of Ralph's democratic leadership in the face of Jack's authoritarian appeal, underscoring the immense difficulty of his ideological position (p. 73).

Ralph's four characteristics are the weapons in this multi-front struggle. His charisma gathers supporters, his organizational prowess creates a platform for his ideology, his leadership directs the fight, and his civility defines the very cause for which he is fighting. His eventual physical survival, ensured by the *deus ex machina* arrival of the naval officer, is secondary to his moral and ideological survival. He never capitulates. He is rescued not as a victor, but as a survivor who has held onto his humanity against all odds, making him a tragic but heroic figure. The tears he sheds at the end are for "the end of innocence," a testament to the profound cost of his struggle.

5. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the protagonist's struggle in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* is a direct and intricate function of his characterization. Ralph is not a passive symbol of civilization but its active, struggling defender. His defining traits—leadership, charisma, organizational prowess, and civility—are interwoven to create a complex individual whose every action is a conscious or unconscious effort to uphold the values of the world he has lost.

The novel, through Ralph's painful journey, argues that civilization is not a passive state but a fragile construct that requires constant vigilance, rational effort, and moral courage to maintain. It is not automatically inherited but must be consciously chosen and defended every day, even when it is inefficient or difficult. Ralph's struggle is ultimately successful because he never makes the choice to abandon his principles. While the island society collapses around him, his personal integrity remains intact. Therefore, this analysis concludes that Golding uses Ralph's character to propose that the struggle for a "better life" is, in its essence, the struggle to preserve one's own humanity through adherence to order, reason, and empathy, even in the face of a world reverting to darkness. Ralph's story remains a powerful and enduring lesson on the precarious nature of the social contract and the individual's role in its preservation.

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FEMALE RIVALRY IN ELENA FERRANTE'S *MY BRILLIANT FRIEND*: A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

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Abstract

This study analyzes the phenomenon of female rivalry in Elena Ferrante's *My Brilliant Friend*, focusing on the complex relationship between the two protagonists, Elena "Lenu" Greco and Raffaella "Lila" Cerullo. Employing a qualitative descriptive method and the sociology of literature approach, the research explores both the contents and underlying factors of their rivalry. Data were collected through close reading and analyzed based on theoretical frameworks concerning female competition. The findings reveal that the rivalry between Lenu and Lila centers on three main dimensions: attractiveness, encompassing Lila's intellectual brilliance and magnetic personality; beauty and physical appearance, which create deep insecurities for Lenu; and similarity of interests, particularly their shared passion for learning and recognition. These dynamics are further intensified by two driving factors: competition for male attention and Lenu's persistent lack of self-confidence. The study concludes that female rivalry, even within a deep friendship, functions as both a source of motivation and emotional struggle, reflecting broader societal expectations surrounding women's beauty, intellect, and desirability.

Keywords: *female rivalr; Elena Ferrante; My Brilliant Frien; sociology of literature*

1. Introduction

The slogan "*women support women*" has become a central mantra in contemporary discussions about female relationships, promoting solidarity, empowerment, and collective advancement. This ideal is institutionalized through various organizations and movements advocating for women's rights and welfare. However, the optimistic narrative of universal sisterhood often contrasts with the more complex realities of social interaction, where jealousy and competition among women persist across diverse contexts (Nova, 2018). Such rivalry often stems from the desire for affection, attention, praise, and the fear of being surpassed by others (Kartajaya & Mahatristi, 2010).

Rivalry, defined as a state of ongoing competition between individuals or groups (Thompson, 2001), is not inherently negative. It can serve as a catalyst for self-improvement, ambition, and personal growth. Yet, when embedded within intimate relationships such as friendship, rivalry may create an intricate psychological tension—simultaneously fostering admiration and resentment. In female relationships, this duality

of affection and competition reflects broader cultural expectations and social hierarchies that shape women's self-concept and interpersonal behavior.

Elena Ferrante's acclaimed novel *My Brilliant Friend* offers a rich exploration of this phenomenon. Set in a poor and violent neighborhood in post-war Naples, the novel follows the lifelong friendship between Elena "Lenu" Greco and Raffaella "Lila" Cerullo. Their bond, established in childhood, is characterized by deep affection, intellectual companionship, and an unrelenting sense of rivalry. They constantly measure themselves against one another—in academic performance, beauty, and their ability to attract male attention. Ferrante's narrative thus provides a nuanced literary space to examine the complex intersection of admiration, envy, and social conditioning that defines many female friendships.

This study investigates the dynamics of female rivalry within Ferrante's *My Brilliant Friend* through the lens of the sociology of literature. Specifically, it aims to: (1) identify the central contents of the rivalry between the two protagonists, Lenu and Lila, and (2) analyze the underlying factors that sustain their competition throughout the novel. By addressing these objectives, the research seeks to answer the guiding question: How does Elena Ferrante depict the anatomy of female rivalry in the friendship between Lenu and Lila, and what social and psychological forces sustain it? This study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of female relationships in literature. It challenges simplistic depictions of women as either natural allies or adversaries and instead highlights the coexistence of affection and competition as fundamental aspects of female experience. In doing so, it illuminates how societal pressures, personal insecurities, and shared ambitions intertwine to shape women's identities and emotional lives.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Sociology of Literature

To analyze the social phenomena within a literary text, this study adopts the lens of the sociology of literature. This approach posits that literature is a reflection of society; it is multidisciplinary and can be understood through perspectives like sociology, psychology, and politics (Suhariyadi, 2014). Literature expresses human life and social realities, often packaged in a fictional context (Suwardi, 2011). As Ian Watt suggests, literature can act as a mirror of society, allowing us to examine human adaptations to social environments (in Golman, 1981). *My Brilliant Friend*, set in a specific socio-historical context of Naples, serves as a perfect mirror to reflect and examine the universal yet particular dynamics of female rivalry.

2.2 Female Rivalry

Female rivalry is a well-documented social phenomenon. It is described as a state where women engage in intense competition with one another, often more so than men, whether in social, professional, or romantic contexts (Elizabeth in Kartajaya & Mahatristi, 2010). This competition can be emotionally draining, as women may feel threatened by friends who outperform them in domains they value (Tesser in Bleske-Rechek & Lighthall, 2010). Benenson (2013) notes that women often employ subtle competitive strategies, such as disguising competition or using social exclusion, from a young age.

The contents of this rivalry, as identified by scholars, often revolve around traits highly valued in social and mate selection contexts:

- Attractiveness: This includes physical appeal and personality traits that make an individual desirable (Bleske-Recek & Lighthall, 2010; Shimp, 2007).
- Youth and Beauty: Physical attractiveness, often synonymous with youthfulness, is a key axis of competition, driving behaviors aimed at enhancing appearance (Campbell, 2004).
- Similarity of Interests and Values: Friendship and rivalry are often strongest among those who share similar backgrounds, intellect, and values, as this creates a direct frame for comparison (Bleske-Recek & Lighthall, 2010).

The factors affecting this rivalry, as outlined by Agustina (2018), include:

- a. Competing for the Hearts of Men: The desire to attract male attention and secure a desirable partner is a primary driver of inter-female competition.
- b. Lack of Confidence: Insecurities and a negative self-perception can lead women to perceive other women as threats, fueling jealous competition.
- c. Lack of Attention and Less Grateful: While these are noted factors, this study found them less prominent in the primary text compared to the first two.
- d. This theoretical framework provides the structure for analyzing the complex relationship between Lenu and Lila.

3. Research Method

This study utilized a qualitative research design, which is appropriate for producing descriptive data from written texts (Creswell, 2009; Ismawati, 2012). The aim was to describe and interpret the phenomena of female rivalry within the novel's narrative.

The primary data source was the English translation of Elena Ferrante's novel, *My Brilliant Friend* (Europa Editions, 2012). Secondary data sources included books, journal articles, and scholarly works on female rivalry, sociology of literature, and literary criticism to build the theoretical foundation.

Data collection was conducted through the documentation method (Koentjaraningrat, 2002). The process involved:

- a. A close reading of the novel.
- b. Identifying, highlighting, and extracting relevant quotations, words, and phrases that illustrated the contents and factors of female rivalry.
- c. Classifying these extracts based on the pre-established theoretical categories.

Data analysis involved qualitative descriptive techniques (Bogdan, 1982). The classified data was analyzed by:

- a. Interpreting the quotations in relation to the theoretical concepts.
- b. Explaining how the textual evidence exemplifies a specific content or factor of rivalry.

Synthesizing the findings to draw coherent conclusions about the nature of Lenu and Lila's competitive relationship.

4. Discussion

The analysis of *My Brilliant Friend* reveals that the friendship between Lenu and Lila is fundamentally structured by a powerful rivalry, the contents and drivers of which are detailed below.

4.1 The Content of Women's Rivalry

a. Attractiveness

Lila's attractiveness is not solely physical but profoundly intellectual. From childhood, Lenu is acutely aware that Lila is "terrible, dazzling" (Ferrante, 2012, p. 34). The teacher's hierarchy, which places Lila at the top, forces Lenu to "devote myself to studying... just so I could keep pace with that terrible, dazzling girl" (p. 34). This intellectual rivalry is the engine of Lenu's academic drive. Furthermore, Lila possesses a dangerous personal magnetism. Lenu observes an "essence not only seductive but dangerous emanated from Lila" (p. 124), a charm that makes her irresistible and intimidating to others, thereby intensifying Lenu's sense of competition.

b. Youth, Beauty, and Physical Appearance

As the girls enter adolescence, physical beauty becomes a central arena for rivalry. Lenu painfully notes the disparity in their looks: "I looked at her white, smooth skin, not a blemish. I looked at her lips, the delicate shape of her ears" (Ferrante, 2012, p. 110). This comparison leads to deep insecurity. Even when Lenu briefly feels beautiful after a summer away, she quickly concludes, "Lila now had retaken the upper hand... while I... was growing ugly again" (p. 231). A poignant symbol of this is the glasses that make Lenu feel ugly but inexplicably suit Lila, making Lenu wonder, "why is it that they look nice on her when she doesn't need them and they make me, who can't do without them, look ugly?" (p. 232). This perceived gap in beauty is a constant source of anguish and competitive jealousy for Lenu.

c. Similarity of Interests and Values

The very foundation of their rivalry is their shared brilliance and thirst for knowledge. Their connection is strongest when they are intellectually matched. Lenu admits, "what I did by myself couldn't excite me, only what Lila touched became important" (Ferrante, 2012, p. 84). This similarity makes the divergence in their paths—Lenu continuing school, Lila being forced to leave—a source of complex emotions. Lenu uses her academic opportunity as a point of superiority, telling Lila about high school to "emphasize my value and my indispensability" (p. 112). When Lila independently begins studying Greek, Lenu is devastated by the threat to her academic domain, thinking, "Would she always do the things I was supposed to do, before and better than me?" (p. 122). Their identical interests create the perfect conditions for lifelong comparison and competition.

4.2 The Factors Affecting Women's Rivalry

a. Competing for the Hearts of Men

The competition for male attention is a significant factor driving a wedge between the two friends. Lenu lives in constant fear that Lila will effortlessly attract any man she desires. She worries about "learning from her melodious voice that now she was making love with Peluso. Or if it wasn't him, it was Enzo. Or if it wasn't Enzo, it was Antonio" (Ferrante, 2012, p. 136). This is most acute with Nino Sarratore, Lenu's great love. She deliberately hides that Nino attends her school for fear that "he would immediately recognize Lila and be vanquished" (p. 137). Later, she even enters a relationship with Alfonso primarily to have a fiancé and rebalance their relationship after Lila's engagement to Stefano, dreaming of how "it would be lovely to go out as

four” (p. 228). This highlights how their rivalry for male validation directly influences their personal choices.

b. Lack of Confidence

Lenu’s pervasive lack of self-confidence is the internal engine of the rivalry. She constantly feels inferior. Early on, she resigns herself to being “second in everything. I hoped that no one would ever realize it” (Ferrante, 2012, pp. 38-39). Her sense of self is so tied to Lila that she feels “fragile, exposed” without her as a benchmark or a follower (p. 122). She believes she cannot shine on her own; without Lila’s intellectual stimulation, her studies seem “less evocative than the finish of a pair of shoes, and that depressed me” (p. 84). This deep-seated lack of confidence ensures that Lila’s every achievement is perceived not just as a success, but as a personal failure for Lenu, perpetuating the cycle of rivalry.

4.3 The Content of Rivalry: A Multidimensional Contest

The rivalry between Lenu and Lila is pervasive, extending beyond simple jealousy into a fundamental struggle for recognition and self-definition.

a. Attractiveness: Beyond Physical Allure

While physical beauty is a component, Ferrante masterfully portrays “attractiveness” primarily as a function of intellectual charisma and formidable will. Lila’s attractiveness is her radical and uncompromising intelligence. Lenu’s description of her as a “terrible, dazzling girl” (Ferrante, 2012, p. 34) captures the awe and fear Lila inspires. This intellectual rivalry is the cornerstone of their relationship. Lenu’s entire academic journey is a response to Lila’s innate brilliance; she studies not for pure love of knowledge but to “keep pace.” Furthermore, Lila possesses a dangerous, almost mythical aura. Lenu notes that an “essence not only seductive but dangerous emanated from Lila” (p. 124), a power that makes her irresistible to others and intimidating to Lenu. This combination of intellectual and personal magnetism makes Lila an unstoppable force and the ultimate benchmark for Lenu, transforming admiration into a relentless drive for competitive emulation.

b. Youth, Beauty, and Physical Appearance: The Body as a Battleground

The novel meticulously charts how the female body becomes a site of contestation, especially as the girls enter adolescence. In their impoverished neighborhood, beauty is a currency and a weapon. Lenu’s obsessive comparisons are heartbreakingly precise: “I looked at her white, smooth skin, not a blemish. I looked at her lips, the delicate shape of her ears” (Ferrante, 2012, p. 110). Ferrante uses Lenu’s gaze to highlight the perceived disparity. Lenu’s self-image fluctuates wildly based on this comparison—she feels beautiful after a summer in Ischia only to conclude upon her return that “Lila now had retaken the upper hand... while I... was growing ugly again” (p. 231). The symbol of the glasses is particularly potent: they are a marker of Lenu’s intellectualism but also a source of insecurity, and their ironic enhancement of Lila’s beauty perfectly encapsulates the cruel and arbitrary nature of this physical competition. This relentless scrutiny reflects the immense social pressure on women to derive their value from their physical appearance, a pressure that deeply warps their sense of self.

c. Similarity of Interests and Values: The Double-Edged Sword of a Shared Worldview

The most profound aspect of their rivalry is that it springs from a place of profound similarity. They are the only two people in their world who see reality with the same sharp, critical eye. This intellectual kinship is the bedrock of their friendship and the source of its most intense friction. Lenu admits that without Lila, her pursuits feel empty: "what I did by myself couldn't excite me, only what Lila touched became important" (Ferrante, 2012, p. 84). Their shared passion for learning makes every achievement a direct challenge to the other. When Lila begins studying Greek on her own, Lenu doesn't feel inspired; she feels threatened and usurped: "Would she always do the things I was supposed to do, before and better than me?" (p. 122). Their divergent paths—Lenu toward formal education, Lila toward entrepreneurial and intellectual autodidacticism—do not end the rivalry but rather transform it into a bitter comparison of different forms of intelligence and success, questioning which path truly leads to freedom.

4.4 The Factors Affecting Rivalry: Internal Insecurities and External Pressures

The drivers of this competition are a toxic blend of internal psychology and external social forces.

a. Competing for the Hearts of Men: The Architecture of Patriarchal Validation

In the patriarchal structure of post-war Naples, male attention is the primary measure of a woman's worth. Consequently, men become both prizes and pawns in Lenu and Lila's rivalry. Lenu's anxiety is palpable; she fears Lila could effortlessly captivate any man, from Enzo to Stefano (Ferrante, 2012, p. 136). This is most acutely focused on Nino Sarratore, who represents intellectual escape for Lenu. Her decision to hide him from Lila is a strategic move in their competition, born of the fear that "he would immediately recognize Lila and be vanquished" (p. 137). This isn't just about romance; it's about validation. Lenu's acceptance of Alfonso as a fiancé is a desperate attempt to "rebalance our relationship" after Lila's engagement to the wealthy Stefano (p. 228). Ferrante thus exposes how patriarchal systems pit women against each other, forcing them to seek value through male approval and view each other not as allies but as obstacles to their own social survival.

b. Lack of Confidence: The Internalization of Inferiority

Lenu's pervasive lack of self-confidence is the internal lens that magnifies every aspect of their rivalry. She internalizes the hierarchy established in childhood, resigning herself to being "second in everything" (Ferrante, 2012, pp. 38-39). Her identity is so entangled with Lila's that she lacks a stable sense of self. Without Lila as a rival, her own pursuits lose meaning, and she feels "fragile, exposed" (p. 122). This profound insecurity means that Lila's every success is experienced by Lenu as a personal diminishment. It is not merely that Lila is better, but that Lenu believes she herself is inherently lesser. This lack of confidence is the fuel that keeps the rivalry burning; it prevents Lenu from simply admiring Lila and instead compels her to engage in a perpetual, exhausting game of catch-up that defines her life.

5. Conclusion

Elena Ferrante's *My Brilliant Friend* presents a profound and multifaceted exploration of the complex relationship between female friendship and rivalry. Through

the intertwined lives of Elena “Lenu” Greco and Raffaella “Lila” Cerullo, Ferrante reveals that admiration and jealousy are not opposites but coexisting emotional forces that shape women’s sense of identity and ambition. The findings of this study demonstrate that their rivalry emerges from three central contents—attractiveness, beauty and physical appearance, and similarity of interests and values—and is driven primarily by two underlying factors: competition for male attention and Lenu’s persistent lack of confidence.

The analysis shows that female rivalry, while often perceived as destructive, can also be a powerful source of motivation and self-development. For Lenu, rivalry becomes the engine that drives her intellectual growth and academic achievement. For Lila, it reflects her defiance of societal limitations and her relentless pursuit of individuality. Their relationship illustrates that rivalry among women is not merely personal but deeply social, shaped by cultural expectations surrounding beauty, intellect, and desirability in patriarchal contexts.

This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how literature mirrors social realities and psychological struggles faced by women. By examining the dual nature of rivalry—both as a source of empowerment and emotional turmoil—this research underscores the complexity of female relationships in literary representation. It affirms that Ferrante’s portrayal transcends personal conflict to expose the subtle ways in which women internalize and resist societal norms.

However, this study is limited to a single literary text and focuses primarily on the sociological dimensions of rivalry. Future research may extend the analysis to Ferrante’s other novels or compare her portrayal of female friendship with that of other contemporary women writers. Such studies could further illuminate how narratives of rivalry, solidarity, and selfhood continue to evolve across different cultural and historical settings.

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FORGIVENESS AS A PATHWAY TO TRAUMA HEALING: A NARRATIVE EXAMINATION OF COLLEEN HOOVER'S *REMINDERS OF HIM*

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Abstract

This study examines the role of forgiveness in the trauma healing process as portrayed in Colleen Hoover's *Reminders of Him*. Focusing on the main character, Kenna Rowan, it explores how she experiences emotional trauma and how forgiveness facilitates her recovery. Using a qualitative descriptive method with a psychological approach, the analysis applies Worthington's model of decisional and emotional forgiveness and Enright's Four-Phase Model of Forgiveness to identify the stages of healing depicted in the narrative. The findings reveal that Kenna exhibits symptoms of psychological trauma, including anxiety, guilt, avoidance, flashbacks, and difficulty maintaining relationships. The study identifies two types of forgiveness—decisional, a conscious choice to forgive, and emotional, a deeper emotional release—and demonstrates how Kenna's journey reflects the four phases of forgiveness: uncovering, decision, work, and deepening. Through self-reflection, acceptance, and social support, she achieves self-forgiveness and re-establishes connections with her daughter and others. The research concludes that forgiveness is a key factor in emotional recovery and that literature can serve as a valuable medium for understanding psychological healing and personal growth.

Keywords: *emotional recovery; forgiveness; psychological approach; trauma healing*

1. Introduction

Forgiveness plays a crucial role in trauma healing because it enables individuals to move forward and reclaim emotional stability. Forgiveness therapy, which emphasizes releasing anger and resentment associated with traumatic experiences, has been shown to reduce post-traumatic stress and encourage post-traumatic growth (Worthington, 2006). This process involves acknowledging the trauma, expressing emotions authentically, and making a conscious decision to forgive. Ultimately, forgiveness liberates individuals from the emotional grip of past pain and allows them to focus on recovery and future well-being. Healing from trauma entails emotional, mental, and sometimes physical restoration after experiencing deeply distressing or life-altering events. It may involve forgiving both oneself and others for the mistakes and harms that have caused suffering.

This research focuses on Colleen Hoover's novel *Reminders of Him* (2022), which powerfully portrays themes of trauma, healing, and forgiveness through the emotional journey of its protagonist, Kenna Rowan—a young mother striving to rebuild her life after five years in prison for a tragic accident that claimed her boyfriend's life. Hoover, an American author renowned for emotionally charged and character-driven works of contemporary fiction and romance, explores the psychological depth of guilt, redemption, and love in this novel.

Kenna's trauma stems from a car accident that killed her boyfriend, Scotty, and from the subsequent imprisonment that separated her from her newborn daughter. Upon her release, Kenna returns to her hometown, reopening emotional wounds for both herself and Scotty's grieving parents, who are now raising her child. The narrative presents healing as a painful yet transformative process. Kenna's journey involves confronting her past actions, seeking forgiveness from others, and learning to forgive herself. Healing also extends to those around her—particularly Ledger Ward, Scotty's best friend and the child's guardian—who struggles between protecting the child and recognizing Kenna's right to be part of her daughter's life.

Forgiveness in the novel emerges as a reluctant but necessary process. It is not only about others forgiving Kenna but also about her own journey toward self-forgiveness. The narrative demonstrates that clinging to anger perpetuates pain, whereas letting go of resentment opens the path to emotional restoration. Through honesty, vulnerability, and gradual emotional growth, the characters reach a point where forgiveness becomes attainable, allowing them to move beyond suffering and embrace renewal.

Previous studies on forgiveness in trauma healing provide two main reasons for selecting this topic. First, empirical research has consistently demonstrated that forgiveness is linked to reductions in post-traumatic stress, depression, and anger. Worthington (2006) and Enright (1996) both argue that forgiveness fosters emotional regulation and helps individuals reconstruct meaning after trauma. Second, forgiveness is the central theme in *Reminders of Him*, making the novel an ideal subject for exploring the psychological dynamics of trauma recovery. Kenna seeks forgiveness from Scotty's family and from herself for the accident that claimed his life, while Scotty's parents struggle with unresolved grief and resentment. Their intertwined pain underscores that healing through forgiveness involves releasing judgment and resentment, leading to genuine emotional peace.

The exploration of forgiveness in Hoover's novel also resonates with broader social contexts. As highlighted by Indonesian scholars such as Lestari (2020), forgiveness and emotional resilience are vital components of psychological recovery in trauma survivors. This perspective reinforces the idea that literature reflecting these themes can provide valuable insight into real-world emotional healing processes. Thus, this study aims to analyze forgiveness as a key mechanism of trauma recovery, emphasizing its relevance both within the literary narrative and in the lived experiences of individuals coping with emotional pain.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Psychology of Literature

Literature and psychology share a focus on human reactions, perceptions, emotions, conflicts, and social issues through various concepts, methods, and approaches. An author's representation of life is influenced by their intentions, views,

beliefs, and value judgments. They inspire readers to explore the unknown and uncover the meaning of life. Literature promotes self-awareness and allows individuals to explore their identities. Most scientific research, fine arts, and literature place a strong emphasis on humanity and existence.

There is a close relationship between literature and psychology. Cohen (1971: 348) thought that psychology helps to clarify some literary problems, and literature presents insights to psychology. To gain deeper understanding, literature can be studied by various approach includes psychological approach. Conversely, Cohen (1971: 351) assumes that the psychologist's manner of conceiving and representing the personality is supported by the intuitive representations made by novelists, dramatists, and other creative writers. It can be seen that there is mutual relationship between literature and psychology.

2.2 Forgiveness

Forgiveness is the balm that heals wounds and commitment to relationships. Practically everything important psychological relationships, people get hurt. Without healing the wounds, relationships will fall apart quickly. However, a lot relationships last. We argue that such patience is possible because people can forgive the pain they suffer, ask for forgiveness for the injuries they cause and receive any forgiveness that is offered to them.

Enright (1996) defined forgiveness as “a willingness to abandon one's right to resentment, negative judgment, and indifferent behavior toward one who unjustly injured us, while fostering the undeserved qualities of compassion, generosity, and even love toward him or her”.

Worthington & Jiménez Robles's (2022). REACH Forgiveness model is an acrostic or acronym that cues each of three key steps to forgiving others. The model begins by asking people to identify the most difficult thing they ever successfully forgave. It helps people see that there are physical, health, psychological, relational, and spiritual benefits to forgiving but that forgiving is but one alternative for dealing successfully with injustices. Thus, the forgiveness intervention is for people who wish to forgive. No one should ever be forced or coerced to forgive. People are shown that forgiveness involves both a decision to forgive and an emotional transformation. First people are led through the **REACH** Forgiveness five steps:

R = Recall the hurt. To heal, you have to face the fact that you've been hurt. Decide not to be snarky (i.e., nasty and hurtful), not to treat yourself like a victim, and not to treat the other person as a jerk.

E = Empathize with your offender. Empathy is putting yourself in the other person's chair. Pretend that the other person is in an empty chair across from you. Talk to him or her. Pour your heart out. When you have had your say, sit in his or her chair. Talk back to the imaginary you in a way that helps you see why the other person might have wronged you. This builds empathy.

A = Altruistic gift. Forgive as an unselfish, altruistic gift. After all, an offender does not deserve to receive forgiveness. To help you want to give the gift of forgiving, try to remember when you wronged someone and that person forgave you. By forgiving altruistically, you can give that same gift to someone who hurt you.

C = Commit. Once you have forgiven, write a note to yourself—something as simple as, “Today, I forgave [person's name] for hurting me.” This helps forgiveness last.

H = Hold onto forgiveness. The self-addressed notes of commitment (above) help us because we will almost surely be tempted to doubt that we really forgave. We can re-read our notes. We did forgive.

There are two kinds of forgiveness: decisional forgiveness and emotional forgiveness.

1. Decisional Forgiveness

Decisional forgiveness is a conscious, deliberate choice to forgive someone who has caused harm, even if feelings of hurt remain (Worthington et al., 2007). Unlike emotional forgiveness, which involves a deeper emotional transformation, decisional forgiveness focuses on controlling one's behavior toward the offender and acting in a non-retaliatory, constructive way. It is the intention to treat the offender as a valued person, possibly for years, despite lingering resentment or hate (DiBlasio, 1998; Exline et al., 2003). This may include eliminating negative behavior in non-continuous relationships (McCullough et al., 2003) or restoring positive behavior in ongoing close connections (Finkel et al., 2002). While decisional forgiveness serves a behavioral purpose, emotional forgiveness aims for affective transformation.

According to Enright (2004) and the Human Development Study Group, forgiveness involves both a cognitive decision to forgive and an emotional component, which entails reducing negative affect and increasing positive affect. These two processes—decisional and emotional forgiveness—are distinct yet interconnected and can be observed separately in personal experience. Since they represent different aspects of the interpersonal forgiveness process, they do not always produce the same effects on distress and well-being. Research shows that decisional forgiveness is linked to reduced hostility and rumination, which in turn support psychological and social well-being (Baker et al., 2017; Kurniati et al., 2017).

2. Emotional Forgiveness

Emotional forgiveness is the process of replacing negative, unforgiving emotions such as resentment, bitterness, hatred, hostility, anger, and fear with positive, other-oriented emotions like empathy, sympathy, compassion, or love toward an offender or group (Worthington, 2007; Exline et al., 2003). This emotional transformation often occurs gradually and may happen unconsciously. Models of forgiveness, such as Fitzgibbons' (1986), highlight that an emotional act of forgiveness typically follows a decision to forgive, especially when the offender is perceived as deserving pardon. Emotional forgiveness, by reducing negative affect and fostering positive emotions, is associated with greater benefits for distress reduction and well-being compared to decisional forgiveness (Worthington et al., 2007b; Sun et al., 2014; Webb & Toussaint, 2020).

2.3 Trauma Healing

Trauma healing is a complex process addressing the physical, emotional, and psychological impacts of traumatic experiences, which may lead to symptoms like anxiety, depression, and PTSD (Harvey, 2002:5, 23). It encompasses various forms of recovery, such as physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, and holistic healing, aiming to foster resilience and growth in trauma survivors. In psychological and narrative contexts, trauma healing often involves forgiveness—a deliberate choice to release anger or revenge without condoning the harm—which can promote identity

reintegration, emotional resolution, relational repair, and spiritual transformation. Enright's Process Model of Forgiveness (2000) describes four phases in this process: uncovering emotional wounds, making the decision to forgive, working to develop empathy and reinterpret the trauma, and deepening emotional release leading to personal growth and potential reconciliation.

This research is also supported by several previous researchers.

1. Worthington (2022)

He explains that trauma healing is complex and individual. Forgiveness aids trauma recovery by fostering perceptions of trustworthiness, creating a desire for reconciliation, and encouraging behavioral change. Reconciliation is difficult without mutual trust but can be supported by forgiveness. Forgiveness includes both *decisional* and *emotional forgiveness*.

Difference from current research: This study focuses on applying Worthington's model within a literary context (*Reminders of Him*), rather than examining forgiveness in real-world social settings as in Worthington's work.

2. Hardman (2022)

He investigates *forgiveness therapy* for complex trauma survivors from the perspective of secular therapists. Forgiveness is viewed as an intrapersonal process involving cognitive, affective, and behavioral components, distinct from excusing, condoning, or forgetting. Findings show that forgiveness therapy can reduce complex trauma symptoms and promote post-traumatic growth.

Difference from current research: Hardman's research involves direct therapeutic practice with real clients, while the current study analyzes the forgiveness process through a fictional character in a novel.

3. Putra (2023)

He examines the relationship between forgiveness and wounded inner child in adolescents. Results indicate a significant negative relationship: higher forgiveness corresponds to lower wounded inner child, and vice versa.

Difference from current research: Putra's study focuses on childhood and adolescent trauma using a quantitative method, whereas the current research explores adult trauma through a qualitative narrative analysis in literature.

3. Research Method

A clear understanding of the conflicts within a literary work is essential for accurate interpretation and for enhancing the value of literary research. This study adopted a qualitative descriptive approach within a psychological literary framework, which is appropriate for exploring the subtleties and complexities of human emotions, perceptions, and behaviors as reflected in literary texts. The qualitative design emphasized interpretative analysis over numerical measurement, focusing on the meaning and emotional depth of the characters' experiences.

As Creswell (2014) explained, qualitative research involves clarifying the study's intent, specifying the research design, reflecting on the researcher's interpretive role, employing multiple data sources, following structured recording protocols, and ensuring analytical validity. This approach enabled the researchers to address the

research questions systematically while maintaining flexibility to accommodate emerging patterns throughout the analysis.

The primary data for this research were drawn from Colleen Hoover's *Reminders of Him*, supported by secondary sources such as scholarly books, journal articles, and theoretical writings related to trauma, forgiveness, and psychological literary criticism. The data collection followed Creswell's (2018) steps, which included defining the research scope, reading and rereading the novel to gain a comprehensive understanding, identifying passages relevant to the research focus, taking analytical notes, and organizing these notes into thematic categories for systematic analysis.

The data were analyzed through qualitative content analysis, aimed at identifying recurring themes related to trauma and forgiveness. The analysis addressed two central research questions: (1) the stages of forgiveness in the trauma healing process as represented in the novel, and (2) the ways in which forgiveness contributes to the emotional recovery of the characters. The findings were interpreted using a descriptive method, ensuring that the conclusions were both systematic and grounded in the text's psychological and thematic contexts.

4. Discussion

In this part, the analysis focuses on how trauma and its manifestation save the main character's psychology at emotional state in Colleen Hoover's novel *Reminders of Him*. It is also about decisional and emotional forgiveness portrayed in the novel, and the role of forgiveness in facilitating the trauma healing process in Colleen Hoover's novel *Reminders of Him*.

4.1 Trauma and its Manifestation

Trauma is a deeply distressing or disturbing experience that can affect an individual's mental health and emotional well-being. In the context of Colleen Hoover's novel *Reminders of Him*, trauma can manifest in various ways in the main character's psychology and emotional state. They are emotional disturbances, avoidance, flashbacks, and lack of relationships.

1. Emotional Disturbance

Emotional disturbance refers to a range of mental health conditions characterized by intense, persistent, or recurring emotional experiences that interfere with individual's daily life, relationships, and overall well-being. The main character may experience emotional disturbances such as anxiety, depression, or uncontrolled anger. It can be seen from the quotation below:

I know they hate me, and they have every right to hate me, but part of me has been living with them for the past four years in Diem. My hope is that they've found a sliver of forgiveness for me through my daughter. (Hoover, 2022: 67)

In this quotation, the character expresses deep feelings of guilt, anxiety, and emotional pain. The sentence "*I know they hate me, and they have every right to hate me*" shows that she constantly blames herself and believes others are right to reject her. This self-blame is a common sign of depression. Her words "*part of me has been living with them for the past four years in Diem*" suggest she has not been able to move on emotionally and keeps reliving her past mistake. This reflects emotional distress and anxiety, especially as she worries about how others feel about her. Finally, the hope that "*they've found a sliver of forgiveness*" shows she is still holding onto a small amount of

hope, which helps her cope with her guilt. However, this hope also shows her ongoing need for acceptance and forgiveness, which is often present in people suffering from depression and anxiety.

2. Avoidance

The main character may avoid situations or people that remind them of the traumatic experience. Kenna's avoidance can be seen from the quotation below:

When I see their house, my fear becomes audible. I make a noise in the back of my throat that surprise me, but it's taking all the effort inside me to keep my tears at bay. I wish I'd have waited until dark. I feel like an open target. Vulnerable to whatever is about to come at me. I want to hide. I need more time. I haven't even practiced what I'm going to say yet. I've thought about it constantly, but I've never practiced out loud. My breath become harder and harder to control. I put my hands on the back of my head and breathe in and out, in and out. (Hoover, 2022: 72)

This quotation reflects Kenna's strong avoidance response when faced with the possibility of confronting her past. Her physical and emotional reactions such as fear, difficulty breathing, and the desire to hide are signs of psychological avoidance. She says, "*I want to hide. I need more time*", which shows her attempt to delay or escape from a stressful situation. Avoidance is a common coping mechanism in individuals dealing with trauma, anxiety, or guilt. Kenna's hesitation to approach the house, her regret about not waiting until dark, and her lack of preparation ("*I haven't even practiced what I'm going to say*") all highlight her discomfort and fear of rejection or confrontation. Furthermore, her effort to control her breathing shows a physiological stress response, which often occurs during moments of emotional overload, commonly associated with avoidant behavior in trauma survivors.

3. Flashback

The main character may experience flashbacks or unwanted memories of the traumatic experiences. It can be seen from the quotation below:

Imagine you hear a car door slam, and you breathe a sigh of relief, only to fall to the floor when you see the police at your door. Imagine hearing things like "I'm sorry," and "accident" and "car wreck" and "didn't make it." imagine yourself not dying in that moment. Imagine being forced to go on, to live through that awful night, to wake up the next day, to be asked to identify his body. His lifeless body. (Hoover, 2022: 69-70)

This quotation illustrates a clear example of a flashback, which is a vivid and distressing re-experiencing of a traumatic event. The repeated use of the word "*imagine*" shows how the character is mentally reliving the night she lost someone she loved. Though it is framed as imagination, the detail and emotional intensity indicate that the memory is deeply ingrained and emotionally painful. Flashbacks are a common symptom of post-traumatic stress and often occur involuntarily. In this case, the memory of the police visit and hearing words like "*accident*", "*car wreck*", and "*didn't make it*" shows how the trauma is still active in the character's mind. The emotional

reaction feeling like dying, being forced to go on, and identifying the body reveals the lasting psychological impact of the event. Overall, this quote shows how flashbacks can cause the person to mentally return to the moment of trauma, experiencing the pain as if it is happening again, which can severely affect emotional well-being and daily functioning. Another quotation about Kenna being flashback can be seen below:

I get out and walk back to where the cross is. I shake it side to side until the dirt loosens around it, and then I pull it out of the ground. Did he die in this very spot? Or did he die in the road? I may not have killed him with my actions, but I definitely killed him with my inaction. *I thought you were dead, Scotty. But dead people can't crawl* (Hoover, 2022: 1).

This quotation demonstrates a form of flashback, where the character, Kenna, mentally relives the traumatic moment connected to Scotty's death. Her visit to the site of the accident triggers vivid memories and emotions. Although the scene takes place in the present, her thoughts reflect a deep emotional recall of the past, especially when she says, "*Did he die in this very spot?*" and "*I thought you were dead, Scotty. But dead people can't crawl.*" These lines show how the trauma is still fresh in Kenna's mind. She is not just remembering the event she is re-experiencing the guilt and confusion that followed. Her statement, "*I definitely killed him with my inaction*", reflects deep self-blame, a common emotional response during flashbacks in individuals with post-traumatic stress.

4. Lack of Relationship

The main character may struggle from healthy relationship with others due to the trauma they've experienced. It can be seen from the quotation below:

I was praying Scotty's parents just needed time. I assumed, ignorantly, that they would eventually see a need for me to be in Diem's life. There wasn't much I could do from my isolated position in the world, but now that I'm out, I've thought long and hard about how I should go about this. I have no idea what to expect. I don't even know what kind of people they are. (Hoover, 2022: 67)

This quotation reflects Kenna's experience of a lack of connection and estrangement from Scotty's parents and her daughter, Diem. Her words show that she has no existing relationship with them, as seen in her uncertainty: "*I don't even know what kind of people they are.*" This indicates a complete emotional and social distance. Kenna's "*isolated position in the world*" highlights how her time in prison and past trauma have left her socially disconnected and without meaningful relationships. Her hope that "*they would eventually see a need for me*" suggests that she longs for connection, but her lack of communication and shared experience with Scotty's parents has created a barrier to forming bonds.

4.2 Types of Forgiveness

There are two types of forgiveness, decisional and emotional forgiveness.

1. Decisional Forgiveness

Decisional forgiveness is a decision to treat the offender as a valuable and valued person. It is possible to carry out the decision faithfully for years and still feel

emotional unforgiveness, resentment, and even hate. Decisional forgiveness can be seen from the quotation below:

Ledger is gripping the top of the truck, leaning in my doorway. His head is resting against the inside of his raised arm. His eyes are red, but his expression isn't filled with hatred. It isn't even filled with anger. If anything, he looks apologetic, as if he knows his outburst scared me and he feels bad. "I'm not mad at you." He presses his lips together and looks down. He shakes his head gently. "It's just a lot to process." (Hoover, 2022: 257)

This quotation shows decisional forgiveness, which refers to a conscious decision to let go of anger or the desire for revenge, even if emotional forgiveness has not fully developed. In this scene, Ledger shows signs of choosing not to stay angry at Kenna, despite his emotional struggle. His words, "*I'm not mad at you,*" and his calm body language ("*he looks apologetic*") suggest that he has decided to control his emotional response and approach Kenna with understanding rather than hostility. His statement, "*It's just a lot to process,*" shows that while he may still feel conflicted, he is making a deliberate effort to move past his anger. This moment reflects how decisional forgiveness can be an important first step in rebuilding broken relationships, especially in situations involving deep hurt or betrayal.

2. Emotional Forgiveness

Emotional forgiveness is the emotional replacement of negative unforgiving emotions such as resentment, bitterness, hatred, hostility, anger, and fear, with positive other oriented emotions such as empathy, sympathy, compassion, and love. Emotional forgiveness can be seen from the following quotations:

"I'm not here to upset you," Grace says. Her voice is gentle. So is her expression. I shake my head, "It's not . . . I'm sorry. I need a minute before I can . . . talk." (Hoover, 2022: 299)

This quotation shows the beginning of emotional forgiveness through Grace's change in tone and behavior toward Kenna. Her words "*I'm not here to upset you*" and her *gentle voice and expression* indicate a shift from anger or blame to empathy and compassion. Emotional forgiveness involves not only deciding to forgive but also letting go of negative emotions like resentment and replacing them with understanding. Kenna's emotional reaction "*I'm sorry. I need a minute...*" suggests that she is overwhelmed by this unexpected kindness, which reflects how deeply she has been affected by past rejection. This moment represents a softening in their relationship and the emotional openness that allows forgiveness to take root. This scene marks an important step toward healing and reconciliation, showing that emotional forgiveness begins when someone chooses to respond with gentleness rather than judgment.

4.3 The Pathway of Forgiveness in Trauma Healing Process

In Colleen Hoover's novel *Reminders of Him*, forgiveness plays an important role in facilitating the trauma healing process for the characters. There are some key aspects of forgiveness in this research such as self-forgiveness and the phases of forgiveness in healing process.

1. Self-forgiveness

Kenna's struggle to forgive herself for her past mistakes is a significant theme. She grapples with guilt and shame, which hinders her ability to move forward. Kenna's self-forgiveness can be seen from the following quotation:

I feel like a weight has been lifted. It's not the weight of the anchor that keeps me tethered under the surface that won't be lifted until I get to hold my daughter. But a small portion of my pain has attached to his sympathy, and it feels like he's physically lifting me up for the air, allowing me a few minutes to breathe. (Hoover, 2022: 258)

This quotation reflects the early stages of self-forgiveness in Kenna's emotional journey. The metaphor "*a weight has been lifted*" symbolizes a partial release of the heavy guilt and shame she has carried. While she admits that the full burden remains ("*the anchor that keeps me tethered*"), she also recognizes a moment of relief and emotional healing, supported by someone else's empathy. Her statement that "*a small portion of my pain has attached to his sympathy*" shows that the compassion she receives from Ledger allows her to begin forgiving herself, even if only briefly. Self-forgiveness often begins with external validation or understanding, which can help a person start to accept their own humanity and mistakes. This passage illustrates that self-forgiveness is a gradual process, and even a small moment of emotional support can create space for healing and personal growth.

2. Phases of Forgiveness in Healing Process

There are four phases of forgiveness in healing process. They are uncovering phase, decisional phase, work phase, and deepening phase.

a. Uncovering Phase

This is the first phase where the individual confronts and explores the pain caused by the trauma, recognizing the depth of emotional and psychological injury. This phase can be seen from the following quotation:

When you didn't move, and I realized your arm was just dangling against the road that has somehow become out ceiling, my first thought was that you might have passed out. But when I pulled my hand back to figure out a way to right myself up, it was covered in blood. Blood that was supposed to be running through your veins. I immediately scooted closer to you, but because you were upside down and still in your seatbelt, I couldn't pull you to me. I tried pulling you, but you still wouldn't budge because the car was on top of part of you. Your blood was everywhere. (Hoover, 2022: 243)

This quotation represents a key moment in the uncovering phase of trauma healing, which involves revisiting and expressing the painful details of a traumatic experience. In this passage, Kenna describes the moment of the accident with vivid and emotional detail, recalling the blood, her fear, and her inability to save Scotty. By recounting this memory, she is not only confronting the trauma but also beginning to process and verbalize her guilt and pain. The uncovering phase requires individuals to bring hidden emotions and memories to the surface, often for the first time. Kenna's description is raw and specific, showing that she is reliving the trauma as a way to understand and communicate her truth. This act of revealing allows her to begin

emotional processing, which is essential for moving forward in the trauma healing process.

b. Decisional Phase

In this phase, the person makes a conscious choice to forgive, not to excuse or forget the harm, but to let go of resentment and the need for revenge. It can be seen from the following quotation:

“I’m not mad at you.” He presses his lips together and looks down. He shakes his head gently. “It’s just a lot to process.” I nod, but I can’t speak because my heart is pounding and my throat feels swollen, and I’m not sure what to say. (Hoover, 2022: 257)

This quotation exemplifies the decisional phase of forgiveness, where a person makes a conscious choice to release anger even before their emotions have fully shifted. Ledger explicitly states, “I’m not mad at you,” signaling an active decision to let go of resentment. His words (“It’s just a lot to process”) acknowledge the complexity of his feelings, but he still chooses to withhold anger. His gentle head shake and lowered gaze show that he is regulating his outward response, a hallmark of decisional forgiveness. Ledger’s statement and body language demonstrate this first step toward rebuilding trust, even if deeper emotional forgiveness comes later.

c. Work Phase

This phase involves developing empathy and compassion for the offender, reinterpreting the trauma in ways that reduce its emotional grip. It can be seen from the following quotation:

“I’m a part of everything that’s been tearing you down all these years, and I’m sorry Kenna. I’m so sorry.” I place my hand over his chest, right over his heart. “It’s okay. What I wrote doesn’t change anything. It was still my fault.” He eventually pulls back far enough to assess me. He must see something on my face that makes him want to comfort me because he presses a soft kiss to my forehead while brushing my hair back tenderly. He kisses the tip of my nose and then plants a soft peck on my lips. His kisses feel like both forgiveness and promises. I imagine mine feel like apologies to him, because he keeps coming back for more every time we separate. (Hoover, 2022: 258-259)

This quotation reflects the work phase of trauma healing, which involves not only emotional acknowledgment but also active steps toward repair and reconnection. In this moment, both Kenna and Ledger engage in mutual vulnerability such as apologizing, comforting, and physically expressing forgiveness and care. Kenna’s statement “*It was still my fault*” shows her continued acceptance of responsibility, a key part of emotional processing. Meanwhile, Ledger’s words “*I’m sorry Kenna. I’m so sorry*” demonstrate that he is also confronting his role in her pain. These expressions of shared accountability are hallmarks of the work phase, where individuals begin rebuilding trust and connection through honest interaction. Their physical gestures such as touch, forehead kisses, and comforting actions symbolize more than affection; they represent emotional labor and healing in action. These are not just feelings but practiced

behaviors that reinforce progress and commitment to growth. In summary, this quotation shows how both characters are no longer just processing pain. They are actively working through it together, which is the essence of the trauma healing work phase.

d. Deepening Phase

In the last phase, the individual experiences emotional release, sometimes even meaning-making or personal growth, leading to reduce suffering and potential reconciliation. It can be seen from the following quotation:

My eyes meet Grace's, and she can see the agony in my expression. "Grace . . ." My voice is a whisper. She immediately walks over to me and pulls me in for a hug. It's an amazing hug. A forgiving hug. "Hey", she says, soothingly. "Hey, listen to me." She pulls back, and we're about the same height, so we're eye to eye when she takes the juice from me and sets it aside. Then she squeezes both of my hand reassuringly. "We go forward," she says. "That's it. It's that simple. I forgive you and you forgive me, and we go forward together and give that little girl the best life we can give her. Okay?" I nod, because I can do that. I forgive them. I've always forgiven them. (Hoover, 2022: 308)

This quotation represents the deepening phase in the trauma healing process, where individuals begin to fully internalize forgiveness, restore trust, and commit to a shared future. In this scene, Grace and Kenna move beyond initial reconciliation into a deeper emotional connection, marked by empathy, acceptance, and mutual forgiveness. Grace's comforting actions *pulling Kenna in for a hug, squeezing her hands*, and saying "*We go forward... I forgive you and you forgive me*" demonstrate not just forgiveness, but a genuine desire to rebuild the relationship with emotional depth and mutual commitment. This is a core aspect of the deepening phase: forming new meaning and stability after trauma. Kenna's internal response "*I forgive them. I've always forgiven them.*" shows that she is also ready to move forward emotionally. The trauma no longer dominates her identity or relationships; instead, she's embracing healing and connection. This moment illustrates how both characters have progressed from emotional pain to a place of shared healing, which defines the deepening phase in trauma recovery.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that *Reminders of Him* portrays trauma as a profound psychological struggle and forgiveness as a transformative pathway to healing. Through the character of Kenna Rowan, Colleen Hoover illustrates how unresolved guilt, anxiety, and avoidance behaviors manifest as trauma symptoms, while gradual acceptance and forgiveness—both decisional and emotional—become mechanisms for recovery. Using Enright's Four-Phase Model, the analysis demonstrates how the narrative moves through stages of uncovering, decision, work, and deepening, culminating in self-forgiveness and reconnection. This study contributes to psychological literary studies by showing how narrative empathy and forgiveness can be conceptualized as mechanisms of trauma recovery within fictional representation.

The findings imply that literature can serve as a reflective tool for understanding emotional resilience, self-healing, and moral growth. In educational contexts, integrating psychological literary analysis into reading and writing curricula can encourage students to engage empathetically with complex emotional themes. Future research may extend this study by examining other contemporary novels that depict forgiveness and trauma from cultural or gendered perspectives, especially within Indonesian or Southeast Asian contexts, to enrich cross-cultural discussions on emotional recovery and moral development.

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NARRATING LOCAL WISDOM IN ANDREA HIRATA'S *GURU AINI*: A CULTURAL STUDY THROUGH THE SOCIOLOGY OF LITERATURE AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE THEORY

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Abstract

This study explores local wisdom in Andrea Hirata's novel *Guru Aini* using a qualitative descriptive method supported by the Sociology of Literature approach and Indigenous Knowledge Theory. The research focuses on identifying and analyzing five core values of Indonesian local wisdom portrayed in the novel: mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), respect for elders, simple lifestyle, love for family, and preservation of cultural traditions. These values are explored through the characters, setting, plot, and dialogue, all of which reflect the socio-cultural life of the Belitung community. The primary data source is the 2020 edition of *Guru Aini*, complemented by scholarly references from previous studies. The findings clearly show that all five values of local wisdom are consistently and meaningfully present throughout the novel. Each value is embedded not only in the actions and attitudes of the characters but also in the social interactions and traditions depicted in the narrative. Thus, the novel serves both as a literary text and a cultural repository, offering insight into Indonesia's traditional knowledge systems. This research concludes that literature, particularly novels like *Guru Aini*, can be a powerful medium for preserving cultural identity and transmitting ethical values. The findings demonstrate that *Guru Aini* portrays five values of Indonesian local wisdom through narrative structure and characterization, reinforcing literature's role as a cultural repository and educational tool for character development.

Keywords: *Guru Aini*; indigenous knowledge; Indonesian values; literary sociology; local wisdom

1. Introduction

Local wisdom, also known as indigenous or traditional knowledge, represents the cultural values, practices, and life philosophies that have been inherited through generations. It is rooted in local communities' deep understanding of nature, social structures, and spiritual beliefs. Despite rapid technological development and globalization, the relevance of local wisdom remains strong, especially in addressing issues like environmental degradation, cultural erosion, and social disintegration (Irmayani & Larola & Yusriadi, 2021; Simanjuntak & Chintia, 2022).

Literature, particularly the novel, functions as a powerful medium for expressing and preserving local wisdom. Through character development, setting, and narrative structure, authors embed traditional values that reflect communal life. As Parhan & Dwiputra (2023) argue, novels set in rural areas often convey values such as mutual cooperation, harmony with nature, and collective strength in facing hardship. In a novel, characters often embody these local values. A protagonist who is wise, patient, and resilient can represent an ideal societal figure. Many of the character conflicts emerge from the tension between modernity and tradition, or between individual desires and communal duties. The setting, with its vivid portrayal of local life, also serves to illustrate and reinforce cultural identity (Adam & Ismail & Ali, 2022). Andrea Hirata's *Guru Aini* is a literary work that powerfully embodies local wisdom. The novel follows Desi Istiqomah, a devoted young mathematics teacher who willingly accepts a teaching post in a remote Sumatran island. There, she faces numerous challenges, from inadequate school infrastructure to student disinterest. Still, with enthusiasm and sincerity, she works to inspire her students (Yanti & Gusriani, 2021).

The novel reflects values such as traditional communal (*gotong royong*), cooperation, respect, love for family, and perseverance. The spirit of *gotong royong*, or mutual assistance, which is one of the core values of Indonesian local wisdom. Community members support one another not only materially but emotionally, reflecting a sense of shared responsibility.

Astuti & Fatimah & Mualafina (2023) highlight that the novel also portrays close connections between humans and nature, the culture of helping one another in solving problems, and the deep respect for elders. Moreover, environmental conservation is another key message, conveyed through the picturesque descriptions of the island's natural beauty (Gulo & Riana & Harefa & Bu'ulolo, 2023).

Ultimately, *Guru Aini* is more than a story of a teacher, it is a celebration of Indonesian values. The novel emphasizes the importance of education, the challenges of remote regions, and the inner strength of individuals rooted in tradition. As Ismawati & Warsito (2019) note, the novel raises timeless issues: educational disparity, ecological consciousness, and the teacher's role in shaping character. This research, titled *Narrating Local Wisdom: A Cultural Study of Andrea Hirata's Guru Aini*, focuses on five major elements: traditional communal cooperation, respect for elders, simple lifestyle, love for family, and preservation of cultural traditions. It adopts a descriptive qualitative method supported by the Sociology of Literature and Indigenous Knowledge Theory to explore how these values are expressed and preserved in the narrative.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Sociology of Literature

The sociology of literature is a theoretical approach that examines literary works based on their relationship with society. It views literature not only as a personal or artistic expression but as a social document reflecting the norms, struggles, and values of the time in which it was produced (Ahmadi, 2021). This approach is particularly useful in analyzing national and modern literature, especially novels, as they often mirror societal structures and changes. As Laurensen & Swingewood (1972) assert, literary imagination must be understood within its empirical context. Literary works, while imaginative, are deeply rooted in social realities. Ratna (2004) identifies three main perspectives within this approach: textual analysis as a reflection of society, authorial background, and reader reception within a social context. According to

Pradopo (2001), literature does not emerge in a vacuum; it develops along with societal dynamics. Spencer (2010) adds that literature can be studied both sociologically and biographically. The sociology of literature thus serves both theoretical and empirical functions, highlighting how literature reflects and interacts with its cultural surroundings. Hasanah (2022) explains that textual analysis in literature reveals deeper social meanings and structures. Endraswara (2013) and Fauziyyah (2023) emphasize that literature stems from real-life experiences and serves as a vehicle for cultural expression through language. Smith (2018) echoes this view, highlighting literature as a mirror of people's lives.

Definitions of literature vary, including interpretations such as art, natural emotional expression, language-based thought, and reflections of life's beauty and meaning (Nabur & Danu, 2019; Sevia, 2024). These definitions all emphasize literature's role in conveying human experience and moral insight. From a functional perspective, literature serves as a tool for social reform, education, and entertainment (Vana, 2024). It reshapes cultural traditions and provides ethical guidance. This is particularly relevant in the context of *Guru Aini*, where local wisdom such as *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), respect for elders, and simple living are embedded in the narrative.

2.2 Indigenous Knowledge Theory

Indigenous Knowledge Theory complements the sociology of literature by offering a conceptual framework that examines how traditional knowledge is formed, sustained, and practiced in daily life. It allows for a deeper understanding of how values found in literary texts, such as mutual cooperation, respect for elders, and cultural preservation, are rooted in real community knowledge systems, particularly in the Belitung society depicted in *Guru Aini*. Both the sociology of literature and Indigenous Knowledge Theory stress the socio-cultural context in knowledge production. Knowledge is seen as a result of the interaction between individuals and their environment. Unlike Western paradigms, Indigenous Knowledge Theory emphasizes validating traditional knowledge within its own context and rejecting the need to measure it against external (Western) standards.

As Sánchez-Villagra (2022) notes, Indigenous Knowledge is not merely a collection of facts but a holistic system involving ecological, spiritual, and social aspects. For example, understanding medicinal plants is not just about their use but also includes associated rituals and cultural significance. Doja (2008) emphasizes the role of oral tradition, stories, songs, and rituals, as vital tools in transmitting indigenous knowledge across generations. This orality allows the knowledge to adapt and evolve with time while preserving core values. Graf & Mescoli (2020) point out that this theory helps promote global cultural diversity and address contemporary issues such as climate change and sustainable development. Indigenous communities, through time-tested knowledge systems, provide practical and ethical approaches to environmental and social challenges.

Senanayake (2006) classifies Indigenous Knowledge into five subtypes: Indigenous Environmental Knowledge: related to natural resource management and sustainability; Indigenous Technological Knowledge: covering traditional technologies like agriculture and craft; Indigenous Health Knowledge: dealing with herbal medicine and health rituals; Indigenous Cosmological Knowledge: concerning worldviews, ancestral beliefs, and spiritual practices; Indigenous Pedagogical Knowledge: about traditional methods

of teaching and knowledge transfer; In the context of this research, the most relevant subtypes are Indigenous Environmental Knowledge and Indigenous Cosmological Knowledge, as these align with the five local wisdom values studied: *gotong royong*, respect for elders, simple living, love for family, and cultural preservation.

Indigenous Environmental Knowledge covers: *Gotong royong* in managing natural resources; A simple lifestyle in harmony with nature; Cultural traditions linked to environmental stewardship. Indigenous Cosmological Knowledge: Respect for elders as bearers of ancestral knowledge; Family as the core of social and spiritual life; Cultural traditions as part of cosmological continuity (Senanayake, 2006; Saefullah, 2021).

The theory also recognizes that Indigenous Knowledge is contextual, dynamic, and interconnected. For instance, traditional medicinal practices are closely tied to environmental knowledge and spiritual beliefs. Levi-Strauss (1978) reminds us that although indigenous groups are often marginalized in the face of modernity and globalization, their knowledge systems are valid and deeply sophisticated. The challenge lies in integrating this knowledge into modern discourses without reducing its meaning.

2.3 Types of Local Wisdom

2.3.1 *Gotong Royong* (Traditional Communal Cooperation)

Gotong royong, or traditional communal cooperation, is a unique Indonesian cultural value rooted in togetherness, sincerity, and collective responsibility. It manifests in daily life, from disaster recovery to building homes and organizing ceremonies (Sinaini & Iwe, 2020). Despite modern challenges like individualism and urbanization, *gotong royong* remains vital for social cohesion and national development. Preserving it requires collective effort through education, policy support, and modern adaptations (Dewanti & Dewanti & Hodriani, 2023).

2.3.2 Respect for Elders

Respecting elders reflects the community's acknowledgment of wisdom, experience, and tradition. It is instilled from family, school, and workplace settings and serves as a cultural glue for intergenerational harmony (Colucci, 2016). However, modern lifestyles and globalization are eroding this value. Continuous efforts are needed to instill respect through education, social reinforcement, and role modeling (Shamsikhani & Ahmadi & Kazemnejad & Vaismoradi, 2022).

2.3.3 Simple Lifestyle

A simple lifestyle emphasizes balance, harmony with nature, and gratitude. Rooted in ancestral practices, it counters the excesses of modern consumerism and promotes sustainability and mental well-being (Kronenberg & Iida, 2011). Though modernization presents challenges, integrating tradition with innovation (like promoting local products through technology) can preserve this lifestyle. Government and community cooperation are essential in sustaining this heritage (Montero-Sandiego et al., 2024).

2.3.4 Love for Family

Family values are central in Indonesian local wisdom, where extended family systems foster moral guidance, cooperation, and social support. Traditions around birth,

marriage, and death strengthen family bonds (An, 2020). Challenges such as urbanization and individualism threaten these values, yet with government support and societal commitment, family love can be preserved for future generations (Andayani & Ancok & Wulan, 2018).

2.3.5 Preservation of Cultural Tradition

Cultural traditions are essential to national identity, representing the accumulated knowledge, values, and practices of past generations. They strengthen social cohesion, build national character, and foster pride in heritage. Cultural traditions also contribute to moral education and environmental awareness (Ansari et al., 2024).

This research is also supported by previous studies:

Adam, Samsudin Hl, Ismail, Anwar & Ali, Silvani Umar (2022). This study explored the integration of local wisdom in literary literacy among senior high school students in Ternate. Using qualitative methods, the researchers found that embedding local cultural values in teaching practices improved both academic and cultural outcomes.

Surip, M., Dalimunthe, S. & Daulay, M. (2021). This research analyzed local wisdom in North Sumatran short stories using Cultural Theory and Literary Anthropology. It concluded that these stories preserve cultural elements such as language, livelihood, and social systems.

Ismawati, Esti & Warsito, Warsito (2019). This study examined Javanese poetry and its potential as teaching material. It showed that both classical and modern poems are rich in moral and philosophical values, making them effective tools for cultural education.

3. Research Method

The research adopts a qualitative descriptive method with content analysis, aiming to explore five core values of local wisdom: *gotong royong* (communal cooperation), respect for elders, simple lifestyle, love for family, and preservation of cultural traditions. The study is grounded in the Sociology of Literature approach developed by Diana Laurenson & Alan Swingewood (1972), Nyoman Kutha Ratna (2004), and Suwardi Endaswara (2013), supported by Indigenous Knowledge Theory as outlined by Claude Lévi-Strauss (1978). Concepts relevant to each value are drawn from scholars such as La Sinaini & La Iwe (2020), Shamsikhani et al. (2022), Kronenberg & Iida (2011), Montero-Sandiego et al. (2024), An (2020), Andayani et al. (2018), Ansari et al. (2024), and R. Saputra (2024).

The primary data source is the novel *Guru Aini* (2020), analyzed through systematic procedures including thorough reading, annotation, keyword identification, and the creation of a matrix to categorize textual evidence. Data analysis follows the steps proposed by Sugiyono (2019) and Miles & Huberman (2014), which include data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. This methodological framework enables the researcher to uncover both explicit and implicit representations of local wisdom in the novel, offering cultural insights while also validating the novel's contribution to the preservation of Indonesian identity.

4. Discussion

Employing a sociology of literature approach, focused on sociology of text and guided by Indigenous Knowledge Theory, this research seeks to illuminate how the

novel embodies and reflects the cultural values and traditions of the Belitong community. Building upon prior research in the field, this section will systematically unfold the manifestations of five distinct local wisdom tenets: *gotong royong* (Traditional Communal Cooperation), Respect for Elders, Simple Lifestyle, Love for Family, and Preservation of Cultural Traditions. Through detailed textual analysis, this part will demonstrate how these crucial elements of local wisdom are intricately woven into the narrative, character development, and societal interactions depicted in *Guru Aini*, serving not merely as background but as foundational pillars shaping the lives and aspirations of its characters. Each sub-section will delve into specific textual evidence, offering a nuanced interpretation of how these indigenous knowledges are portrayed and their significance within the broader cultural context of the novel.

4.1 *Gotong Royong* (Traditional Communal Cooperation)

Gotong royong also emphasizes collective responsibility. The welfare and sustainability of the community are seen as a shared responsibility, with each individual contributing to maintaining harmony and progress. In a pluralistic society like Indonesia, *gotong royong* serves as a social glue that unites various ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds, transcending differences and creating strong bonds. *Gotong royong* is a reflection of local wisdom that has been passed down from generation to generation; although its practices may vary according to local customs and needs, its profound essence remains the same (Levi-Strauss, 1978; Dewanti & Dewanti & Hodriani, 2023).

In the context of Andrea Hirata's novel *Guru Aini*, *gotong royong* is explored as a real manifestation of local wisdom that shapes the character of its people, especially in how they face challenges, build communities, and support the education system, as represented in the discussion of "Traditional Communal Cooperation (*Gotong royong*)"

"Ibu Amanah datang ke rumah Desi atas undangan ibu Desi yang sudah kehabisan cara untuk membujuk anak gadisnya (Hirata, 2020, p.2, lines 22-24)."

This data, although brief, is one of the strong initial images of how the spirit of mutual cooperation is manifested in the daily lives of the people in the novel *Guru Aini*. *Gotong royong* (traditional communal cooperation) is not always in the form of large physical activities such as building bridges or cleaning villages, but also moral, emotional, and intellectual support between individuals in facing personal difficulties.

In this case, Ibu Desi was in a desperate situation with her daughter. This was a very complicated personal problem, but rather than give up or face it alone, she chose to seek help and support from others in her community. The invitation to Ibu Amanah shows a belief that collective power, even in the form of advice or the presence of a friend, can bring solutions. This is the essence of *gotong royong*: the realization that burdens are lighter when carried together, and that community is a social safety net.

The presence of Ibu Amanah, who is most likely a respected figure or has wisdom, is a representation of a reliable community resource. Mutual cooperation here is not only about providing material assistance, but also about empathy and concern. Ibu Amanah shows her concern by accepting the invitation, indicating that she feels the difficulties experienced by Ibu Desi. With the arrival of Ibu Amanah, Ibu Desi no longer feels alone in facing Desi's problems. The burden of thought is slightly divided. Although it is not yet clear what Ibu Amanah will do, her presence opens up the possibility of discussion,

exchange of ideas, and the search for alternative solutions that Ibu Desi might not have thought of alone.

This quote is the initial foundation of how Andrea Hirata describes local wisdom through interactions between characters. Mutual cooperation here is a social mechanism that helps individuals and families overcome challenges, strengthens community ties, and emphasizes that no one struggles alone in a caring society. This is how local people realize the values of togetherness in facing various dynamics of life, both public and private.

4.2 Respect for Elders

Respect for elders is a fundamental pillar in the social structure of Indonesian society, clearly etched as a form of local wisdom passed down from generation to generation. It is not merely about etiquette or politeness; rather, it is a value symbolizing the recognition of their experience, wisdom, and crucial role in preserving traditions and guiding younger generations. This respect often manifests in various aspects of life, from how one speaks and behaves, to seeking advice, and giving priority in social interactions roots (Shamsikhani & Ahmadi & Kazemnejad & Vaismoradi, 2022).

In Andrea Hirata's novel *Guru Aini*, although it might not always be explicitly narrated as "showing respect to elders," this value is most likely woven into various character interactions and dynamics. An author like Andrea Hirata, who is strong in depicting Malay culture and the local wisdom of the hinterland, would implicitly or explicitly show this practice. In the interactions between teachers and students, even though Desi is a young teacher, she will most likely be taught and expected to show respect to the headmaster, senior teachers, or older community figures. This is not just because of hierarchy, but also because they are considered to have richer experience in education and life. The students, in turn, will also be educated to respect their teachers, who are older and more knowledgeable in terms of age and position.

In addition, in the context of a community like Ketumbi, local wisdom about respecting elders will be seen in the way decisions are made or problems are solved. Elderly figures or village elders may be the main reference or advisor in facing various challenges. The role of Ibu Amanah who was invited by Ibu Desi (as we have discussed) can also be seen as a form of respect. Ibu Desi shows respect by asking for help and advice from someone who is believed to have more mature experience and views. "Respect for elders" in *Guru Aini* not only functions as an ethical norm, but also as a foundation that maintains social harmony and the transmission of knowledge between generations. This is local wisdom that ensures that past experiences and wisdom continue to be a guide for the present and the future, forming a solid, orderly, and respectful community character.

The data below obtained from the novel *Guru Aini* describes respect for elders as a pillar of local wisdom.

'Ibu memegang tanganku erat, tatapan matanya penuh harap dan kekhawatiran yang bercampur aduk. 'Desi, Nak, pikirkan lagi. Ada banyak pekerjaan lain yang lebih mudah, lebih dekat dengan kita, dan gajinya pasti jauh lebih besar. Jangan sia-siakan bakatmu untuk menjadi guru di daerah terpencil seperti itu.' Aku tersenyum tipis, menggelengkan kepala perlahan, dan dengan suara mantap yang kuharap bisa meyakinkan hatinya, kujawab, 'Terima kasih, Bu, tapi aku hanya mau menjadi guru.' Tidak ada yang lain, tidak pernah ada

yang lain, selain panggilan di hatiku untuk mengabdikan pada ilmu dan anak-anak yang haus akan itu. Bagiku, tidak ada pilihan karier yang bisa sebanding dengan kebahagiaan dan makna yang akan kudapatkan dari mengajar (Hirata, 2020, p.32, line 16).''

This data, although highlighting Desi's determination and idealism as a prospective teacher, paradoxically depicts *gotong royong* from a different perspective, namely as a form of indirect support or even "resistance" to personal choices that will then receive community support. Basically, the dialogue between Desi and her mother shows *gotong royong* in a broader context, as an effort by the family and close environment to "safeguard" or "secure" the future of its members, even though the chosen method may feel contrary to the individual's wishes.

In this dialogue, Desi's concerns and her offer to choose another job that is "easier, closer, and pays more" are a reflection of the instinct of mutual cooperation within the nuclear family. Desi, with all her love and concerns, wants to ensure that her child has a "good" and "safe" life according to common standards. This is a form of mutual cooperation based on the deep concern and protective responsibility of parents towards their children. Desi tries to "shoulder" the burden of her future by offering alternatives that are considered more promising, even though Desi herself has a different calling. This internal debate shows the natural urge within a social unit (family) to help each other and maintain the well-being of its members, even if it means trying to direct their life choices.

However, on the other hand, Desi's firm refusal confirms that traditional communal cooperation does not always mean absolute harmony in every aspect. Her idealism to become a teacher, despite all the risks and the distance of the location, will eventually trigger a different and more real form of mutual cooperation from the Ketumbi community (as seen in the previous data with the donation of goods). This conversation with her mother becomes the starting point that underlines Desi's determination, which will later be answered by traditional communal cooperation in the form of adaptive support from the Ketumbi community. So, although at first there was a kind of "discordance" in the way mutual cooperation was interpreted between mother and daughter (one wanted to protect from difficulties, one wanted to realize idealism), in the end, Desi's journey to Ketumbi and her acceptance by the community there were the end result of a series of mutually complementary mutual cooperation actions: family protection at the beginning, and unexpected community support later on.

4.3 Simple Lifestyle

A simple lifestyle, deeply intertwined with local wisdom, often emphasizes sustainability, community, and contentment with less. In many traditional societies, this wisdom encourages living in harmony with nature, utilizing resources thoughtfully, and practicing self-sufficiency. It prioritizes communal well-being over individual accumulation, fostering strong social bonds through shared responsibilities and mutual support. This approach often involves appreciating artisanal skills, valuing locally sourced goods, and upholding traditions that promote mindfulness and gratitude. Ultimately, a simple lifestyle guided by local wisdom champions a life rich in experiences, relationships, and purpose, rather than material possessions, leading to a profound sense of peace and belonging within one's environment and community (Kronenberg & Iida, 2011).

“Desi membetulkan hijabnya lalu menguatkan ikatan tali sepatunya, sepatu hadiah dari ayahnya itu. Sepatu yang masih tampak putih bersih, begitu putih sehingga mengkilap. Garis-garis merah di sisi-sisinya cemerlang. Sepatu itu adalah satu-satunya miliknya, yang dirawatnya dengan penuh perhatian dan kehati-hatian, bukti bahwa baginya, setiap benda berharga dan patut dijaga, merefleksikan gaya hidup sederhana yang memaknai setiap pemberian...(Hirata, 2020, p.12, line 23).”

This singular passage, though brief, is a microcosm of the simple lifestyle that permeates the Belitong community. Desi's shoes are more than just footwear; they are a tangible representation of a deeply ingrained local wisdom. The fact that they are her "only pair" immediately establishes a lack of excess, a fundamental characteristic of simple living. In a world saturated with consumerism and the fleeting gratification of acquiring new possessions, Desi's situation highlights a life where needs are met with sufficiency rather than extravagance. This is not a lament of poverty, but an understated acceptance of circumstance, transforming it into a virtue.

Desi's meticulous care for her shoes – keeping them "pristine white" and shining despite their presumably frequent use – speaks volumes. This act of "great attention and caution" transcends mere tidiness; it signifies a profound respect for her belongings. In a simple lifestyle, items are not disposable commodities. They are valuable assets that are meant to last, to be maintained, and to serve their purpose for as long as possible. This approach inherently reduces waste and fosters a sense of gratitude for what one possesses, rather than a constant yearning for the next new thing. It is a practical manifestation of sustainability, long before the term became a global catchphrase, rooted in generations of living harmoniously with limited resources.

4.4 Love for Family

In the world of *Guru Aini*, family is the bedrock upon which dreams are built and endured, a sanctuary of belonging and an irreplaceable source of strength. Family in *Guru Aini* serves as an indispensable emotional and practical safety net. When individuals face setbacks, despair, or the overwhelming weight of their circumstances, it is often the unwavering support of their family that provides the courage to continue. This support might come in the form of quiet encouragement, practical assistance, or simply a shared understanding of their struggles. The concept of *gotong royong* (traditional communal cooperation), another significant local wisdom, is frequently first experienced and most intensely practiced within the family unit before extending to the wider community. This internal solidarity strengthens the familial bond, creating a resilient micro-society capable of weathering external storms. The family becomes a place where vulnerability is accepted, and burdens are shared, ensuring no one faces their challenges entirely alone.

The powerful theme of love for family in *Guru Aini* is far more than a sentimental notion; it is a vital point of local wisdom that underpins the very fabric of society in Belitong. It manifests as a selfless dedication, an enduring source of support, and a primary motivator for perseverance. Through the struggles and triumphs of its characters, Hirata's novel beautifully illustrates how these unbreakable familial bonds foster resilience, inspire sacrifice, and ultimately provide the unwavering foundation upon which individual dreams, and indeed, the future of the community, can truly

flourish.

Here is the data from the novel *Guru Aini* that illustrates Love for Family:

'Akhirnya Desi siap naik bus. Ayahnya menghampirinya. Terperanjat Desi melihat ayahnya tiba-tiba bertekuk lutut di depannya dan membuka simpul tali sepatunya. Tali sepatu itu lalu pelan-pelan diikat kembali oleh ayahnya, dengan cara yang aneh, yaitu setelah disimpul, tali sepatu itu diputar kebeakang dan disimpul lagi di belakang kaki (Hirata, 2020, p.13, line 13-19).''

Andrea Hirata's *Guru Aini* profoundly illustrates the unwavering love for family as a vital butir kearifan lokal, deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of Belitung. This love is not always expressed through grand declarations; more often, it is conveyed through actions of quiet devotion and heartfelt sacrifice. One such moment, particularly poignant and revealing, occurs on page 13, lines 13-19, as Desi prepares to embark on her journey.

The scene unfolds as Desi, ready to board the bus, is approached by her father. The narrative describes a startling moment: "Desi was startled to see her father suddenly kneel before her and untie her shoelaces. Her father then slowly re-tied the laces, in a strange way, by tying them behind her foot after making a knot. This specific, intimate gesture is loaded with layers of meaning, speaking volumes about the profound familial bond and the father's deep love for his daughter.

Firstly, the act of the father kneeling before his daughter is highly symbolic. In many cultures, kneeling signifies respect, humility, or even a plea. Here, a father, typically a figure of authority and strength, humbles himself before his child. This extraordinary gesture underscores the immense deference and devotion he holds for Desi and her future. It is a silent blessing, an act of service that transcends typical parent-child dynamics, highlighting a love so vast it overrides conventional social standing. It demonstrates a father's willingness to put his child's well-being and readiness above his own pride or position.

Secondly, the father's action of untangling and then meticulously re-tying her shoelaces in a unique way ("in a strange way, namely after being knotted, the shoelaces are turned back and knotted again at the back of the foot") is far more than just a practical adjustment. Given the previous emphasis on Desi's single, precious pair of shoes (Data 1, Data 3, Data 4), this careful attention to her footwear suggests a desire to ensure her comfort, safety, and readiness for the journey ahead. The "strange" or unusual way of re-tying the laces could symbolize a father's unique way of protecting or preparing his child for the unknown. It might be a practical tip for durability, a special "knot" that only he knows, or simply a way to spend a few more precious moments ensuring her readiness. Regardless of its practical efficacy, it is undeniably a gesture imbued with deep care, foresight, and a subtle desire to leave her with something uniquely "his" that will help her on her path.

This entire interaction is a powerful demonstration of selfless parental love. It conveys a silent message of support, encouragement, and a father's deep emotional investment in his daughter's journey. In communities where material wealth might be scarce, these acts of intimate care and sacrifice become the most potent expressions of affection and commitment. This scene, devoid of dialogue, speaks a universal language of love, a father's heartfelt prayer and hope for his child's success, physically manifested through the tender re-tying of her shoelaces. It is a beautiful illustration of how love for

family in *Guru Aini* is expressed through deeply personal, sometimes unconventional, but always profoundly meaningful gestures, cementing it as a foundational local wisdom.

4.5 Preservation of Cultural Traditions

In the context of Andrea Hirata's novel "*Guru Aini*," although its primary focus is education and a math teacher's struggle, the essence of cultural preservation is implicitly interwoven through the depiction of the Malay community's life in Belitong. While not explicitly discussing traditional ceremonies or arts, the novel illustrates how the Saputra, 2024, such as the spirit of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), perseverance in the face of limitations, and the importance of education as a path out of poverty, are consistently upheld and passed down. This represents a more subtle form of cultural tradition preservation: the preservation of values and a way of life that form a community's identity, championed by characters like Ibu Aini and her students for a better future without forgetting their roots (Ansari, et al, 2024; Saputra, 2024).

Andrea Hirata, through the novel *Guru Aini*, not only presents a touching story of educational struggle, but also subtly carves a portrait of Belitong society with all the richness of its local wisdom. Among the noble values that shine through, the preservation of cultural traditions emerges as a crucial foundation that maintains identity, strengthens social cohesion, and provides a moral foothold amidst the currents of modernization. This is not merely about preserving old rituals, but about how society consciously maintains their ancestral heritage to remain relevant, meaningful, and serve as a guide for future generations. In *Guru Aini*, cultural tradition is the breath of life that shapes worldview, ethics, and togetherness, demonstrating that the true strength of a community lies in its ability to firmly hold onto its cultural roots.

More than that, the preservation of cultural traditions in *Guru Aini* also serves as a guardian of social harmony. Communal rituals, traditional ceremonies, or the custom of sharing create spaces for the community to interact, strengthen bonds of kinship, and resolve conflicts. Tradition becomes the glue that reinforces a sense of togetherness and collective identity, especially amidst the harsh challenges of life. This demonstrates that tradition is not just a fossil of the past, but an adaptive mechanism that continues to function to maintain balance and social solidarity in the present.

Ultimately, through its portrayal of community life, *Guru Aini* invites us to reflect that the preservation of cultural traditions is an active endeavor in safeguarding invaluable intangible heritage. It represents local wisdom that teaches us true progress must be balanced with an understanding of our origins, and that a community's identity will remain strong as long as its cultural roots are continuously nurtured and maintained.

The preservation of cultural traditions as a point of local wisdom is illustrated in the novel *Guru Aini*, through the following data:

Kerap Desi mendengar orang berkata begitu padanya. "Tak berminat menjadi model, Bu. Negeri ini kekurangan guru matematika, terutama di kampung-kampung." (Hirata, 2020, p.2, lines 5-7)

The data, "Desi often heard people say that to her. 'Not interested in becoming a model, Ma'am. This country lacks mathematics teachers, especially in the villages.' (page 2, lines 5-7)", although seemingly not explicitly depicting cultural tradition, carries profound implications about the cultural values strongly held by the character

Desi and, more broadly, the community in the novel *Guru Aini*.

Desi's choice to become a math teacher and her refusal of a modeling offer reflect several important aspects of local wisdom related to the preservation of cultural traditions. In the context of the novel, especially with the backdrop of a remote area lacking teachers, Desi's choice affirms the high cultural value placed on education. The community values knowledge and the role of teachers as pillars of progress. This is a noble tradition that is highly upheld, where education is seen as a way out of limitations and a means to improve quality of life. Desi, by choosing the teaching profession over modeling, actively preserves this cultural tradition by dedicating herself to educating the younger generation.

Desi's choice to teach "especially in the villages" demonstrates strong cultural values of traditional communal cooperation (*gotong royong*) and social care. She doesn't pursue a glamorous career but chooses to dedicate herself to communities in need. This reflects a cultural tradition where the common good is prioritized over personal interest. By becoming a teacher in a remote area, Desi preserves this cultural tradition by becoming an agent of positive change and making a real contribution to the progress of her community.

Desi's rejection of the modeling offer, which is often associated with luxury and popularity, implicitly critiques the culture of materialism that is beginning to permeate society. She chooses a noble and beneficial profession rather than chasing fame and wealth. This is a more subtle form of cultural tradition preservation, where spiritual values and dedication are valued more than material possessions.

Desi's choice, as a woman, to actively contribute to education also reflects a positive shift in cultural traditions regarding the role of women. She is not merely seen as an object of beauty (as implied by the modeling offer), but as an individual with the capability and responsibility to contribute to national development. This is a dynamic form of cultural tradition preservation, where old values are reinterpreted to accommodate changing times and provide greater space for women.

Thus, although not explicit, this data holds deep meaning about how Desi, through her career choice, actively preserves cultural traditions that uphold education, community service, spiritual values, and the active role of women in development. Her career choice is a reflection of the local wisdom that is alive and remains relevant in the community of *Guru Aini*.

5. Conclusion

The novel *Guru Aini* by Andrea Hirata serves as a powerful literary representation of Indonesian local wisdom. Through the lens of Sociology of Literature and Indigenous Knowledge Theory, this research has identified and analyzed five core cultural values embedded in the narrative: mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), respect for elders, simple lifestyle, love for family, and preservation of cultural traditions. These values are not only central to the story's characters and events, but they also reflect the real-life practices and beliefs of the Belitung community.

The findings demonstrate that literature plays a vital role in preserving and transmitting cultural identity. By portraying traditional values in an engaging narrative, *Guru Aini* becomes a cultural document that bridges the past and the present. It teaches readers about the importance of collective action, humility, intergenerational respect, familial bonds, and the safeguarding of cultural heritage, values that remain relevant in today's rapidly modernizing world.

Moreover, this study highlights the role of education and literature in countering the erosion of local identity due to globalization. Through qualitative content analysis, it is evident that literary works can serve as ethical laboratories where cultural values are tested, reinforced, and reimagined. Thus, *Guru Aini* is not just a novel; it is a meaningful contribution to the preservation of Indonesian wisdom and a valuable resource for cultural and educational development.

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INTEGRATING LOCAL WISDOM AND CHARACTER VALUES IN DIGITAL MATERIALS FOR RECEPTIVE ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS

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Abstract

This study aimed to develop digital learning materials that integrate local wisdom and character education for the Receptive Oral Language Skills course in the English Education Study Program at Universitas Negeri Medan. Using a Research and Development (R&D) model, the study followed several stages: preliminary study, needs analysis, material design, expert validation, revision, and final product development. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and expert evaluation forms, and analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively to assess the materials' quality and feasibility. The developed digital materials were designed to enhance students' receptive oral skills while embedding character values and local cultural elements from North Sumatra. Expert validation, conducted by specialists in English education, instructional media, and local culture, evaluated linguistic quality, learning process, content integration, and digital design. The results showed an overall score of 91.75%, categorized as "very good." The final product is a set of digital learning materials that combine cultural relevance, character education, and interactive features to support meaningful learning in Receptive Oral Language Skills. The findings imply that integrating local wisdom and character values into digital learning resources can not only enhance language comprehension but also foster students' cultural awareness, moral development, and appreciation of local identity. This approach offers a model for culturally responsive and value-oriented language instruction in higher education.

Keywords: *digital learning materials; character education; language skills; local wisdom; receptive oral research and development*

1. Introduction

Education in the twenty-first century has entered an era profoundly influenced by rapid technological development. Alongside the digital revolution, the education sector has experienced major transformations in how information is accessed and how learners interact with instructional content. Technology has opened opportunities to create learning methods that are more interactive, inclusive, and accessible. However, it is crucial to ensure that technology is not merely used to enhance digital literacy but

also to foster local wisdom and character development. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education (UNESCO, 2023), should be realized through approaches that consider local cultural contexts. This ensures that students become not only technologically literate individuals but also socially aware, ethical, and responsible citizens. Therefore, digital literacy should be integrated with an understanding of local wisdom to produce a generation capable of innovating globally while maintaining national identity and character values.

In line with technological progress and the increasing importance of digital literacy, learning that incorporates local wisdom and character education has become increasingly relevant. The integration of local cultural values into digital learning can provide a deeper educational dimension, enabling students not only to acquire technical skills but also to build a sense of identity, social responsibility, and cultural awareness. Through digital media, diverse elements of local wisdom such as folklore, traditions, and customs can be presented in engaging and accessible formats (Rieckmann et al., 2017). This approach not only supports students' digital competence but also contributes to the preservation of local culture, which plays a vital role in shaping national identity and character.

One of the courses in the English Education Study Program is Receptive Oral Language Skills (ROLS), which focuses on developing students' listening skills in English. This course is vital, as language mastery extends beyond the classroom into students' social lives. However, instructional practices often rely on globally oriented materials that lack local cultural and character relevance. Existing ROLS materials tend to emphasize linguistic comprehension using Western-based contexts and generic topics, providing limited cultural connection and minimal character development. Consequently, students may achieve technical proficiency but struggle to relate the content to their own cultural environment. As a result, English listening instruction could be contextualized with local wisdom and character education, enabling learners to strengthen both linguistic competence and cultural identity.

The renewal of teaching materials for ROLS is therefore necessary. Beyond language proficiency, materials should encourage students to appreciate cultural diversity and internalize positive values. Character education serves as a key element in preparing students to become intellectually capable and morally grounded individuals. The development of digital learning materials based on local wisdom and character values provides a holistic learning experience that emphasizes not only language mastery but also the cultivation of character and cultural understanding (Yaqin et al., 2024). This innovation aligns with the SDGs, emphasizing inclusivity and respect for diversity in education (Rieckmann et al., 2017).

Currently, the digital materials used in the ROLS course have been designed contextually using flipbooks but still lack integration with local wisdom and character education. Considering students' increasing digital literacy, these materials could be enhanced by embedding elements from Indonesian local cultures such as folklore, customs, and symbols that connect language learning with rich cultural traditions. This pedagogical and cultural limitation represents a clear gap that needs to be addressed. Therefore, this study aims to develop digital learning materials for ROLS that integrate local wisdom and character education. The purpose is to provide innovative learning resources that not only enhance students' listening competence but also foster character values and cultural identity and the goals of sustainable education.

2. Literature Review

Culture, as defined by Koentjaraningrat (2000), encompasses a system of ideas, actions, and human creations acquired through learning. It manifests in three forms: ideas, activities, and artifacts, all of which reflect the identity and behavioral patterns of a community. Preserving and adapting culture, including local wisdom, within education is therefore essential. Such integration strengthens students' cultural identity and enhances the relevance of education to their everyday lives. Koentjaraningrat (2000) emphasized that successful development must consider cultural mentality, which can be cultivated through learning that is based on culture. By incorporating cultural elements such as folklore, local traditions, and customary practices into instructional materials, learning becomes more contextual and engaging while simultaneously instilling Pancasila values such as mutual cooperation, tolerance, and harmony.

Character education in Indonesia is closely related to the concept of the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (Pancasila Student Profile), a key component of the Kurikulum Merdeka (Independent Curriculum). This profile aims to develop learners who are not only intellectually capable but also possess values and attitudes that embody Pancasila as the foundation of the nation (Kemendikbudristek, 2020; Kemendikbudristek, 2022). The Profil Pelajar Pancasila consists of six main dimensions: faith and noble character, global diversity, mutual cooperation, independence, critical reasoning, and creativity. These dimensions are intended to shape students into adaptive, character driven, and competent individuals ready to meet the challenges of the twenty first century (Kahfi, 2022; Ristiani et al., 2022; Susilawati et al., 2021). This framework applies not only within formal education but also across lifelong learning contexts, allowing learners to strengthen competencies through flexible and interactive experiences with their surroundings.

Previous studies have demonstrated that learning materials based on local wisdom can enhance student motivation and engagement (Jamilah et al., 2024; Martha et al., 2022). However, many of these studies primarily focus on improving student interest and participation without sufficiently addressing how local wisdom and character values can be effectively embedded into digital instructional design. In contrast, this study seeks to integrate both pedagogical and cultural dimensions systematically within digital materials, offering a more comprehensive framework. Therefore, developing learning materials that integrate technology, character education, and local wisdom is essential to address current educational challenges. This approach not only supports character formation but also bridges the gap between technological advancement and cultural identity development, avoiding repetition of superficial cultural inclusion found in previous works. In the digital era, interactive digital materials such as flipbooks offer engaging and contextualized ways to visualize cultural elements (Mayer & Fiorella, 2022). Through local narratives and traditions, students can not only enhance language skills but also gain a deeper understanding of the values that shape character and national identity (Sitanggang & Andriany, 2024).

This study focuses on developing digital learning materials for ROLS that integrate local wisdom from three major ethnic groups in North Sumatra: Batak Toba, Batak Mandailing, and Batak Karo, which represent the cultural backgrounds of most students. The local wisdom approach in this research draws from Koentjaraningrat's (2000) theory of culture, which identifies three cultural dimensions: ideas, activities, and artifacts. These elements serve as the basis for contextualizing listening and speaking materials. Character values are derived from the Profil Pelajar Pancasila,

including cooperation, independence, global diversity, critical reasoning, creativity, and faith. Through this approach, it is expected that students will not only improve their English language skills but also strengthen their moral character and appreciation of cultural diversity.

3. Research Method

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) design adapted from the model proposed by Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003), which outlines ten systematic steps for the development and validation of educational products. The research aimed to design, develop, and evaluate digital learning materials integrating local wisdom and character education for the Receptive Oral Language Skills course in the English Education Study Program at Universitas Negeri Medan.

The development procedure consisted of three major stages, namely the preliminary stage, the development stage, and the evaluation stage. The preliminary stage focused on identifying learning needs, formulating objectives, and designing the initial prototype of the digital learning materials. The needs analysis was conducted through questionnaires and interviews with students and lecturers, combined with a review of relevant literature. The data obtained indicated the need for digital learning media that not only enhance students' receptive oral language competence but also incorporate elements of local culture and character values.

The development stage involved creating and refining the prototype based on the data collected in the preliminary stage. This phase included the organization of content, the integration of multimedia components, and the alignment of materials with the course learning outcomes. The preliminary version of the product was tested on a limited scale to evaluate its linguistic accuracy, cultural relevance, and technical functionality. Feedback from experts and users was used to make necessary revisions, particularly regarding clarity of instructions, visual layout, and user interaction. The evaluation stage encompassed field testing, revision, and expert validation to determine the feasibility and effectiveness of the developed materials. Validation was conducted by experts in English language education, local culture, and instructional media design to ensure accuracy, relevance, and instructional quality. Following validation, the product underwent further refinement to meet academic and pedagogical standards before being considered ready for implementation and dissemination.

3.1 Participants

The study was conducted in the English Education Study Program, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Medan, located on Jalan Willem Iskandar Pasar V, Medan. It took place during the odd semester of the 2025–2026 academic year (August–October). The participants were two regular classes of students enrolled in the Receptive Oral Language Skills course, with a total of 63 students. A purposive sampling method was used, selecting participants based on their enrollment in the course and availability during the study period.

3.2 Data Collection

Data were collected using observation sheets, questionnaires, and interview guidelines. Observations and field notes were used to gather information during the needs analysis, expert validation, and both limited and large-scale product trials. The validation process involved four experts specializing in English education materials,

media, culture, and character education. Questionnaires were administered to obtain expert validation data, while interviews provided qualitative insights that supported the revision and refinement of the developed materials. Through this process, the study produced a set of digital learning materials that were pedagogically sound, culturally contextualized, and aligned with character education principles, supporting the development of students' receptive oral language skills in a meaningful and locally grounded manner.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Development Process of the Digital Teaching Material

To ensure the quality and relevance of the SDGs-based digital learning materials developed in this study, two subject-matter experts (lecturers in English education and curriculum development) conducted a validation process. The evaluation used a structured rubric covering seven key aspects, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Very Poor, 5 = Excellent). The development of digital teaching materials integrating local wisdom and character education for the Receptive Oral Language Skills course was carried out through several systematic stages.

The first stage involved conducting a needs analysis to identify students' learning needs and expectations regarding digital materials that incorporate local cultural values and character education. This was accomplished through questionnaires distributed to students and classroom observations of the Receptive Oral Language Skills course. The purpose of this stage was to gather relevant information that could serve as the foundation for developing culturally responsive digital teaching materials.

The preliminary phase also included a literature review and a small-scale pilot study involving questionnaires and interviews with students and lecturers. The findings indicated that both students and instructors required digital learning media that not only supported listening and oral comprehension skills but also integrated elements of local wisdom and character education.

Although students acknowledged the benefits of using digital technologies in learning, they also reported several challenges, including the lack of local cultural context in the existing materials, limited internet access and device availability, low-quality audio in some resources, and insufficient variety in listening exercises. These findings confirmed the gap identified in the abstract—that while current digital learning materials are functional, they are not yet optimal in integrating cultural and character values.chapters.

4.1.2 Students' Preferences and Learning Expectations

Students expressed a strong preference for interactive and engaging features that reflect their local cultural contexts. They recommended the inclusion of story-based listening activities, interactive quizzes, gamified listening tasks, and project-based assignments. Additionally, online discussion forums were considered essential to foster collaboration, reflection, and critical thinking skills. These preferences suggest that students expect not only accessible digital materials but also learning experiences that promote active participation and meaningful engagement.

One of the key findings was the high interest in integrating local wisdom within listening and oral comprehension activities. The most preferred themes included

folklore, local history, customs and traditional practices, and regional songs or oral traditions. This indicates that learning becomes more meaningful when the content reflects students' cultural identity and provides contextual learning experiences.

4.1.3 Integration of Lokal Culture and Character Education Values

Beyond content, students emphasized the importance of embedding character education values within digital materials. The most frequently mentioned values included curiosity, creativity, honesty, cooperation, tolerance, and responsibility. Students believed that these values should not be presented as separate topics but should be naturally integrated into the design of the materials. They suggested using interactive dialogues, audio stories, reflective assignments, and collaborative projects, which were perceived as effective methods for helping learners reflect on moral values while developing their listening skills.

The results guided the design of digital teaching materials that are relevant, interactive, and culturally contextualized. The materials specifically incorporate the local traditions of North Sumatra, focusing on the Batak Toba, Batak Karo, and Batak Mandailing cultures, which were chosen because they represent the cultural backgrounds of the majority of the students. These materials were designed to support students' receptive oral skills, such as listening comprehension, while aligning with the learning objectives of the Receptive Oral Language Skills course.

4.1.4 Expert Validation of the Developed Product

The developed digital teaching materials were validated by experts in English education, local culture, and instructional media design to ensure their overall quality and appropriateness for academic use. The validation process was designed to examine several key aspects, including content accuracy, linguistic clarity, instructional design quality, and the effective integration of character education and local wisdom values. To achieve this, a structured validation instrument consisting of twenty-four items was employed. The instrument covered four major dimensions: linguistic quality, learning process, content and integration of local wisdom and character values, and digital media design. Each item was assessed using a four-point Likert scale, ranging from one (Not Feasible) to four (Highly Feasible). In addition to quantitative ratings, experts were invited to provide qualitative feedback and suggestions in an open-ended section of the instrument to guide further improvement of the product.

During the initial development stage, the digital teaching materials underwent preliminary evaluation and were subsequently refined based on expert feedback. Several minor revisions were made to enhance the overall quality and usability of the product. These included simplifying the instructions in listening exercises to make them clearer and more communicative, adjusting cultural references within the listening texts to ensure stronger alignment with North Sumatran cultural contexts, and improving the visual layout and navigation features to enhance user accessibility and learning experience. After these revisions were incorporated, the product was revalidated by the panel of experts to confirm that it met all established quality standards.

4.1.5 Expert Validation Results

The validation process involved experts consisting of specialists in English Education material, media, culture and character education. Each expert assessed the

developed digital teaching materials based on four main aspects: linguistic quality, learning process, content integration of local wisdom and character education, and digital media design. The assessment employed a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Not Feasible) to 4 (Highly Feasible). Based on the validation data, the following average scores were obtained:

Aspect Evaluated	Number of Items	Average Score (%)	Category
Linguistic Aspect	6	91.60	Excellent
Learning Process Aspect	5	88.00	Excellent
Content and Integration of Local Wisdom & Character Education	6	93.30	Excellent
Digital Media Design Aspect	7	94.10	Excellent
Overall Average	24	91.75	Highly Feasible

Table 1. Expert Validation

The data presented in Table 1 indicate that all evaluated aspects achieved scores within the excellent category. The linguistic aspect, with an average score of 91.60%, demonstrates that the instructional language used throughout the materials is accurate, clear, and contextually appropriate. The experts confirmed that the texts and listening materials are linguistically consistent with students' proficiency levels, providing both comprehensible input and effective language exposure.

The learning process aspect obtained an average score of 88.00%, reflecting a well-organized instructional flow and clear alignment with the course learning outcomes. The validators observed that the sequence of activities encouraged student engagement and active learning. Nevertheless, they suggested simplifying certain task instructions to further enhance clarity and time efficiency during classroom implementation.

The content and integration of local wisdom and character education aspect received an average score of 93.30%, indicating that the materials successfully embed cultural and moral dimensions within the language learning process. The experts commended the integration of North Sumatran cultural elements—such as folklore, local traditions, and community values—into listening passages and exercises. They further noted that the inclusion of character values such as cooperation, honesty, and responsibility strengthens students' moral awareness while promoting contextualized language learning experiences.

The digital media design aspect achieved the highest mean score of 94.10%, showing that the visual and technical quality of the digital materials met the standards. According to the validators, the interface design is user-friendly, the layout is visually coherent, and the materials are easily accessible across various devices. Minor adjustments were suggested, including refining font contrast and improving audio quality to optimize the overall user experience.

Collectively, the overall mean score of 91.75% classifies the developed digital materials as “Highly Feasible”, based on the quantitative data conversion scale proposed by Sugiyono (2012). This finding confirms that the materials are valid, practical, and pedagogically sound. The high level of expert agreement suggests that the product effectively integrates linguistic, cultural, and technological elements to support students' receptive oral language skills.

4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the development of digital teaching materials integrating local wisdom and character education for the Receptive Oral Language Skills (ROLS) course produced resources that are both pedagogically sound and contextually relevant. The high overall validation score of 91.75%, classified as highly feasible (Sugiyono, 2012), demonstrates that the materials meet essential standards of linguistic quality, instructional coherence, content validity, and technological usability. These results suggest that combining digital learning with cultural and ethical dimensions creates meaningful learning experiences that extend beyond linguistic competence, fostering ethical awareness, cultural identity, and social responsibility among learners (Laili, 2017; Septiana et al., 2021; Rahayu et al., 2025).

In line with the perspectives of Rieckmann et al. (2017), UNESCO (2023), and Arsari (2022), this study reinforces the view that technology-driven education should cultivate learners who are not only digitally literate but also socially responsible and culturally grounded. The integration of North Sumatran cultural elements, including Batak Toba, Karo, and Mandailing folklore, contextualizes English learning within students' lived experiences, creating authentic learning environments that resonate with their identities (Hulu et al., 2024; Manurung et al., 2024). The high validation score for content and integration (93.30%) confirms that these cultural and moral dimensions were successfully embedded, aligning with Koentjaraningrat (2000) conception of culture as a dynamic system of ideas, activities, and artifacts that shapes human behavior and identity. This finding also corresponds with the conclusions of Septy (2016) and Prasanty & Nurlina (2024), who emphasize that local cultural elements enhance authenticity and meaningfulness in language learning. Thus, localized content not only reinforces students' cultural awareness but also improves their linguistic proficiency and learner engagement.

The results are consistent with previous research showing that culturally relevant learning materials can increase student engagement and motivation. Martha et al. (2022), Jamilah et al., (2024), and Widjaja et al. (2022) found that students respond more positively to learning activities that incorporate culturally familiar narratives. Similarly, Zuhra et al., (2024) and Shofyana et al., (2022) highlight that local wisdom-based digital content enhances students' communicative competence and affective engagement. In the present study, experts observed that learners demonstrated higher levels of attention, emotional connection, and participation when listening tasks incorporated local folklore and values. These findings support Yaqin et al. (2024), who argue that culturally contextualized digital resources strengthen both cognitive and affective learning domains, improving listening comprehension while fostering cultural appreciation and a sense of belonging.

The linguistic clarity, grammatical accuracy, and communicative effectiveness of the materials, reflected in a validation score of 91.60%, further support Mayer & Fiorella (2022) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which emphasizes that clear, well-structured verbal and visual input enhance comprehension, retention, and meaningful learning. Validators also highlighted the accessibility and clarity of instructional language, which is crucial in receptive skills instruction, particularly in higher education contexts where listening comprehension serves as a foundation for productive skills such as speaking and writing (Ramdhani et al., 2024; Shofyana et al., 2022).

The instructional design, with a learning process score of 88.00%, demonstrated effectiveness in promoting active learning, independent inquiry, collaboration, and reflective thinking. Embedded activities encouraged students to engage in peer collaboration, self-assessment, and critical reflection, supporting the development of essential character traits such as creativity, cooperation, responsibility, and problem-solving (Susilawati et al., 2021; Ristiani et al., 2022; Kahfi, 2022). These results align with Sitanggang & Andriany (2024), who assert that the integration of Pancasila values into 21st-century education enhances learners' moral reasoning and civic responsibility. This study thus supports the notion that digital materials designed with both character and cultural values can foster holistic learning outcomes that address cognitive, moral, and social competencies.

The digital media design, which received the highest validation score of 94.10%, reflects excellence in interface, layout, and accessibility. This supports findings from Rahayu et al. (2025), who highlight that culturally intelligent EdTech design promotes inclusivity and engagement, contributing to Sustainable Development Goal 4 on equitable education. By presenting content in visually coherent and accessible formats, the materials accommodate diverse learner needs, ensuring that cultural and linguistic content can be effectively internalized across different proficiency levels.

Integrating character education within digital materials through values such as honesty, cooperation, responsibility, and empathy represents a critical contribution of this study. These values cultivate ethical awareness and social responsibility, aligning with Sitanggang & Andriany (2024), Yaqin et al. (2024), and Laili (2017), who argue that digital pedagogy must remain value-oriented to prevent decontextualized learning. Embedding moral and cultural dimensions in listening activities encourages learners to reflect critically on ethical dilemmas and social responsibilities, demonstrating how digital materials can facilitate the simultaneous development of linguistic competence, moral reasoning, and cultural literacy.

The findings suggest that integrating local cultural content and character education into lesson design creates meaningful and authentic learning experiences. Story-based listening tasks engage students emotionally while prompting reflection on moral values, supporting both cognitive and affective growth (Septiyana et al., 2024). Guiding students in navigating digital multimedia materials enhances their digital literacy, enabling critical engagement with content and fostering both technical and cognitive skills (Arsari, 2022). Collaborative activities promote peer interaction, cooperation, and problem-solving, while attention to accessibility and inclusivity ensures equitable participation (Hulu et al., 2024). Continuous feedback and iterative material refinement based on learner responses further enhance pedagogical effectiveness and contextual relevance.

More broadly, these findings demonstrate that digital learning platforms can effectively operationalize local wisdom and ethical values, reaffirming that educational technology need not be value-neutral (Rahayu et al., 2025). This research also highlights its relevance to curriculum and policy development in Indonesian higher education, suggesting that integrating cultural and character dimensions into digital course design can inform national standards for values-based, contextually grounded English education.

5. Conclusion

The development of digital learning materials integrating local wisdom and character values for the Receptive Oral Language Skills course demonstrates that such resources can enhance language comprehension while fostering moral awareness and cultural identity. By combining culturally relevant content, character education, and interactive digital features, these materials support student engagement, motivation, collaboration, and critical thinking, while promoting essential character traits such as responsibility, empathy, and cooperation. However, since the materials are based on the cultural context of North Sumatra, their effectiveness may vary in other regions with different cultural backgrounds. Future research should explore broader applications, long-term effects on receptive skills and character development, and adaptation for other language skills. These findings suggest that educators should intentionally integrate local wisdom and character values into digital instructional design, creating learning experiences that are linguistically enriching, culturally grounded, and value-oriented, offering a model for holistic and transformative language education.

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INTEGRATING DUOLINGO ENGLISH TEST (FREE PRACTICE) IN EFL SPEAKING INSTRUCTION: A QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY AT UNIVERSITAS NEGERI MEDAN

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Abstract

English speaking ability, a primary competency for English Education students, is often hindered by limited practice, lack of confidence, and minimal independent learning media. This study investigates the effectiveness of the Duolingo English Test (Free Practice) platform as a digital learning medium within the Receptive Oral Language Skills course to enhance students' English speaking abilities. This study uses a quantitative approach with a one-group quasi-experimental design, involving a pre-test and post-test to measure improvement before and after the intervention. The intervention consisted of routine practice using the Duolingo platform and supplementary materials from the "Teacher Luke" YouTube channel. Quantitative data from test scores were analyzed using a paired sample t-test, while qualitative data from questionnaires were used to explore student perceptions. The results of this study are expected to provide an effective, flexible learning solution suited for students in the digital era. The conclusion indicates that the strategic use of digital media like the Duolingo English Test can be encouraged in speaking skills instruction at the university level.

Keywords: *digital learning media, duolingo english test, english language learning, english speaking skills, receptive oral language skill*

1. Introduction

Speaking proficiency is an essential competency for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, particularly those majoring in English education. For these future educators, the ability to communicate effectively in English is not only an academic requirement but also a vital professional asset. However, this remains a significant challenge. Studies in the Indonesian context, for example, often cite difficulties such as high speaking anxiety, large class sizes limiting practice, and low learner confidence.

Technological innovation has transformed language learning from traditional, teacher-centered models to more flexible, learner-centered approaches. Digital platforms offer alternative methods for students to practice language skills

independently beyond classroom hours. One promising tool in this regard is the Duolingo English Test (DET), an online English proficiency assessment that also provides a Free Practice version. This version allows users to simulate test conditions and practice various speaking tasks, making it an accessible and low-pressure environment for developing oral proficiency.

Despite the availability of such digital platforms, their integration into formal higher education curricula remains limited. Previous studies have shown that Duolingo enhances vocabulary acquisition and pronunciation in self-study contexts, while other research has highlighted the motivational benefits of mobile-assisted learning. However, there is still a research gap concerning the pedagogical use of DET Free Practice within formal classroom instruction—particularly in university-level speaking courses. Most existing research focuses on Duolingo as an application for language learning or testing, not as a structured practice medium embedded in a course.

This study aims to fill that gap by examining the use of the Duolingo English Test (Free Practice) in the Receptive Oral Language Skills course at Universitas Negeri Medan. Specifically, it explores how structured DET-based practice sessions can improve students' speaking performance and how learners perceive the platform as a digital learning medium. The novelty of this study lies in three aspects: (1) the empirical evaluation of DETs Free Practice as a learning tool rather than merely an assessment instrument; (2) its application in a course that integrates receptive and productive skills ; and (3) its focus on EFL university students within an Indonesian context.

2. Literature Review

1) Speaking Skills

Speaking is one of the most essential productive skills in language learning, serving as the primary means of oral communication. According to Brown (2007), speaking involves an interactive process of constructing and sharing meaning through verbal and non-verbal symbols within various contexts. Harmer (2007) emphasizes that speaking proficiency encompasses both fluency—the ability to express ideas smoothly and spontaneously—and accuracy—the correct use of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Developing speaking skills requires not only linguistic competence but also confidence, practice, and opportunities for authentic interaction. In EFL contexts, where exposure to English is often limited, learners need structured platforms that can simulate communicative settings for oral practice.

2) Technology in English Language Learning

The rapid advancement of digital technology has reshaped the landscape of language education. The emergence of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has made language learning more flexible and accessible. Wang and Vásquez (2012) note that digital technology enables adaptive and personalized learning experiences, allowing students to control their learning pace. Similarly, Kukulska-Hulme, Lee, and Norris (2020) highlight the mobility and convenience offered by MALL, where learners can engage in learning anytime and anywhere. Furthermore, Kessler (2018) asserts that digital platforms foster learner engagement and motivation through gamification and interactive feedback systems.

3) Duolingo and the Duolingo English Test (Free Practice)

Duolingo is a globally recognized language-learning platform that employs gamification principles to encourage consistent learning habits. Its derivative product, the Duolingo English Test (DET), is an online English proficiency test designed to be adaptive, accessible, and affordable (Duolingo, 2024). The Free Practice version of the DET simulates authentic test experiences by providing users with tasks that target productive and receptive skills. Among its speaking-related exercises are: Speak About the Photo, Read, Then Speak, and Speaking Sample. According to Zhao (2022), these formats represent performance-based assessments that promote authentic language production. Using DET Free Practice as a learning tool allows learners to develop their oral proficiency in a supportive environment that lowers affective barriers and encourages active participation.

4) Previous Studies

Several studies have examined the role of digital learning platforms in enhancing English language skills. Kessler (2018) found that using Duolingo improved students' vocabulary and pronunciation in self-study contexts. Widodo (2021) reported that digital storytelling activities increased learners' confidence and motivation to speak English. Zhao (2022) validated the reliability of the DET speaking tasks as an effective performance-based assessment. However, few studies have explored the pedagogical integration of DET Free Practice within formal EFL courses at the tertiary level. This study addresses this gap by empirically investigating how DET Free Practice can function not only as an assessment tool but also as an interactive learning medium to develop speaking proficiency.

5) Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985), which posits that language production facilitates learning by encouraging learners to process linguistic input more deeply and notice gaps in their knowledge. Through repeated speaking tasks on the DET platform, learners engage in meaningful output that enhances fluency and accuracy. Additionally, Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis supports the use of low-anxiety learning environments, such as DET Free Practice, which reduce learner stress and promote confidence.

3. Research Method

This research utilized a quantitative approach employing a quasi-experimental design, specifically a One-Group Pre-test and Post-test Design $O_1 \rightarrow X \rightarrow O_2$ (Fraenkel et al., 2012; Sugiyono, 2018). The research was conducted at the English Language Education Study Program, Universitas Negeri Medan. The subjects were active students ($N=37$) enrolled in the Receptive Oral Language Skills course during the 2025/2026 academic year, selected using purposive sampling based on specific inclusion criteria: (a) active enrollment in the required course, (b) access to a compatible device and internet for the DET platform, and (c) providing informed consent to participate in all stages of the study.

Two main instruments were used: the Duolingo English Test (Free Practice) platform as the primary tool for the pre-test and post-test, and a questionnaire in Google Form format to gather qualitative data on student perceptions. The procedure began with a preparation stage and a pre-test in late August. This was followed by a four-week

intervention (early to late September), where students practiced independently on the DET platform and studied supplementary, non-commercial content from the "Teacher Luke" YouTube channel (Teacher Luke DET, n.d.). A post-test was then conducted in early October.

Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the study. Participants were informed of the research objectives, and their voluntary consent was obtained. All data was anonymized to ensure confidentiality.

Data analysis techniques involved using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics were used to find the mean and standard deviation, while a Paired Sample t-Test was used to test the hypothesis at a significance level of ($\alpha = 0.05$). The qualitative data from the questionnaire was analyzed descriptively, with responses grouped into relevant themes.

4. Discussion

This chapter presents the research results that have been implemented as well as an in-depth discussion of these findings. The first part (4.1) presents the research finding data descriptively, divided into two sub-chapters according to the research problems: (4.1.1) results of the platform's effectiveness, and (4.1.2) results of student responses. The second part (4.2) presents an analytical discussion of these findings.

4.1 Research Results

The research results are presented in two main parts aligned with the research problems.

4.1.1 Effectiveness of Using the Duolingo English Test (Det) Platform

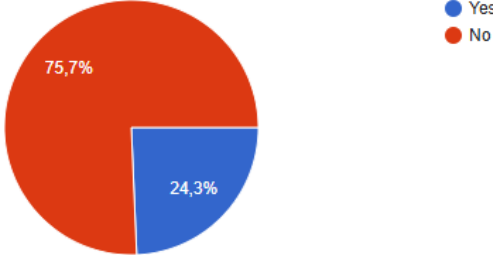
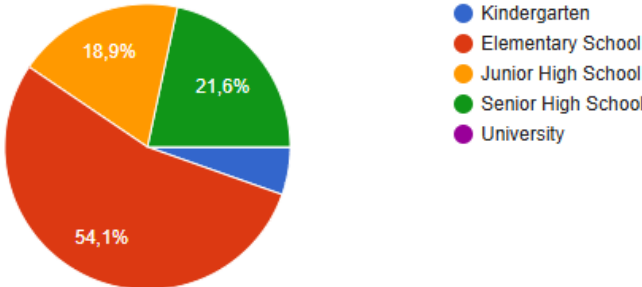
To answer the first research problem regarding the platform's effectiveness, quantitative data on students' speaking abilities were collected from 37 participants through a pre-test before the intervention and a post-test after the four-week intervention.

Statistik	Skor Pre-Test	Skor Post-Test
Jumlah Responden (N)	37	37
Skor Rata-Rata (<i>Mean</i>)	68.40	81.20
Standar Deviasi	7.95	6.80
Skor Minimum	55	70
Skor Maksimum	80	95

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics of Pre-Test and Post-Test Speaking Ability Scores

Based on Table 4.1, a substantial increase in the average score (mean) is visible, namely by 12.80 points, from 68.40 on the pre-test to 81.20 on the post-test. To test the significance of this increase, a Paired Sample t-Test was conducted. The analysis showed a statistically significant difference, $t(36) = -9.85$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d = 1.73$. Because the p-value is much smaller than ($\alpha = 0.05$), it can be concluded that the intervention was highly effective.

4.1.2 Student Responses And Perceptions Regarding The Learning

No .	Pertanyaan Angket												
1.	Have you ever attended any English courses outside school/university? Salin diagram 37 jawaban  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>24,3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>75,7%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Yes	24,3%	No	75,7%						
Response	Percentage												
Yes	24,3%												
No	75,7%												
2.	When did you start learning English formally? Salin diagram 37 jawaban  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Location</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Kindergarten</td> <td>5,4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Elementary School</td> <td>54,1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Junior High School</td> <td>18,9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Senior High School</td> <td>21,6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>University</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Location	Percentage	Kindergarten	5,4%	Elementary School	54,1%	Junior High School	18,9%	Senior High School	21,6%	University	0%
Location	Percentage												
Kindergarten	5,4%												
Elementary School	54,1%												
Junior High School	18,9%												
Senior High School	21,6%												
University	0%												

3.	What is your main reason for choosing the English Education Study Program at UNIMED? 37 jawaban The reason why I choose the English Education Study Program at UNIMED is : first, I love English because of the sounds, and I wanna speak English as a native speaker, so I can be able to talk with another people from another country. And then, my dream is being an English Teacher so I can teach many people to talk in English because English is everywhere. I want to become someone who can help future generations understand English more easily I want to learning English, improve vocabulary, pronunciation fluency To be a good teacher My reason, is i want to be a teachers because English education at Unimed is also one of the good English education at the University of Sumatra Because i was interesting with english and I want to learn more about english language What is your main reason for choosing the English Education Study Program at UNIMED? 37 jawaban because I want to improve my English skills and learn more about English I want to improve my English skills and I believe this university will be great way because I am interested in language lessons Because my dad wanted me to become an English Teacher I want to learn more about english Not only do I want to be hired as a teacher, but through my English skills there will be many promising job opportunities in the future. because I want to learn more about English I want to learn english more deeply, and I want to share every knowledge i get about english because i have loved english since i was in elementary school and another reason is my long-term dream
----	--

What is your main reason for choosing the English Education Study Program at UNIMED?

37 jawaban

to improve my language skill

Because I want to learning English language

because in my opinion English Study program at UNIMED very good, because my high school teacher alumni from

because i love English and i want people learned it too. so, i chose this major and university.

To become an English educator

because the English department at Unimed is one of the best departments

Because I want to improve my English skill and I want to be a teacher in the future

Because I am interested in the world of literature and education, and I hope to become a great teacher someday.

What is your main reason for choosing the English Education Study Program at UNIMED?

37 jawaban

My main reason for choosing the english education because I want to be an english teacher

Cause it interesting and fun to learn

because apart from the good accreditation of its departments, the Unimed campus is one of the favorites in North Sumatra

of course, because I want to be a teacher

because i really like English, and i want to improve my English

because I really like English, but I haven't mastered it yet, so I really want to learn more, and I have an education because I am motivated by my mother who is a teacher

want to be better

because I think learning at this university is better

because I want to improve my English skills

The reason I chose to study English Education is that it's a way for me to develop my English skills, and I believe that with English, we can explore places we've never been to, especially overseas.

because I really like English lessons since I was in elementary school and always got perfect grades until now I finally chose English education as my major

I want to be an english teacher one day

Because i want to be an English teacher and i know in UNIMED i can learn English well.

4.

How would you rate your current English speaking ability?

Salin diagram

37 jawaban

Rating	Count	Percentage
1	1	2.7%
2	9	24.3%
3	22	59.5%
4	5	13.5%
5	0	0%

5.

Which English skill do you think you are best at?

Salin diagram

37 jawaban

Skill	Percentage
Speaking	18.9%
Listening	10.8%
Reading	64.9%
Writing	5.4%

6.

Which skill do you find most difficult to master?

Salin diagram

37 jawaban

Skill	Percentage
Pronunciation	16.2%
Grammar	40.5%
Vocabulary	18.9%
Fluency	10.8%
Confidence	13.5%

	What is the main problem you face when speaking English? 37 jawaban my vocabulary and my accent I only just learned a few words, and I can't put words together yet, and there are still many things I don't understand. When we want to respond to someone who speaks English, it is difficult to put the words together. Grammar Sometimes, I nervous until make me forgot whatever I said that I have difficulty forming the right words, and it's also a bit difficult because I don't have anyone to practice speaking English with The main problem is i can take a longer time to speak english because i need the time for thinking the language often forget vocabulary and understand what someone said but are confused about how to respond
7.	What is the main problem you face when speaking English? 37 jawaban Nervous and confused about tenses and grammar nervous and afraid of saying the wrong thing I often forget the vocab I still find it difficult to arrange words into a good sentence there are some vocabulary that have never been heard and are difficult to understand and pronunciation that is sometimes difficult to pronounce. pronounce Confidence and pronunciation when I try to speak in english,i feel difficult to arrange the words vocabulary and sentence pattern

What is the main problem you face when speaking English?

37 jawaban

In Grammer

The main problem I face is that I am still lacking in pronunciation, maybe that happens because I don't have a partner to talk to in English every day.

to speak english fluency and listening to it

Lack of words that come to mind

pronunciation and eccent

The main problem when I speaking English is pronunciation because sometimes there are several words that sound or are pronounced similarly.

Limited vocabulary and lack of self-confidence

Sometimes I'm afraid of pronouncing it wrong and cognitive it feel embarrassed for me

What is the main problem you face when speaking English?

37 jawaban

I ain't too confident to speak english

Of course the first is my self-confidence, and I haven't mastered everything in English yet

Speaking

my problem is that sometimes i don't know the right words to use when i talking to other people

i have a little difficulty with pronunciation and word order

a little confused

lack of vocabulary that I have to respond to the answer

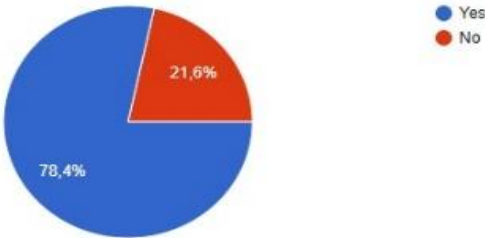
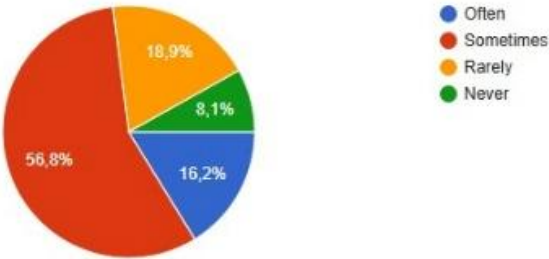
incorrect pronunciation and lack of confidence

It's hard to find the right words in English

maybe, sometimes while i speak english i have a problem with confidence and grammar, and also sometimes really shy when i speak in publik.

Confidence

When i speaking English, my problems are my pronunciation and my confidence.

8.	Do you often practice speaking English outside the classroom? 37 jawaban Salin diagram  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>78.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>21.6%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Yes	78.4%	No	21.6%				
Response	Percentage										
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9.	How often do you use English learning apps (e.g., Duolingo, ELSA Speak, etc.)? 37 jawaban Salin diagram  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Often</td> <td>16.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometimes</td> <td>56.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rarely</td> <td>18.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td>8.1%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Often	16.2%	Sometimes	56.8%	Rarely	18.9%	Never	8.1%
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Sometimes	56.8%										
Rarely	18.9%										
Never	8.1%										
10.	Do you think platforms like Duolingo help improve your speaking skills? Why or why not? 37 jawaban Yes, because it offers some learn and practice with many choices. Yes, because it provides language exercises Yes, because this application can make us know the latest vocabulary and how to pronounce it better I have not used the app duolingo or anything similiar, but i have seen how they work, i simply believe that its based on the person that uses the app, and iam not part of the person that would benefit much from daid app. Yes I like Duolingo, why? Because learning all about grammar, tenses, vocabulary and than help me in make a sentence be kind yeah it helps a little for basics Yes, i think duolingo help me to improve my english skills especially in speaking, because duo lingo give me a choice to train my speaking english and i also can get many vocabularies from english language										

Do you think platforms like Duolingo help improve your speaking skills? Why or why not?

37 jawaban

Yes, because on this platform you will also be told how to pronounce a word correctly.

yes, because it helps me to improve my vocabulary

Yes, because it makes it very easy for people who are not fluent in English.

Yes, because i can practice with my vocabulary and i know where should i improvise

Yes, because the platform mentioned helps us to practice speaking skills and increase vocabulary.

yess,because it can help me in understanding some foreign vocabulary.

Yes

Yes, because from that platform we can learn english everywhere and so practical, so it's really help us.

sometimes,i think better if i learn directly with a real visuals,like with my friend and my sister

Do you think platforms like Duolingo help improve your speaking skills? Why or why not?

37 jawaban

Yes,because duolingo the best application

Yess because He teaches the basics of English

Yess, because sometimes I practice English from the application.

beside the duolingo app, we can lear english in anothers platform like twitter or instagram or maybe from listening to the music to improve our english skills. so, in my opinion, an apps like duolingo can improve our skills

Yes cause its help a lot of people for translating

may note be as effectivlty in devoloping speaking skills

yes it's help me, because the platform like Duolingo really help me to remember about grammar, pronunciation and my speaking skills

Yes, Because there are so many English practice features that make me more trained

Do you think platforms like Duolingo help improve your speaking skills? Why or why not?

37 jawaban

Not completely, because I have used Duolingo but my English skills are stuck at basic. But at the basic level it still worth it for mee

Yes, duolingo is so helpfull

I haven't used the application often, but I believe it can improve my English.

Of course, English learning platforms like Duolingo are useful for learning English. I have been using Duolingo for the past 2 years.

I really like learning while playing on the Duolingo platform.

yes because in duolingo i got new words and make my pronucation to be better

Very very helpful, I really like the Duolingo app

yes because that apps can help us if we can't

Yes, it is very helpful because I can learn more vocabulary that I don't know yet.

Yes, because Duolingo is the application that I used when I first started learning English.

Of course such a platform can help me to hone my English speaking skills.

yes duolingo very good to practice my english, and because that platform I can study about english so far, so actually i like this platform because it's very help me about my english skills, like reading, speaking and listening.

No I don't, because when i used duolingo to study, it just help me to developpe my vocabulary. And to speak in english, i think i just need partner to talk, so i can be more brave to speak

I ever try to use Duolingo, and i think Duolingo can help me to improve my pronunciation and my vocabulary. But Duolingo makes me bored sometimes.

What is the main problem you face when speaking English?

37 jawaban

my vocabulary and my accent

I only just learned a few words, and I can't put words together yet, and there are still many things I don't understand.

When we want to respond to someone who speaks English, it is difficult to put the words together.

Grammar

Sometimes, I nervous until make me forgot whatever I said that

I have difficulty forming the right words, and it's also a bit difficult because I don't have anyone to practice speaking English with

The main problem is I can take a longer time to speak English because I need the time for thinking the language

often forget vocabulary and understand what someone said but are confused about how to respond

What is the main problem you face when speaking English?

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Nervous and confused about tenses and grammar

nervous and afraid of saying the wrong thing

I often forget the vocab

I still find it difficult to arrange words into a good sentence

there are some vocabulary that have never been heard and are difficult to understand and pronunciation that is sometimes difficult to pronounce.

pronounce

Confidence and pronunciation

when I try to speak in English, I feel difficult to arrange the words

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In Grammer

The main problem I face is that I am still lacking in pronunciation, maybe that happens because I don't have a partner to talk to in English every day.

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Sometimes I'm afraid of pronouncing it wrong and cognitive it feel embarrassed for me

What is the main problem you face when speaking English?

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I ain't too confident to speak english

Of course the first is my self-confidence, and I haven't mastered everything in English yet

Speaking

my problem is that sometimes i don't know the right words to use when i talking to other people

I have a little difficulty with pronunciation and word order

a little confused

lack of vocabulary that I have to respond to the answer

incorrect pronunciation and lack of confidence

It's hard to find the right words in English

maybe, sometimes while i speak english i have a problem with confidence and grammar, and also sometimes really shy when i speak in publik.

Confidence

When I speaking English, my problems are my pronunciation and my confidence.

To answer the second research problem, data was collected through a questionnaire distributed to 37 students. This questionnaire measured background, self-perception, and student responses to the learning media.

1. Statement 1: "Have you ever attended any English courses outside school/university?"

The results show that the majority of students rely on formal education in school. A total of 75.7% of students (28 respondents) stated 'No', they had never taken additional courses, while 24.3% (9 respondents) stated 'Yes'.

2. Statement 2: "When did you start learning English formally?"

The data shows that most students have been learning English since an early age. The majority, 54.1% (20 respondents), started in 'Elementary School'. This was followed by 'Senior High School' (21.6% or 8 respondents), 'Junior High School' (18.9% or 7 respondents), and 'Kindergarten' (5.4% or 2 respondents).

3. Statement 3: "What is your main reason for choosing the English Education Study Program at UNIMED?"

Thematic analysis was conducted on 37 open-ended answers. Four main themes were identified as student motivations: (1) Career Goals (Becoming a Teacher), (2) Personal Interest in the Language (Passion), (3) Self-Development (Skill Improvement), and (4) Institutional Reputation (UNIMED).

4. Statement 4: "How would you rate your current English speaking ability?"

This data shows students' low self-perception. An absolute majority, 59.5% (22 respondents), rated their ability at level '3' (Average). When combined, 86.5% of students (32 respondents) rated themselves at level '3' (Average) or lower (levels 1 and 2). No students (0%) rated themselves as '5' (Excellent).

5. Statement 5: "Which English skill do you think you are best at?"

Receptive skills (reading) clearly dominate. A large majority, 64.9% (24 respondents), chose 'Reading' as their best skill. Conversely, only 18.9% (7 respondents) felt confident with 'Speaking'.

6. Statement 6: "Which skill do you find most difficult to master?"

This data identifies the technical difficulties perceived by students. The biggest difficulty was 'Grammar' (40.5% or 15 respondents). This was followed by 'Vocabulary' (18.9%), 'Pronunciation' (16.2%), 'Confidence' (13.5%), and 'Fluency' (10.8%).

7. Statement 7: "What is the main problem you face when speaking English?"

Thematic analysis was conducted on 37 open-ended answers to delve deeper into the findings of Q6. Unlike Q6, this qualitative data shows that psychological (affective) barriers are the most dominantly felt problem. The most frequently emerging theme was 'Anxiety and Lack of Confidence', such as "I ain't too confident", "nervous and afraid of saying the wrong thing", and "afraid of pronouncing it wrong... embarrassed". The second theme was 'Linguistic Limitations' (Grammar, Vocab, Pronunciation).

8. Statement 8: "Do you often practice speaking English outside the classroom?"

The data shows that the participants in this study are proactive students. A large majority, 78.4% (29 respondents), answered 'Yes', that they often practice outside the classroom.

9. Statement 9: "How often do you use English learning apps (e.g., Duolingo, ELSA Speak, etc.)?"

Students are familiar with learning applications. The majority (56.8% or 21 respondents) use them 'Sometimes'. When combined, 73% (27 respondents) use applications (Often/Sometimes).

10. Statement 10: "Do you think platforms like Duolingo help improve your speaking skills? Why or why not?"

This is the core of the student response to the media. An absolute majority (more than 90%) gave a 'Yes' (positive) answer. Thematic analysis of "Why" shows two main perceptions: (1) Assisting Linguistic Skills (e.g., "got new words and make my pronucation to be better") and (2) Providing Practical Practice (e.g., "so many English practice features"). A criticism that emerged was that Duolingo (as a general application) is felt to be less effective for speaking because "i just need partner to talk, so i can be more brave to speak".

4.2 Discussion

The research results show two main findings: (1) The intervention using the DET (Free Practice) platform was significantly effective in improving students' speaking scores (Result 4.1.1). (2) Student responses to the digital platform were positive, but they identified their main challenge as psychological (anxiety) (Result 4.1.2).

The most interesting finding is the contradiction between Q6 (multiple choice), where students identified 'Grammar' (40.5%) as their highest difficulty, and Q7 (open-ended), where the most dominant problem was 'Confidence' and 'Nervousness'. This suggests students cognitively know their weakness is grammar, but affectively, their biggest barrier to speaking is anxiety. This is highly relevant to Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter theory and supports findings by Widodo (2021), who noted increased confidence from digital activities.

This is where the success of the intervention (Result 4.1.1) lies. The significant score increase occurred because this intervention addressed both problems:

- Technical Problems (Q6 & Q10): The platform provides linguistic practice (vocabulary, pronunciation) which students found helpful, aligning with Kessler's (2018) findings.
- Psychological Problems (Q7 & Q10): Thematic analysis of Q10 shows that the digital platform provides a safe (pressure-free) practice environment. Students felt comfortable practicing because they were "not judged" or "not embarrassed". This lowered their affective filter, allowing them to practice more (as per Q8) and build confidence.

The criticism in Q10 (that the app "lacks a speaking partner") actually strengthens the importance of this specific research. This study used the Duolingo English Test (Free Practice), not the regular app. The DET features (Speak About the Photo, Speaking Sample) are specifically designed to force spontaneous oral discourse, simulating the "missing partner" and aligning with the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985). The platform's effectiveness (Result 4.1.1) also validates its design as an authentic performance-based assessment, as suggested by Zhao (2022).

For EFL pedagogy in Indonesia, this suggests that standardized digital tools like the DET Free Practice can be a valuable, scalable supplement to traditional classroom instruction, helping to overcome common challenges of large class sizes and limited individual practice time.

5. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis and discussion, two main conclusions are drawn. First, the use of the Duolingo English Test (Free Practice) platform as an intervention medium is proven to be significantly effective in improving the speaking skills of English Language Education Study Program students. This is demonstrated quantitatively by a statistically significant improvement in oral proficiency scores.

Second, student response to the use of the DET platform was very positive. The analysis revealed that although students identified 'Grammar' as a technical difficulty, their primary felt barrier to speaking was psychological, namely 'lack of confidence' and 'anxiety/fear of making mistakes'. The positive response was based on the perception that the platform provides a safe (pressure-free) and practical practice environment, which directly helps lower this affective filter and build confidence.

Future research should explore the long-term impact of such interventions and could employ a true experimental design with a control group. For policy, this study suggests that university language centers could formally integrate such validated digital platforms as a cost-effective method to support the speaking curriculum.

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KARO DIALECTAL VARIATION IN TANAH KARO: A LEXICAL AND PHONOLOGICAL SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Language holds the memory of a community and shapes how people understand themselves, their landscape, and their cultural belonging. This study investigates dialectal variation in the Karo language of Tanah Karo, North Sumatra, through a lexical and phonological sociolinguistic framework. Using a descriptive qualitative design supported by dialectological procedures, the research analyzes 200 Swadesh-based lexical items and natural speech data collected from six native speakers representing three major dialect regions: Julu (Tigapanah), Teruh Deleng (Tiganderket), and Singalor Lau (Tigabinanga). Structured interviews, direct observation, and audio-recorded elicitation sessions formed the basis of the dataset. Findings show that while the dialects remain mutually intelligible, they exhibit systematic micro-variations in vowel realization, lexical selection, and morphophonemic structure. Tigabinanga displays the most consistent vowel fronting and several unique lexical items, whereas Tigapanah and Tiganderket share closer phonological and lexical affinities. These patterns reflect the influence of geographical separation, inter-village communication, and long-standing cultural identity. The study contributes to the documentation of Indonesia's regional languages and underscores the importance of preserving dialectal diversity. Further research using acoustic phonetics or quantitative dialectometry is recommended to deepen the understanding of phonological distance within the Karo speech community.

Keywords: *dialects; Karo language variation, lexical and phonological variation, sociolinguistics, Tanah Karo*

1. Introduction

Language is more than a tool for conveying information; it is the medium through which humans construct meaning, negotiate identity, and sustain cultural memory. In multilingual nations such as Indonesia, language functions simultaneously as a communicative system and a marker of cultural belonging. The inseparable relationship between language and society, as emphasized by Halliday (1970, in Chaer, 1995), underscores how linguistic practices both reflect and shape social realities. Every

linguistic choice—whether lexical, phonological, or stylistic—signals a speaker's position within a network of cultural, geographical, and social relationships.

Within the complex linguistic landscape of North Sumatra, the Karo people have maintained a distinct linguistic heritage that continues to evolve across generations. The Karo language comprises several recognized dialects, including Julu, Teruh Deleng, Singalor Lau, Jahe, and Liang Melas (Robert, 2007; Prinst, 2002). Although these dialects share a common ancestral root, they exhibit notable differences in vocabulary, pronunciation, and local usage patterns. These variations arise from the interaction of geographical separation, social structure, and cultural identity, illustrating Sapir's (1965) assertion that linguistic diversity is a natural and expected characteristic of human societies.

Despite the recognition of Karo dialect diversity in earlier works (Sembiring, 2009; Sembiring, 2010; Pasaribu, 2013; Daulay, 2016), systematic comparative studies focusing specifically on lexical and phonological variation among the major dialects of Tanah Karo remain limited. Most existing studies provide broad classifications or descriptive overviews but have not examined in depth how micro-level lexical shifts and phonological correspondences emerge across neighboring dialect regions. This creates a scholarly gap, particularly in understanding how geography, social interaction, and intergroup contact contribute to the shaping of dialect boundaries within a relatively small and interconnected region.

This study responds to that gap by offering a focused sociolinguistic analysis of lexical and phonological variation among three central Karo dialects: Julu (Tigapanah), Teruh Deleng (Tiganderket), and Singalor Lau (Tigabinanga). The research aims to identify the nature of these variations, explore their patterns, and explain the factors that influence them. By drawing on sociolinguistic perspectives articulated by Fishman (1979), Fasold (1990), and Labov (2001), the study situates Karo dialect differences within a broader theoretical framework of language variation as a systematic and socially meaningful phenomenon.

Beyond its academic contribution, this research carries cultural significance. Local languages in Indonesia face increasing pressure from dominant national and global languages, which can lead to the erosion of dialectal richness and intergenerational linguistic knowledge. Documenting lexical and phonological variations within the Karo language therefore contributes not only to linguistic scholarship but also to cultural preservation. Understanding how dialects differ—and how they remain mutually intelligible—supports efforts to maintain the linguistic identity of the Karo community while recognizing its internal diversity.

In this spirit, the study seeks to deepen our understanding of how language, space, and community interact in Tanah Karo. The findings are expected to enrich existing documentation of Indonesian regional languages and to provide a sociolinguistic basis for future work in dialectology, language education, and cultural revitalization.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Language and Society

Language is inseparable from the social world in which it is used. It reflects relationships, power structures, cultural practices, and collective identities. This foundational principle, articulated in early linguistic scholarship by Sapir (1965) and later expanded by Chambers (2003), provides the cornerstone of sociolinguistic inquiry.

Sociolinguistics, as defined by Fishman (1979), examines how language operates within its social environment, while Fasold (1990) emphasizes that variation is not random but patterned according to social factors such as age, class, gender, and geography.

Halliday (1970) and Ferguson & Gumperz (1960) highlight that all languages contain inherent varieties shaped by communicative purpose and social context. Their work introduces the concepts of “lects” and “registers,” which describe how linguistic choices shift depending on participants, settings, and functions. This perspective positions variation as a natural and essential feature of language, enabling it to adapt to the complexities of social life.

Within this theoretical frame, the study of variation in the Karo language becomes part of a broader conversation about how communities negotiate identity through speech. The Karo-speaking population, embedded in the culturally diverse landscape of North Sumatra, exemplifies how language reflects social differentiation while simultaneously sustaining cultural unity.

2.2 Concept of Language Variation

Language variation is an intrinsic property of all human languages. Sapir’s (1921) early observation that “everyone knows that language is variable” continues to guide modern linguistic thought. Variation manifests across linguistic levels—phonological, morphological, lexical, and syntactic—and reveals the dynamic nature of language as it shifts through time, space, and social context.

Bayle (2007) classifies these levels as fundamental domains of linguistic analysis, each providing a lens for understanding how languages diverge and converge. In sociolinguistics, special attention is given to dialects, which emerge due to geographical separation, and to registers, which arise from differences in formality, profession, or communicative purpose.

The Karo language offers concrete illustrations of this variability. For instance, the lexical differences in naming common objects—such as the regional variation in the word for “coconut”—show how communities adapt their linguistic resources to local identity and interactional needs. Such examples demonstrate that language variation is not simply a matter of vocabulary choice but an expression of cultural distinctiveness shaped by lived experience.

2.3 Types and Causes of Language Variation

Sociolinguists generally agree that variation is structured and socially meaningful. Saragih (2014) identifies several causes of linguistic variation: regional boundaries, social class, age, gender, status, and geographical conditions. Regional dialects form when communities are separated by physical barriers, leading to distinctive phonological and lexical features. Social dialects emerge from differences in economic background, occupation, or educational level. These distinctions influence not only vocabulary and pronunciation but also preferred styles of communication. For example, younger speakers may gravitate toward expressive or innovative forms, while older speakers often retain more traditional ones.

Turell (2002) and Labov (1966, 2001) further argue that variation follows systematic patterns rather than spontaneous or isolated deviations. Linguistic choices are shaped by community norms and by the unconscious desire to express belonging or distinction. Such patterns reveal how language is tightly interwoven with identity and social structure.

In the case of the Karo language, internal factors such as phonological proximity interact with external factors such as geography, migration, and intergroup contact. The mountainous terrain of Tanah Karo, with its natural divisions between valleys and settlements, provides fertile ground for the development of micro-dialects that remain mutually intelligible yet distinct.

2.4 The Karo Language and Its Dialects

The Karo language, belonging to the Austronesian family, is spoken by approximately 600,000 people in the highlands of North Sumatra. While closely related to Batak languages such as Simalungun, Gayo, and Alas, it maintains a unique phonological and lexical profile (Sembiring, 2009). Its dialectal diversity is shaped by centuries of cultural and geographical development, with the highland environment contributing significantly to patterns of linguistic differentiation.

Scholars generally classify Karo into five major dialects: Julu, Teruh Deleng, Singalor Lau, Jahe, and Liang Melas (Prinst, 2002; Robert, 2007). Although these dialects share structural similarities and high mutual intelligibility, they display subtle yet meaningful differences. Previous studies—such as those by Sembiring (2010), Pasaribu (2013), and Daulay (2016)—have catalogued specific features and confirmed that dialect variation in Karo is shaped by both geographical distribution and cultural interaction.

However, most existing works provide broad descriptive accounts and do not offer in-depth comparative analysis of lexical and phonological correspondences across the major dialect regions of Tanah Karo. This leaves a scholarly space for research that examines how vocabulary choices and vowel realizations differ systematically among dialects and what these differences reveal about linguistic evolution within the community.

Taken as a whole, the literature establishes a strong theoretical foundation for analyzing Karo dialectal variation. It also highlights the need for more focused studies that combine dialectological methods with sociolinguistic insights, particularly in regions where geography and social interaction continue to shape linguistic diversity. The present study builds on this foundation by offering a detailed analysis of lexical and phonological variation among three key Karo dialects.

3. Research Methodology

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design, an approach well suited for documenting linguistic variation within its natural social and geographical context. The analysis followed the dialectological procedures proposed by Mahsun (1995), which provide systematic steps for comparing language forms across regions while accounting for phonological and lexical correspondences.

3.1 Research Sites and Participants

The research was conducted in three major dialect regions of Tanah Karo: Tigapanah (representing the Julu dialect), Tiganderket (Teruh Deleng dialect), and Tigabinanga (Singalor Lau dialect). These locations were selected purposefully because they represent distinct dialect clusters and exhibit clear geographical separation.

Six native speakers participated in the study, two from each region. Informants were chosen based on the following criteria:

- (1) native fluency and lifelong residence in the dialect area,

- (2) age above forty to ensure linguistic stability and minimal influence from inter-dialectal mixing,
- (3) physical and mental fitness for providing reliable linguistic data.

These criteria align with standard dialectological practice for capturing stable and representative language forms.

3.2 Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through structured interviews and direct observation. The structured interviews employed a Swadesh-based wordlist consisting of core vocabulary items commonly used in dialect comparison studies. While the exact number of items varied slightly across speakers due to differences in recall and natural usage, the list covered a broad range of lexical categories—including nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs—sufficient to identify systematic phonological and lexical correspondences.

During the interviews, informants were asked to pronounce each lexical item and provide its dialectal equivalent. All sessions were audio-recorded to ensure accurate phonetic transcription. Observation was used to capture naturally occurring speech, providing additional phonological data and confirming lexical choices identified through elicitation.

3.3 Data Analysis Procedures

The analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). In the condensation stage, all lexical and phonological data were transcribed, categorized, and prepared for comparison. Items exhibiting variation were grouped and contrasted across the three dialect regions.

In the display stage, the data were organized into comparative tables, enabling a clear visualization of similarities and divergences. Patterns of vowel shifting, consonantal differences, and lexical replacement were identified through repeated comparison.

During the conclusion-drawing stage, the emerging patterns were interpreted in relation to sociolinguistic and dialectological theory. Particular attention was paid to how geographical separation, historical interaction, and community identity contributed to the observed variation.

3.4 Establishing Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was ensured through methodological triangulation—using multiple data sources (elicitation and natural speech) and multiple informants from each dialect region. Transferability was strengthened by detailed descriptions of the research sites and participants. Dependability and confirmability were maintained through advisor validation, systematic documentation of analytical steps, and an audit trail of transcription and coding decisions, following the principles of Lincoln and Guba (1985).

4. Findings and Discussion

This section integrates the presentation and interpretation of the data gathered from the three Karo dialect regions: Tigapanah (Julu), Tiganderket (Teruh Deleng), and Tigabinanga (Singalor Lau). The data display precedes interpretation so that each linguistic pattern can be examined in light of sociolinguistic and dialectological theory.

To accommodate international readership, each entry is presented in the following order: dialect form → IPA transcription → English meaning.

4.1 Core Lexical and Phonological Variants

The following table presents fundamental lexical and phonological differences identified across the three dialects. These items were drawn from a Swadesh-based list and natural speech.

No	Tigapanah	Tiganderket	Tigabinanga	English Meaning
1	<i>biang</i> /biyang/	<i>biang</i> /biang/	<i>biang</i> /biang/	Dog
2	<i>bombang</i> /bombang/	<i>bombang</i> /bombang/	<i>bombang</i> /bombang/	Wave / tide
3	<i>tutung</i> /tutung/	<i>tutung</i> /tutung/	<i>tutong</i> /tutɔŋg/	To burn / roast
4	<i>mbue</i> /mbuai/	<i>melala</i> /mɛlala/	<i>mbue</i> /mbuɛi/	Many / a lot
5	<i>taka</i> /taka/	<i>taka</i> /taka/	<i>taka</i> /takæ/	To split / divide
6	<i>bunga</i> /bunga/	<i>bunga</i> /bunga/	<i>bunga</i> /bungæ/	Flower
7	<i>ndabuh</i> /ndabuh/	<i>naktak</i> /naktak/	<i>nampok</i> /nampɔk/	To fall
8	<i>daging</i> /daging/	<i>jukut</i> /jukut/	<i>jukut</i> /jukut/	Meat
9	<i>uai</i> /uwai/	<i>ue</i> /ue/	<i>uei</i> /ue/	Yes (affirmative)

Table 4.1. Core Lexical and Phonological Variants

The data show that all three dialects remain mutually intelligible, demonstrating a strong lexical core. However, systematic variations emerge that shed light on the internal structure of the Karo language.

1. Vowel Shifts in Tigabinanga

The Tigabinanga dialect consistently performs vowel fronting and lowering, for instance:

- /a/ → /æ/: *taka* → *takæ*
- /u/ → /ɔ/: *tutung* → *tutɔŋg*

This pattern aligns with Labov's (1994, 2001) principles of chain shifting in regional dialects. Peripheral communities, particularly those geographically distant from linguistic centers, tend to innovate more rapidly.

2. Lexical Replacement

In items such as:

- *mbue*, *melala* ('many')
- *ndabuh*, *naktak*, *nampok* ('to fall')

We see lexical divergence rather than mere phonological variation. This suggests micro-regional innovation influenced by inter-village cultural identity.

3. Morphophonemic Variation

Forms such as *daging* vs *jukut* illustrate the coexistence of inherited and innovative lexemes. This aligns with Mahsun's (1995) theory that dialects in Indonesia often reflect older historical layers preserved differently across regions.

4.2 Additional Phonological and Lexical Differences

No	Tigapanah (Form + IPA)	Tiganderket (Form + IPA)	Tigabinanga (Form + IPA)	English Meaning
1	<i>ndehər</i> /ndəhər/	<i>ndehər</i> /ndəhər/	<i>ndihər</i> /ndihər/	Near
2	<i>medem</i> /mədəm/	<i>medem</i> /mədəm/	<i>tayang</i> /tajaŋ/	To sleep
3	<i>bisul</i> /bisul/	<i>bisul</i> /bisul/	<i>bareh</i> /bareh/	Boil (skin)
4	<i>mehuli</i> /məhuli/	<i>meradal</i> /məradal/	<i>merandal</i> /mərandal/	Good
5	<i>nipai</i> /nipai/	<i>nipe</i> /nipe/	<i>nipe</i> /nipe/	Snake

Table 4.2. Additional Variants

1. Predictable Phonological Patterns

The difference between *ndehər* and *ndihər* exemplifies Tigabinanga's tendency to front central vowels, strengthening its profile as the most phonetically innovative dialect.

2. Verb Divergence

The divergence in the term for 'sleep'—*medem* vs *tayang*—is particularly striking. Verbs are known in sociolinguistics (Trudgill, 1983) to carry cultural and experiential nuance, making them more susceptible to dialectal specialization.

3. Adjectival Innovation

The variation among *mehuli*, *meradal*, and *merandal* reveals a process of gradual phonological erosion. This supports Mahsun's model that dialect change in Indonesia often proceeds via small shifts accumulating over generations.

4. Retention of Core Nouns

The relative stability of nouns such as *nipai/nipe* suggests that referential vocabulary—especially fauna and flora terms—evolves more slowly.

4.3 Semantic Categorization

A. Nouns

Tigapanah	Tiganderket	Tigabinanga	English Meaning
<i>nipai</i>	<i>nipe</i>	<i>nipe</i>	Snake
<i>bunga</i>	<i>bunga</i>	<i>bunga</i>	Flower

B. Verbs

Tigapanah	Tiganderket	Tigabinanga	English Meaning
<i>medem</i>	<i>medem</i>	<i>tayang</i>	To sleep
<i>ndabuh</i>	<i>naktak</i>	<i>nampok</i>	To fall

C. Adjectives

Tigapanah	Tiganderket	Tigabinanga	English Meaning
<i>mehuli</i>	<i>meradal</i>	<i>merandal</i>	Good
<i>melket</i>	<i>melket</i>	<i>melket</i>	Dirty

Table 4.3. Semantic Categories by Dialect

The semantic categorization reveals a hierarchy of variability:

1. Nouns are the most stable, reflecting their foundational role in reference and communication.
2. Verbs show the greatest divergence, indicating sensitivity to cultural practices, metaphorical usage, and experiential semantics.
3. Adjectives occupy a middle tier, particularly those that express evaluation or moral judgment (e.g., ‘good’).

This distribution mirrors cross-linguistic patterns identified in semantic typology.

4.4 Sociolinguistic Interpretation

The dialectal variation observed in Karo is a product of multiple interacting sociolinguistic factors:

1. Geography and Mobility

Mountainous terrain separates villages in Karo, limiting contact and encouraging phonological drift in peripheral areas such as Tigabinanga.

2. Identity and Ancestry

Speakers interviewed noted that dialect reflects village history, reinforcing Barth’s (1969) concept of linguistic boundaries as cultural boundaries.

3. Communication Networks

Tigapanah and Tiganderket share stronger economic and social ties, explaining their closer linguistic resemblance.

4. Oral Tradition

Karo communities maintain rich oral practices, which help preserve older lexical forms in some regions while accelerating innovation in others.

4.5 Integrated Summary

The findings show that:

1. The three dialects are mutually intelligible yet structurally distinct.
2. Tigabinanga is the most innovative dialect, especially in vowel quality and verb lexicon.
3. Tigapanah and Tiganderket form a dialect continuum, reflecting greater interaction.
4. Variations align with geographic, social, and historical factors, supporting classical sociolinguistic theory.

5. Conclusion

This study examined lexical and phonological variation across three dialect regions of the Karo language—Tigapanah (Julu), Tiganderket (Teruh Deleng), and Tigabinanga (Singalor Lau)—through a sociolinguistic and dialectological lens. The

findings demonstrate that while the three dialects maintain a high degree of mutual intelligibility and share a strong lexical core, each region exhibits distinctive patterns that reflect its unique sociocultural and geographical setting. The Tigabinanga dialect shows the highest level of phonological innovation, notably through consistent vowel fronting and lowering, while Tigapanah and Tiganderket maintain more conservative phonological features and a higher degree of mutual similarity.

Lexical variation appears most prominently in verbs and evaluative adjectives, indicating that semantic domains connected to daily activities and subjective judgments are more susceptible to dialectal differentiation. Nouns, particularly those related to flora, fauna, and essential objects, remain relatively stable across regions, supporting cross-linguistic typologies of semantic resilience. These findings confirm that variation in Karo is systematic rather than random and is shaped by long-standing patterns of settlement, mobility, communication networks, and inter-village identity formation.

The interplay between geography, ancestry, and linguistic practice underscores the strong relationship between language and cultural belonging in the Karo highlands. The results also reinforce established theories of language variation, including Labov's model of regional differentiation, Mahsun's dialectological principles, and Fasold's insights into lexical sociocultural anchoring. As such, the study contributes to the ongoing documentation and preservation of local linguistic heritage, an increasingly urgent task in the face of sociocultural change, mobility, and language shift in Indonesia.

Further research using acoustic phonetics, quantitative dialectometry, or ethnographic interviews with younger and more mobile speakers would enrich the current findings and provide deeper insight into ongoing language change within the Karo speech community. This expanded inquiry would support a more comprehensive understanding of how dialectal variation evolves in multilingual, multicultural, and geographically diverse regions such as North Sumatra.

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NAVIGATING HUMAN RESILIENCE: AN ANALYSIS OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL LIFE STRUGGLES IN DANIELLE STEEL'S ZOYA

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Abstract

This study explores the multidimensional nature of human resilience as portrayed in Danielle Steel's novel *Zoya*, focusing on the protagonist's psychological and sociological transformation amid historical upheaval. Employing Braun and Isaac's (1979) tripartite model of life struggle—conflict with self, others, and the environment—and integrating Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs alongside Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), the research analyzes how *Zoya* navigates personal trauma, intergenerational tension, and socio-political displacement. Set against the backdrop of the Russian Revolution and global migrations of the 20th century, *Zoya*'s journey from aristocratic exile to self-reliant immigrant underscores the interplay of intrinsic motivation—such as identity reconstruction and emotional autonomy—and extrinsic forces like war, poverty, and social change. Through qualitative literary analysis, the study uncovers how *Zoya* redefines dignity, agency, and meaning across shifting cultural landscapes. The findings suggest that Steel's narrative transcends conventional romance, offering a compelling literary case study of adaptive resilience. By merging literary analysis with psychological and sociological theory, this article contributes to broader interdisciplinary discourses on trauma, survival, and the evolving female bildungsroman. *Zoya*'s evolution serves not only as a fictional reflection of resilience but also as a universal narrative of human tenacity amid crisis.

Keywords: *Adversity; Identity; Motivation; Resilience; Struggle*

1. Introduction

Literature serves as both a mirror and a mold for human experiences, offering a narrative space in which life's complexities—emotional, social, and existential—are explored and illuminated. As Sabudu (2020) notes, literary works frequently reflect socio-cultural realities in ways that resonate with readers' own challenges. The novel *Zoya* by Danielle Steel presents a vivid portrayal of such realities, encapsulating the personal and societal upheavals endured by its protagonist amid historical chaos.

Set against the backdrop of the Russian Revolution and the socio-political transformations of the early 20th century, *Zoya* traces the journey of Zoya Ossupov, a young aristocratic woman who is compelled to navigate profound loss, displacement,

and reinvention. Her transformation—from a pampered noble in Tsarist Russia to a resilient survivor in Paris and New York—is shaped by a series of internal conflicts and external pressures. As literature, particularly fiction, often embodies such psychological and sociological themes (Endraswara, 2008; Nurgiyantoro, 2013), *Zoya* becomes an ideal subject for analyzing the "struggle for life"—a concept that Braun and Isaac (1979) define through three core dimensions: conflict with self, with others, and with the environment.

This study utilizes both Braun and Isaac's framework and Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs to interpret the protagonist's narrative journey. Maslow's model offers a psychological lens for understanding Zoya's intrinsic motivations—such as the pursuit of emotional resilience and identity reconstruction—while external influences, including war, cultural displacement, and class collapse, highlight extrinsic factors that compel behavioral adaptation. Furthermore, Krishnananda (2024) underscores the timeless human need to overcome existential challenges, suggesting that struggle itself becomes a medium for discovering purpose and meaning.

The sociological approach adopted in this study views Zoya not merely as a fictional character but as a symbolic representation of individuals negotiating identity, belonging, and autonomy in the face of historical trauma. The integration of previous scholarly analyses (e.g., Larasati et al., 2021; Syahputro, 2023) on character resilience and literary conflict further validates the thematic relevance of this research.

Ultimately, this article seeks to explore how internal psychological drivers and external sociocultural forces intersect to shape the human experience of struggle. Through the lens of *Zoya*, it examines the enduring capacity for survival, growth, and self-determination in even the most challenging circumstances.

2. Literature Review

This section provides the theoretical and empirical foundation supporting the analysis of life struggle in Danielle Steel's *Zoya*. The literature review is organized into four key subsections: the sociological approach to literature, the conceptual framework of struggle, intrinsic and extrinsic motivational theories, and an overview of relevant previous studies.

2.1 Sociology of Literature

The sociological approach in literary criticism emphasizes the reflection of social phenomena within literary texts. Literature, according to Allan (2006), is not an isolated artistic expression but rather a product of its socio-historical context, mirroring the structures and dynamics of society. C. Wright Mills (1959) introduced the concept of the "sociological imagination," urging readers to connect personal experiences with broader societal patterns. In literary texts, this translates into character development shaped by cultural norms, class systems, and historical events.

In *Zoya*, the protagonist's life trajectory is shaped by systemic events such as the Russian Revolution, economic collapse, and wartime displacement. As Endraswara (2008) and Nurgiyantoro (2013) argue, literature is capable of encapsulating both psychological and sociological dimensions of human life. The sociological lens, therefore, is crucial in analyzing how external events impose identity crises and behavioral transformation on literary characters.

2.2 Conceptualizing Life Struggle

Braun and Isaac's (1979) theory on the "struggle for life" offers a framework for classifying conflict into three categories: struggle with oneself, with others, and with the environment. These categories collectively capture the psychological, interpersonal, and societal dimensions of adversity. Internal struggle involves emotional conflict, guilt, and value shifts; struggle with others concerns interpersonal dynamics and social expectations; and struggle with the environment includes war, displacement, and economic survival.

Krishnananda (2024) adds a philosophical dimension, arguing that life's fundamental struggles stem from basic human limitations and the need for existential meaning. He emphasizes that historical crises are fundamentally human crises—cyclical in nature, yet transformative in impact.

2.3 Motivation: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Factors

To understand how characters endure and overcome life's struggles, this study also incorporates Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs and the Self-Determination Theory by Deci and Ryan (1985, 2000). Maslow posits that human behavior is driven by layered needs—from physiological survival to self-actualization. Zoya's psychological resilience and transformation can be interpreted through her progressive journey across these needs.

Intrinsic motivation refers to actions driven by internal satisfaction—such as the pursuit of dignity, emotional healing, or personal growth (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Krishnananda (2024) highlights the role of curiosity, challenge, and emotional meaning in intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation involves behavior influenced by external rewards or pressures—such as war, exile, economic necessity, and social expectations.

These dual motivational frameworks are essential for interpreting Zoya's character arc. Her internal motivations for perseverance and her external pressures to survive form the core dynamics of her literary struggle.

2.4 Previous Studies on Life Struggle in Literature

A variety of recent studies demonstrate the analytical relevance of life struggle as a literary theme. Larasati, Triyogo, and Yulfi (2021) explored social class conflict in *Frankenstein*, emphasizing how structural inequalities shape character relationships. Syahputro (2023) examined survival and psychological struggle in *12 Strong*, aligning closely with the current study's thematic focus. Sain and Dewi (2022) discussed perseverance in *Laskar Pelangi*, showing how characters adapt through educational and familial hardship.

Further, Husna (2021) analyzed determination in Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, while Azka et al. (2021) investigated resilience in C.S. Lewis's *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Other contributions—such as Gustaman and Lolowang (2021) on *Where the Crawdads Sing* and Manuputty et al. (2021) on *Kami Bukan Sarjana Kertas*—demonstrate how literary protagonists reflect endurance in hostile environments.

These works support the current study's focus on the multidimensional nature of human struggle, while reinforcing the value of combining psychological and sociological analysis in literary research. The originality of this study lies in its

integration of Braun and Isaac's (1979) tripartite framework with motivational psychology to examine Zoya's transformation under the weight of historical trauma.

3. Research Method

This study adopts a qualitative literary analysis approach rooted in psychological and sociological theory. The methodology is designed to interpret the types of life struggles experienced by the protagonist in Danielle Steel's *Zoya*, and to examine the internal (intrinsic) and external (extrinsic) factors that influence the character's transformation across the novel.

3.1 Research Design

This research is classified under qualitative literary criticism, employing a descriptive-interpretative approach. As explained by Strauss and Corbin (in Riyanti, 2018), qualitative methods are effective in exploring phenomena that cannot be quantified—such as emotional depth, personal transformation, and cultural tension in literature.

Specifically, the analysis is informed by the psychological-sociological lens. From a psychological perspective, the study employs Abraham Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs and Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) to explore internal motivations. Sociologically, it utilizes Braun and Isaac's (1979) tripartite model of struggle—conflict with self, others, and the environment—to identify the nature of adversity and social tension in the narrative.

Following Peck and Coyle (1984), this critical framework is suitable for examining the emotional and ideological constructs embedded in fiction. The purpose is not to evaluate the aesthetic merit of the text but to understand how the protagonist's life journey reflects universal themes of human struggle, resilience, and transformation.

3.2 Data Source

The primary data source is the novel *Zoya* by Danielle Steel, first published in 1989 by Dell Publishing. The novel spans approximately 500 pages and is divided into three major settings—Imperial Russia, interwar Paris, and Depression-era New York.

Textual data are drawn from:

- Character dialogue and monologue
- Narrative exposition
- Descriptive passages related to historical and social context

These elements were extracted based on their relevance to the study's core themes: types of life struggle and factors influencing character behavior.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

The documentation technique was employed as the primary method of data collection. As suggested by Sugiyono (2020), documentation in qualitative research involves gathering data from textual or archival materials to explore latent meanings and recurring motifs.

In this study, narrative excerpts from the novel were selected through close reading and coded according to the following thematic categories:

- Internal psychological struggle (e.g., guilt, identity loss)
- Interpersonal struggle (e.g., conflict with family or community)

- Environmental struggle (e.g., war, poverty, displacement)
- Intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors

Passages were selected that best illustrated Zoya's character development in response to these categories.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

The analysis was conducted using descriptive qualitative analysis, as outlined by Sugiyono (2020). This involved several systematic steps:

1. Thematic Identification: The researcher categorized textual data into Braun and Isaac's (1979) struggle typology: with self, with others, and with the environment.
2. Motivational Mapping: Data were further analyzed using Maslow's (1970) and Ryan and Deci's (2000) frameworks to distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators affecting Zoya's decisions.
3. Contextual Integration: Passages were interpreted in relation to historical background, class struggle, and cultural displacement as represented in the novel.
4. Interpretation and Synthesis: Themes were synthesized to construct an overarching understanding of the character's transformation. Zoya's psychological and sociological journey was then interpreted not only as a fictional narrative but as a reflection of broader human experiences during social crises.

3.5 Research Validity and Limitations

While qualitative research does not seek statistical generalizability, its validity is strengthened through triangulation of theory and narrative interpretation. By grounding the study in established psychological and sociological frameworks, the analysis offers both depth and theoretical consistency.

The primary limitation lies in the subjectivity inherent to literary interpretation. Reader bias and cultural context may influence how themes are perceived. However, the integration of multiple theoretical perspectives enhances the reliability of the analytical conclusions.

4. Discussion

The analysis of *Zoya* reveals that Danielle Steel's novel is more than a historical romance—it is a profound literary exploration of human resilience in the face of sociopolitical trauma. Zoya's journey through loss, displacement, and reinvention encapsulates the universal "struggle for life," articulated through Braun and Isaac's (1979) typology: struggle with self, others, and environment. This section discusses how these types of struggle intertwine with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, drawing upon Maslow (1970), Ryan & Deci (2000), and Krishnananda (2024), while anchoring the argument in narrative excerpts.

4.1 Internal Struggle and the Psychology of Identity Disruption

Zoya's internal conflict represents a psychological rupture caused by the collapse of the social structures that once defined her. The fall of the Russian aristocracy forces her to confront not only the loss of family and status but also the erosion of her self-concept. A pivotal moment occurs when Zoya begins to morally compromise, lying to her grandmother to attend dinner with a man:

“She felt guilty about it, but by the time she left the house, she had forgiven herself for what seemed like a harmless lie... After all, what harm was there in dinner with a nice man?” (*Paris: Chapter 15*)

This moment signifies the emergence of moral dissonance—a critical phase in identity realignment (Erikson, 1968). Her aristocratic values conflict with the necessities of exile. Zoya's self-forgiveness reflects a cognitive adaptation (Festinger, 1957), suggesting she begins to recalibrate her ethical framework to survive emotionally in a morally ambiguous world.

Further, her decision to dance professionally—once unthinkable for a Russian noblewoman—marks a psychological turning point. Though the act risks shame and defiance of familial codes, it embodies Maslow's (1970) idea of moving beyond basic survival toward self-actualization. Zoya's ability to find pride in what was once seen as dishonorable reflects her internal transformation:

“Paris is a big city that is very difficult to survive in, let alone Zoya and her grandmother did not bring much wealth.”

Steel uses economic precarity as a catalyst for inner growth. Zoya's decision to redefine dignity in terms of persistence and adaptability rather than social status signals her movement toward psychological autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

4.2 Interpersonal Struggle and Intergenerational Tension

Zoya's interpersonal conflicts primarily emerge through her interactions with her grandmother, Evgenia, whose commitment to traditional aristocratic values becomes both a source of stability and repression. Their debate over Zoya's dancing illustrates a classic intergenerational clash between duty and agency:

“Never mind in any case Zoya, I shan't allow it.”

“What's so terrible about being a dancer? It doesn't shock you that Prince Vladimir drives a taxi...” (*Paris: Chapter 10*)

This dialogue juxtaposes two interpretations of dignity—one rooted in heritage, the other in practicality. Zoya's assertion reveals her growing alignment with existential individualism (Frankl, 1963), emphasizing meaning through lived action rather than inherited identity.

Zoya's struggle with her grandmother also mirrors feminist readings of *bildungsroman*, wherein a female protagonist must challenge the "benevolent patriarchy" of older guardians to achieve subjectivity (Gilbert & Gubar, 1979). Here, Evgenia acts as a gatekeeper of aristocratic virtue, but her eventual concession—“*She felt too old and tired to fight her.*”—marks the surrender of social tradition to lived necessity. This emotional surrender allows Zoya to enter a new sociocultural identity as an immigrant laborer rather than a displaced noble.

4.3 Environmental Struggle as Historical Trauma

Perhaps the most profound form of external conflict Zoya faces is environmental—encompassing war, revolution, migration, and poverty. The collapse of her world begins violently, with the death of her brother and the physical destruction of her home:

“Evgenia sold her last pair of earrings on December first, and she was horrified at how little they gave her. All they had were Zoya’s wages now...” (Paris: Chapter 18).

Material deprivation here is not merely an economic condition but a metaphor for social entropy—the dissipation of inherited identity under the weight of modernity. Her family jewels, symbols of aristocratic permanence, are exchanged for the transient security of bread and rent.

Zoya’s subsequent employment in a ballet company marks her entry into a different environment—one governed by merit and commodified skill rather than inherited class. In Krishnananda’s (2024) terms, she transitions from a passive recipient of privilege to an active agent of meaning-making. The environment forces her to become, rather than simply belong.

Later, the novel revisits the theme of environmental upheaval when Zoya contemplates returning to Russia: “*Grandma, let’s go to Russia!*” This decision reflects not nostalgia, but a reconciliatory impulse—Zoya seeks to integrate her past self with her reconstructed identity. Such narrative arcs resonate with trauma literature, where survivors must “re-story” their lives (Caruth, 1996). Her return to Russia is not regressive but therapeutic, aligning with Maslow’s concept of meta-motivation—seeking meaning beyond mere survival.

4.4 Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Motivation: The Force behind Survival

Throughout *Zoya*, Steel crafts a delicate interplay between intrinsic values (dignity, love, purpose) and extrinsic pressures (war, poverty, social expectation). One of the most emotionally charged scenes captures Zoya’s plea to Simon:

“Please.... Zoya begged, ‘Please, Simon....’ She was overcome with grief. ‘I couldn’t live without you.’” (Chapter 44)

This excerpt illustrates how attachment trauma intersects with internalized fears of abandonment and loss. Simon’s presence is not just love, but a symbolic bulwark against emotional collapse. Yet Zoya’s eventual recovery from Simon’s death, and her collaboration with Paul, signals her internalization of resilience:

“They worked hard, and dined late... but their friendship was always more important to them than the lovemaking.” (Chapter 48)

Here, love is redefined—not as romantic rescue but as partnership and shared endeavor. Zoya’s transition from dependency to co-creation mirrors autonomous motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000), where personal growth is driven by alignment with internal goals, rather than external validation.

In *Zoya*, Danielle Steel constructs a narrative that transcends romantic or historical fiction. Through Zoya’s transformation—from a displaced aristocrat to a self-reliant woman navigating multiple cultural and emotional geographies—the novel explores the depth of human resilience. The integration of internal psychological shifts, interpersonal evolution, and environmental adaptation affirms Braun and Isaac’s (1979) and Maslow’s (1970) theories of struggle and motivation.

Zoya’s life arc is ultimately one of survival through meaning: she does not merely endure loss; she learns to redefine selfhood through adversity. In this way, *Zoya*

reflects not just a fictional life story, but a literary meditation on the human condition under pressure.

5. Conclusion

Danielle Steel's *Zoya* offers a nuanced literary portrayal of survival, identity reconstruction, and the enduring human spirit amid historical and personal catastrophe. This study has examined the protagonist's journey through the analytical frameworks of Braun and Isaac's (1979) tripartite theory of life struggle—conflict with self, others, and the environment—and Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs, further contextualized by Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). By integrating these psychological and sociological lenses, the analysis reveals that Zoya's transformation is shaped by the dynamic interplay of intrinsic motivations—such as emotional resilience, loyalty, and self-worth—and extrinsic forces including war, exile, and social dislocation.

Zoya's internal struggle is marked by the psychological fragmentation caused by grief, loss, and identity dissolution. Her moral recalibrations and emotional adaptations reflect an evolving selfhood that moves from inherited social roles to self-authored meaning. Simultaneously, her interpersonal conflicts, particularly with her grandmother, illuminate the generational tensions and value shifts demanded by survival in unfamiliar cultural contexts. These are not mere narrative obstacles but representations of wider social transitions, wherein tradition must yield to adaptability.

The environmental conflict, primarily through war, poverty, and migration, situates Zoya's story within broader historical trauma. Yet, instead of portraying Zoya as a passive victim, the novel constructs her as an agent of her own narrative, capable of reconfiguring her life across shifting geopolitical and emotional landscapes. Her eventual success—professional, emotional, and personal—is not a return to past privilege, but the result of agency, effort, and continuous reinvention.

What emerges is a compelling literary case study of human resilience. Zoya's struggle for life is not only a matter of surviving historical upheaval, but of finding coherence and purpose amid fragmentation. Her ability to adapt without relinquishing her ethical core affirms the psychological depth of intrinsic motivation, while also acknowledging the formidable influence of sociopolitical context. This narrative arc resonates with contemporary concerns about displacement, identity loss, and emotional endurance in times of crisis.

Thus, this study concludes that Steel's *Zoya* stands as more than a historical or romantic narrative—it functions as a literary inquiry into how individuals navigate adversity through an ongoing negotiation between personal agency and external realities. Through this lens, the novel contributes not only to literary discourse but to interdisciplinary discussions in psychology, sociology, trauma studies, and feminist criticism.

Future research may further explore comparative analyses between *Zoya* and other literary heroines of exile and transformation, or extend this framework to examine how contemporary fiction portrays resilience in times of forced migration, war, and social upheaval.

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