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The following titles reflect the wide-ranging research presented in this volume: Unspoken Tension: Grammar in Discourse as a Key to Reading Hemingway's "The Killers"; The Effect of Gemini AI-enhanced E-portfolios on Students' Speaking Performance: A Quantitative Analysis in ESP Context; Form, Function, and Meaning in the Use of Euphemism in the Title of Kompas Daily Newspaper; Degradation of Balinese Kitchen Utensil Lexicon: An Ecolinguistics Perspective, and Enhancing Japanese Communication Skills through an Industry-Based Roleplay Module Using Communicative Language Teaching Approach.

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Badung, June 28th 2026

Politeknik Negeri Bali
Editor in Chief,

Gusti Nyoman Ayu Sukerti, S.S., M.Hum.



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Unspoken Tension: Grammar in Discourse as a Key to Reading Hemingway’s “The Killers”

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Abstract – This study examines Ernest Hemingway’s short story “The Killers” through the lens of Grammar in Discourse, focusing on how grammatical structures function at both the sentence and discourse level as resources for meaning-making in interaction and narrative. The aims are to examine how Hemingway’s grammar operates at the discourse level to shape interactional dynamics and narrative tension, to fill a scholarly gap by providing a systematic analysis of his grammar within this framework, and to highlight the pedagogical potential of using Hemingway’s text in teaching grammar. This study employs a qualitative descriptive method, analysing excerpts with attention to tense, modality, deixis, ellipsis, repetition, and voice. The analysis shows that Hemingway’s minimalist grammar serves as a stylistic device to heighten tension, realism, and ambiguity. The consistent use of past simple and ellipses in dialogue builds a sense of immediacy and sounds natural. Modal expressions and imperatives emphasize the unequal power dynamic between the gangsters and the victims. Deictic expressions and vague references add to the uncertainty, supporting Hemingway’s iceberg theory of leaving meaning beneath the surface. Pedagogically, the study highlights the potential of integrating literary texts into the teaching of Grammar in Discourse, encouraging learners to see grammar as a resource for constructing meaning, negotiating power, and interpreting stylistic effects.

Keywords: Ernest Hemingway, grammar in discourse, pedagogy, “the killers”, stylistics

1. Introduction

Ernest Hemingway's prose has long been recognized for its stark minimalism, economy of language, and the much-discussed "iceberg theory," whereby the deeper meaning of a narrative lies beneath the surface of the text. In an interview with George Plimpton, Hemingway explains his famous iceberg theory, "*I always try to write on the principle of the iceberg. Seven-eighths of it is underwater, and only one part shows*" (Nagado, 2015). Among his short stories, "The Killers" (1927) is frequently regarded as one of the clearest representations of these stylistic characteristics. The story unfolds in a small-town diner where two hitmen arrive and wait for their victim, Ole Anderson, while interacting with George, Nick Adams, and the cook. The narrative is built almost entirely on dialogue, with minimal narration and sparse descriptive detail. Such stylistic economy makes "The Killers" particularly suitable for discourse-oriented analysis because meaning emerges not only from what is explicitly stated but also from omission, silence, and grammatical structure.

Classical studies on Hemingway's fiction have consistently emphasized the stylistic distinctiveness of minimal prose. Early critics such as Carlos Baker and Philip Young identified economy of language, omission, and understated narration as defining characteristics of Hemingway's literary style. Baker (1963), for instance, argued that Hemingway's deliberate omission of explanatory details intensifies emotional and thematic impact, while Young (1966) connected Hemingway's sparse prose to existential themes and psychological restraint. These foundational studies established Hemingway as a writer whose literary power depends heavily on linguistic restraint and implicit meaning. Later scholarship by (Benson, 1990) further demonstrated that Hemingway's short fiction derives much of its narrative force from compressed dialogue and omission, reinforcing the importance of language structure in the construction of meaning.

More recent scholarship has continued to highlight the importance of linguistic and discourse-oriented approaches in literary studies. Recent studies have also highlighted the growing importance of grammar in discourse-oriented language instruction. For example, Marlini et al. (2022) found that English education students perceived grammar in spoken discourse as an essential component of communicative competence, emphasizing the need for contextualized and discourse-based approaches to grammar learning. Such findings reinforce the view that grammar should be understood not merely as a set of formal rules but as a resource for meaning-making in authentic context. Contemporary stylistic research increasingly views grammar as a dynamic resource for constructing characterization, interaction, and reader engagement rather than merely a system of formal rules (Hamawand, 2023; Jeffries & McIntyre, 2025). Similarly, discourse-based studies emphasize the pedagogical and interpretive value of analysing grammar beyond sentence-level structures (Oyama & Kang, 2023; Farrokhi et al., 2018). These developments suggest that grammatical choices in literary texts can shape narrative perspective, interpersonal relations, and emotional tension. However, despite these advances, Hemingway's "The Killers" has rarely been examined specifically through the framework of Grammar in Discourse.

From a discourse-grammatical perspective, Hemingway's stylistic choices can be understood as more than aesthetic preferences. They function as mechanisms through which interpersonal relations, power dynamics, and narrative tension are constructed. For example, when one of the gangsters says, "*What's the idea?*" followed by the curt reply "*Nothing. Just nothing,*" the brevity and repetition of "nothing" create an atmosphere of both evasiveness and finality. Likewise, expressions such as "*We're going to kill a Swede*" or "*I'll give you ten minutes*" illustrate how tense and modality contribute to immediacy, certainty, and threat. These examples demonstrate that grammar in Hemingway's short story "The Killers" is not merely structural but deeply connected to discourse functions and reader interpretation.

The notion of Grammar in Discourse provides an appropriate theoretical lens for examining such textual dynamics. Moving beyond the traditional view of grammar as a collection of isolated rules, this approach emphasizes grammar as a resource for meaning-making in context (Carter & McCarthy, 2006; Halliday, 1994). Features, such as tense, modality, deixis, ellipsis, and voice, are not only syntactic elements but also discourse strategies that shape interaction, narrative progression, and characterization. Within literary texts, these grammatical choices acquire additional stylistic significance because they contribute simultaneously to thematic development and reader engagement. In Hemingway's case, the deliberate restriction of grammatical variation strengthens the ambiguity, tension, and emotional restraint characteristic of his minimalist narrative style.

While Hemingway's short story "The Killers" has received substantial scholarly attention, most studies concentrate on its themes of fatalism, its stylistic minimalism, or its representation of masculinity

and violence. Analyses often foreground Hemingway's iceberg theory, focusing on what is left unsaid rather than on the linguistic structures that construct the story. Some stylistic studies have addressed Hemingway's sparse vocabulary and dialogue-driven narration, but few have explicitly situated their analysis within the framework of Grammar in Discourse (Abdullayev, 2024). This represents a research gap: there has been little systematic exploration of how Hemingway's grammatical patterns contribute to discourse-level meaning and function as stylistic strategies.

The present study addresses this gap by analysing "The Killers" through the lens of Grammar in Discourse. Specifically, it investigates how Hemingway's use of tense, modality, deixis, ellipsis, and voice contributes to the construction of meaning at the discourse level. In doing so, the article demonstrates that the use of grammar in the text is not an incidental feature but a deliberate stylistic choice that underpins the narrative's tension, ambiguity, and thematic resonance. For instance, the frequent use of ellipsis in dialogue (Rahaman, 2023), such as "*What's he like?*" followed by "*He's all right,*" mirrors natural speech and conveys a sense of detachment that aligns with the characters' restrained emotional expression. Likewise, the absence of modal hedges in gangster speech creates an atmosphere of assertiveness and dominance, reinforcing the power asymmetry in the diner scene.

In addition to its literary contribution, this study has pedagogical implications. Literary texts, especially those as linguistically distinctive as "The Killers", provide rich material for teaching Grammar in Discourse. Instead of presenting grammar as abstract rules detached from usage, instructors can use such texts to demonstrate how grammatical forms operate in real communication, constructing meaning, power relations, and stylistic effects. When students encounter utterances like "*I'll give you ten minutes*" or "*You better eat the beans*" in the context of a literary narrative, they can appreciate how grammar functions not only structurally but also pragmatically and stylistically. This aligns with contemporary views of grammar pedagogy that emphasize usage, discourse, and context rather than prescriptive correctness.

Accordingly, the objectives of this article are threefold. First, to examine how Hemingway's use of grammar in "The Killers" operates at the discourse level, shaping interactional dynamics and narrative tension. Second, it seeks to fill the scholarly gap by providing a systematic analysis of Hemingway's grammar within the framework of Grammar in Discourse. Third, it highlights the pedagogical potential of using Hemingway's short story "The Killers" as a resource in teaching grammar, encouraging learners to view grammar as a tool for meaning-making rather than as a set of rigid rules.

1.1. Studies on Hemingway's Style and "The Killers."

Ernest Hemingway is widely recognized for his distinctive prose style, characterized by brevity, understatement, and what he himself termed the "iceberg theory," in which much of the meaning lies beneath the surface of the text. Critics have long associated Hemingway's short stories with his minimalist approach, in which omission and silence play crucial roles in creating tension (Baker, 1963; Benson, 1990; Bloom, 1999). The short story "The Killers" (1927) is often cited as a prime example of this style. The narrative revolves around two hired gunmen who enter a small-town diner in search of a former boxer named Ole Andreson. Yet, much of the drama unfolds not in action but in dialogue and what remains unsaid.

Scholarly attention to "The Killers" has frequently centred on themes of fatalism, violence, and the modernist condition of disillusionment (Gajdusek, 1988; Young, 1966). The story has also been analysed in terms of masculinity, existential silence, and the inevitability of death. Stylistically oriented studies, such as those by (Meyers, 1985) and (Nagel, 1996), emphasize Hemingway's pared-down diction, repetitive dialogue, and reliance on colloquial language. While these contributions illuminate the thematic and stylistic significance of "The Killers", few have explicitly connected Hemingway's stylistic minimalism to systematic analyses of grammar as a discourse resource. This gap provides an opportunity to revisit the story from a linguistic perspective that foregrounds grammar as central to meaning-making.

1.2. Grammar in Literary Discourse

In literary studies, grammar has often been approached through the lens of stylistics, where linguistic form is examined as a means of producing literary effect. Leech & Short (2007) argue that grammar shapes the "style" of a text by influencing point of view, characterization, and tone. (Simpson, 2004) further highlights how grammatical choices contribute to narrative voice and ideological positioning. Within this tradition, literary grammar is not treated as an abstract set of rules but as a functional component of the text's meaning.

Studies of grammar in literary discourse have demonstrated how authors deploy tense, aspect, modality, and deixis to generate atmosphere and manipulate reader expectations. For instance, the simple

present tense may convey immediacy, while ellipsis can simulate authentic speech. In the case of Hemingway, critics have noted his repeated reliance on paratactic sentence structures and simple verb forms (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). However, comprehensive analyses that explicitly treat these features as discourse-level strategies remain limited. This article seeks to bridge that gap by situating Hemingway's grammatical choices within the broader framework of Grammar in Discourse.

1.3. Grammar in Discourse: Theoretical Foundations

Grammar in discourse refers to an approach that examines how grammatical choices, such as tense, modality, deixis, ellipsis, and voice, operate within stretches of real language to construct meaning (Esteban, 2024). It treats discourse as the site of grammatical deployment rather than proposing a formal model, such as a discourse analytic work on cohesion and theme-rheme (Garcia Montes et al., 2014). While discourse grammar is a formal framework, functional discourse grammar, which arose from the analysis of spoken and written discourse, posits discourse-level units organized by pragmatic functions; it models grammar as shaped by discourse structure. Meanwhile, systemic functional linguistics (SFL) is Halliday's social semiotic theory that views language as a network of systems for creating ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning through grammar realized through mood, transitivity, and theme, which are linked to the context of situation (Li, 2019).

The theoretical foundation of Grammar in Discourse is closely associated with Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which conceptualizes language as a social semiotic system. According to Halliday (1994) and Halliday & Matthiessen (2014), grammar simultaneously performs three meta-functions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The ideational represents experience and events, the interpersonal negotiates social relations and speaker stance, while the textual organizes language into coherent discourse. Within this framework, grammatical features such as tense, modality, deixis, ellipsis, and voice are not merely formal categories, but functional resources that help speakers and writers construct meaning in context.

Tense and aspect, for example, situate events temporally and influence narrative perspective. In discourse, tense choice may create immediacy, distance, continuity, or detachment depending on how they position events relative to the speaker and the audience (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Modality, meanwhile, expresses degrees of certainty, obligation, probability, and speaker commitment. Halliday (as cited in Sangoor & Bedu, 2025) explains that modality operates through scales of probability and usuality, enabling speakers to encode attitude and evaluations within discourse. Consequently, they reveal relationships of authority, certainty, hesitation, or control.

Deixis also plays a central role in discourse meaning because it anchors utterances within spatial, temporal, and interpersonal context. According to Levinson (1983), deictic expressions such as *this*, *here*, *now*, and *you* establish relationships between language and the situation of utterance. Through deixis, speakers position themselves and others within discourse, thereby shaping perspective and interactional dynamics.

Another important discourse feature is ellipsis, which refers to the omission of linguistic elements that can be understood from context. McCarthy (1991) explains that ellipsis commonly occurs in spoken discourse because conversational participants often rely on shared contextual knowledge to interpret incomplete utterances. Elliptical structure, therefore, contributes to conversational economy, naturalness, and pragmatic implication. Similarly, Esteban (2024) argues that ellipsis reflects the efficiency of real-life communication, where speakers frequently omit recoverable information. In literary discourse, ellipsis may also function stylistically by creating ambiguity, tension, and reader involvement.

Voice refers to the relationship between the subject and the verb in a sentence (Lubis et al., 2024). In discourse analysis, however, the choice between active and passive voice extends beyond grammatical variation because it reflects agency, focus, and rhetorical intention. Active voice typically highlights the agent, while passive voice often emphasizes the action. Voice is a grammatical feature that determines the relationship between the verb and its arguments (subject and object). Voice functions as a discourse strategy that shapes emphasis, interpersonal positioning, and interpretation (Lestari, 2025).

In addition to SFL, the present study also draws on a discourse-oriented perspective proposed by Carter & McCarthy (2006), who describe grammar as "patterned choices in discourse." From this perspective, speakers and writers select grammatical structures strategically to achieve communicative goals. Grammar, therefore, becomes a dynamic and context-sensitive system of meaning-making rather

than a static body of prescriptive rules. Amin (2014) similarly argues that discourse-based approaches to grammar teaching emphasize the importance of meaning and communicative context, shifting grammar instruction away from isolated sentence-level analysis.

Drawing on these theoretical perspectives, the present study examines Hemingway's "The Killers" as a discourse-oriented literary text in which grammar functions as a stylistic and pragmatic resource. Hemingway's reliance on simple tense forms, recurrent ellipsis, deixis, modality, and contrast between active and passive constructions is interpreted not merely as stylistic peculiarities but as discourse strategies that construct narrative tension, interpersonal relations, and thematic meaning throughout the story.

1.4. Research Gap

Despite extensive scholarship on Hemingway's minimalist style, there remains a paucity of research that explicitly applies Grammar in Discourse as an analytical framework to his works. Existing studies on literary language have widely acknowledged the importance of grammar in shaping literary expression and meaning. Scholars in stylistics and discourse studies have demonstrated how grammatical choices contribute to characterization, narrative perspective, atmosphere, and thematic development in literary texts. In Hemingway's case, many studies have highlighted his "telegraphic" sentences, sparse dialogue, and economy of expression as central features of his minimalist style.

However, most of these analyses remain at the level of general stylistic observation and do not systematically investigate how specific grammatical features function within discourse to generate meaning. In particular, the short story "The Killers" has frequently been examined from thematic, stylistic, and existential perspectives, yet it has rarely been explored through the lens of Grammar in Discourse. Consequently, limited attention has been given to the ways grammatical elements such as ellipsis, modality, deixis, and voice interact dynamically to shape narrative progression, interpersonal relations, and tension within the story.

Addressing this gap, the present study integrates insights from literary stylistics with the analytical tools of Grammar in Discourse. By doing so, it not only deepens the understanding of Hemingway's narrative strategies but also highlights the pedagogical potential of teaching grammar through authentic literary discourse.

2. Method

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach, focusing on the application of Grammar in Discourse to Ernest Hemingway's short story "The Killers". The choice of this method is based on the nature of the research problem, which aims to reveal how grammatical structures function beyond the sentence level to create meaning, interaction, and stylistic effects in the narrative. Rather than quantifying data, the analysis seeks to provide interpretive insights into how grammar operates as discourse within a literary context.

2.1. Data Source and Data Collection

The primary data for this study are Ernest Hemingway's short story "The Killers", first published in 1927 in Scribner's Magazine and later included in *Men Without Women*. In line with this study, the data source was taken from "20th-Century American Short Stories" (1975). The story is considered one of Hemingway's most representative works of minimalist prose and dialogic tension, making it a suitable text for discourse-based grammatical analysis.

The data consist of selected excerpts from "The Killers" that illustrate key grammatical phenomena relevant to discourse analysis, such as: (1) Tense and aspect (simple present, simple past, and their narrative/discourse functions), (2) Modality (use of modal verbs and modal expressions to convey obligation, uncertainty, or attitude), (3) Deixis (spatial, temporal, and personal references in dialogues), (4) Ellipsis and repetition (economy of expression and creation of subtext), and (5) Voice (active vs. passive constructions in building narrative stance). Passages containing these features were purposively sampled to highlight instances where grammar directly relates to meaning-making and stylistic effect.

2.2. Procedures

The analysis followed several steps: (1) Close Reading – Careful examination of the short story to identify grammatical structures that stand out in shaping narrative and interaction, (2) Categorization –

Grouping the data according to discourse grammar features (tense/aspect, modality, deixis, ellipsis, voice), (3) Interpretive Analysis – Analysing how each grammatical feature functions within the discourse of the story, with attention to its role in characterization, tension, and thematic development, and (4) Discussion of Findings – Relating the grammatical analysis to Hemingway’s minimalist style and the broader context of discourse grammar. In line with Denzin & Lincoln (1994) that the qualitative approach implies an emphasis on processes and meanings, which involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter which include the study and collection of variety of empirical material such as case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts (Lestari & Wardhono, 2022).

2.3. Research Orientation

This study draws on Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1994) ; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) and Carter & McCarthy’s (2006) conception of grammar as discourse, supported by insights from stylistics (Leech & Short, 2007; Simpson, 2004). The integration of these frameworks allows for a multidimensional reading of “The Killers”, where grammar is viewed not merely as structure but as a resource for meaning, interaction, and literary effect.

In line with the objectives of this study, the analysis is guided by the following research questions:

- 1) How do grammatical features such as tense, modality, deixis, ellipsis, and voice function within the discourse of Hemingway’s “The Killers”?
- 2) In what ways do these grammatical choices contribute to the construction of meaning, character interaction, and tension in the story?
- 3) What pedagogical implications can be drawn from the discourse-based grammatical analysis of “The Killers” for the teaching of grammar in discourse?

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Tense and Aspect

One of the most striking features of the short story “The Killers” is Hemingway’s reliance on the simple past tense and his occasional use of the simple present tense in dialogue. The narrative itself is dominated by the simple past, giving the story a sense of detached narrative voice. Meanwhile, the dialogues are rendered in the present, creating immediacy and tension. For example, the opening sentence reads:

“The door of Henry’s lunchroom opened, and two men came in.” (Hemingway, “The Killers”)

Here, the use of the past simple tense (“opened,” “came”) presents events as sequential actions, creating what Leech & Short (2007) describe as a “dynamic progression” of narrative movement. In stylistic analysis, the form of simple past constructions is frequently associated with the linear unfolding of events, enabling readers to follow actions directly and immediately (Simpson, 2004). This grammatical pattern contributes to the impression of a scene unfolding almost cinematically, where actions are presented with minimal authorial intrusion. Such use of tense is also close to Hemingway’s minimalist style. Hemingway’s prose is characterized by economy of language, limited narration, and surface-level description, all of which align with his well-known “iceberg theory” (Benson, 1990; Nagel, 1996). In this context, the dominance of simple past structures minimizes interpretive commentary and instead foregrounds actions as they occur. Grammar, therefore, functions not merely as a structural device but as a discourse strategy that sustains objectivity and tension within the narrative. In contrast, when characters engage in dialogue, the tense usage shifts. Consider this exchange:

“What’s the idea?” George asked.
“Nothing,” said the other. “Except to tell you what we’re going to do.”

The use of the present simple tense in the question “What’s the idea?” together with the future-oriented construction “we’re going to do” provides a sense of immediacy for the interaction, as if it is occurring directly before the reader. According to Halliday & Matthiessen, (2014), the form of present tense in discourse often functions to reduce temporal distance between the event and the audience, thereby increasing the sense of involvement. Similarly, Carter & McCarthy (2006) note that present-

tense constructions in spoken interaction frequently contribute to conversational realism and psychological proximity.

In this exchange, the simple present does not merely identify the time of the actions; rather, it situates the reader within the interaction itself. Meanwhile, the future construction “we’re going to do” signals an action in which is imminent and unavoidable, intensifying the threatening atmosphere of the dialogue. The combination of present and future forms, therefore, creates a discourse effect in which the reader experiences both the immediacy of the ongoing interaction and the anticipation of impending violence.

From the perspective of Grammar in Discourse, tense and aspect are not only markers of time but also indicators of narrative perspective and reader positioning. The simple past tense constructs a detached, matter-of-fact narration that distances the narrator from the characters, while the present-tense dialogues reduce that distance and pull the reader into the unfolding interaction. This alternation between past and present contributes to the tension between detachment and immediacy, a stylistic characteristic frequently associated with Hemingway’s minimalist narrative technique (Leech & Short, 2007; Simpson, 2004).

Thus, tense and aspect in the short story “The Killers” function beyond sentence-level grammar; they operate as discourse strategies that shape reader engagement, balancing the cold objectivity of narration with the vividness and urgency of spoken interaction

3.2. Modality

In Hemingway’s short story “The Killers”, modality plays a crucial role in shaping power relations and uncertainty within the dialogue-driven narrative. Although Hemingway employs a minimalist style, the selective use of modal verbs and modal expressions reveals the characters’ intentions, attitudes, and implicit threats. Consider the dialogue between George and one of the killers:

“You don’t have to get scared,” Al said. “He won’t hurt you.”

Here, the modal expression “have to” conventionally signals obligation or necessity (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). However, in this context, it functions ironically since Al is one of the armed killers controlling the situation, and positions himself as a reassuring figure while simultaneously maintaining dominance over George. The assurance is therefore manipulative rather than genuinely comforting. As Carter & McCarthy (2006) explain, modality in discourse often reflects interpersonal relations and speaker authority rather than merely grammatical necessity. Al’s statement minimizes George’s fear linguistically, yet the surrounding context, the killers’ presence, weapons, and threatening behaviour contradict the reassurance, creating tension between the literal meaning and the implied threat.

Similarly, the statement “He won’t hurt you” employs the modal auxiliary “will,” which typically expresses certainty or prediction. In this dialogue, however, the certainty conveyed by “will” is controlled by the killers themselves, because they determine who will or will not be harmed. The modal, therefore, reinforces the killers’ authority over the situation. The utterance appears comforting on the surface, but pragmatically it functions as a reminder that safety depends entirely on the killers’ decisions. Another example occurs when the killers discuss their plan:

“We’ll wait for him here,” Max said.

The modal “will” here functions not only as a marker of future action but also as an indicator of determination and commitment. According to Halliday & Matthiessen (2014), modal auxiliaries can express degrees of certainty, intention, and obligation in discourse. In this case, “we’ll wait” signals a fixed and deliberate plan, leaving little room for uncertainty or negotiation. This contributes to the atmosphere of inevitability because the killers speak with absolute confidence about their actions, while the other characters remain passive and uncertain. The certainty embedded in the modal construction contrasts sharply with the powerless responses of George and Nick, thereby reinforcing the asymmetrical power relations in the story.

From a discourse perspective, modality in “The Killers” functions beyond grammatical expression of futurity or obligation. Instead, it operates as a discourse strategy that encodes authority, intimidation, and control. Through modal choices, Hemingway allows the killers to dominate the conversational space, while the other characters are linguistically positioned as vulnerable and reactive.

3.3. Deixis

Deixis in the short story “The Killers” is crucial for situating the characters within the confined space of Henry’s lunchroom and for underscoring the immediacy of the interactions. Hemingway’s use of personal, spatial, and temporal deixis functions not merely to orient the reader but also to enhance the tension and confinement in the narrative. According to Levinson (1983), deixis establishes the relationship between language and context by locating participants, events, and spaces relative to the speaker’s perspective. In discourse, deictic expressions therefore contribute not only to reference but also to the construction of social and psychological positioning. A key example of spatial deixis occurs when the killers are introduced:

“This is a nice little town,” said one of the men. “We just stopped here on our way.”

The deictic expressions “this” and “here” position the town of the killers’ immediate spatial perspective. Rather than describing the town as a familiar or meaningful place, the deixis frames it as a temporary point of reference within their journey. As Halliday & Hasan (1976) argue, spatial deixis often reflects the speaker’s orientation toward place and social belonging. In this context, the killers’ language suggests detachment from the community because the town is treated merely as a location for carving out violence rather than as a socially significant environment. The temporary and transactional nature of their presence is reinforced by the phrase “on our way,” which implies movement and lack of attachment.

Personal deixis also contributes to the shifting dynamics between characters. Consider the killers addressing George:

“You talk too much,” Al said to George.

The pronoun “you” directly identifies George as the target of criticism and control. According to Brown & Gilman (1960), personal pronouns in interaction can reflect power relations and social hierarchy. In this exchange, the killers repeatedly employ second-person deixis in imperative and evaluative statements, while George responds defensively and briefly. This imbalance positions the killers as dominant speakers who control the discourse, which George is linguistically reduced to a reactive and subordinate role. The deixis, therefore, functions not simply as reference but as a mechanism of interpersonal control. Temporal deixis appears in the killers’ planning:

“We’re going to kill a Swede. Do you know a big Swede named Ole Andreson?”

The present progressive construction “we’re going to” signals an imminent action which has already been planned. Carter & McCarthy (2006) explain that future-oriented constructions in discourse often create a sense of immediacy because they bring anticipated events psychologically closer to the present moment. Here, the killers speak of murder as a fixed and inevitable action, which intensifies suspense within the narrative. The temporal framing compresses the distance between present conversation and future violence, thereby creating what Simpson (2004) describes as “narrative pressure” in which readers become aware of approaching danger before the characters can respond to it.

From a Grammar in Discourse perspective, deixis in the short story “The Killers” does more than indicate reference; it functions as a discursive strategy of control, othering, and temporal pressure. By manipulating spatial and temporal frames, the killers define the scene according to their own perspective, leaving the townspeople with limited discursive agency. Hemingway’s use of deixis, therefore, contributes significantly to the atmosphere of tension and confinement that characterizes the story.

3.4. Ellipsis

Ellipsis is one of the most distinctive grammatical features in Hemingway’s prose, and in the short story “The Killers”, it serves as a powerful discourse strategy. The omission of words, particularly in dialogue, creates a sense of brevity, tension, and understatement, forcing readers to infer meaning from what is left unsaid. According to Carter & McCarthy (2006), ellipsis in spoken discourse frequently functions as a marker of conversational economy, in which speakers omit predictable elements because meaning can

be recovered from context. Hemingway adopts this spoken-discourse pattern to produce realistic and compressed interaction. Consider the exchange between George and the killers:

“What do you want to eat?” George asked.
“I don’t know,” one of the men said. “What do you got?”

The expression “What do you got?” represents a colloquial spoken construction that differs from the more formally standard written form “What do you have?”. Rather than functioning as a grammatical error, the expression reflects the informal and conversational character of spoken American English. Carter & McCarthy (2006) note that spoken grammar often contains reduced or contextually economical forms that would be less common in formal written discourse. In Hemingway’s dialogue, this colloquial structure contributes to the realism of the interaction and reinforces the killers’ brusque and dismissive manner of speaking. The shortened form creates a rapid conversational rhythm, which intensifies the tense atmosphere of the diner scene. Another instance appears in Nick’s conversation with Ole Andreson:

“I can’t do anything about it,” Ole Andreson said.
“Tell me what you want me to do.”
“There isn’t anything to do.”

Here, the ellipsis is less structural than semantic, since Ole Andreson’s responses remain intentionally minimal and emotionally restrained. His refusal to elaborate suggests resignation and emotional withdrawal. As Simpson (2004) argues, minimal utterances in literary dialogue often function pragmatically to imply meaning that remains unspoken. The repetition of short, elliptical structures, therefore, conveys Ole Andreson’s acceptance of fate and reinforces the fatalistic atmosphere of the story.

From a discourse perspective, ellipsis functions in two significant ways. First, it creates economy and tension: the killers’ abbreviated speech efficiency intimidates, while Ole Anderson’s truncated responses signal despair and passivity. Second, ellipsis promotes readers’ engagement by compelling readers to infer unstated meanings and emotional subtext. This aligns with Hemingway’s “iceberg theory” in which deeper meaning resides beneath the surface of sparse language (Benson, 1990; Nagel, 1996).

Thus, ellipsis in the short story “The Killers” demonstrates how grammatical omission becomes both a stylistic and pragmatic device, shaping the rhythm of dialogue, the psychological atmosphere, and the interpretive involvement of the reader.

3.5. Voice

The use of voice, particularly the contrast between active and passive constructions, plays a subtle yet significant role in the short story “The Killers”. Hemingway’s minimalist style privileges direct, active sentences; however, when passive or agentless constructions appear, they often reflect helplessness, inevitability, or detachment from agency. According to (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) active voice foregrounds the agent performing an action, while passive construction backgrounds or suppresses agency. In discourse, this distinction can contribute to representations of power and control. An important example occurs when the killers announce their plan:

“We’re going to kill a Swede. Do you know a big Swede named Ole Andreson?”

This statement is expressed in the active voice, with the killers explicitly positioned as grammatical subjects and agents of the action (“We’re going to kill”). The construction foregrounds their authority since they present themselves as active decision-makers who control both the action and its outcome. Fairclough (1989) argues that foregrounded agency in discourse often reflects social power, since dominant speakers are linguistically represented as initiators of action rather than passive participants. In this exchange, the killers openly articulate their intention without hesitation or mitigation, which reinforces their dominance over the interaction.

The bluntness of the active construction also contributes to the threatening atmosphere of the scene; rather than concealing or softening the action, the killers directly verbalize violence, thereby controlling not only the discourse but also the emotional tone of the conversation. George and the other

townspeople, by contrast, respond briefly and cautiously, which further intensifies the asymmetry of power. In contrast, passive voice (or its implied presence through omission of agents) emerges when townspeople respond:

“He’s been here before today?”
“No, he hasn’t been here.”

Although these sentences are grammatically active, the discourse focus shifts away from the speakers themselves and centres instead on Ole Andreson as the object of inquiry. The townspeople do not direct or control the interaction; rather, they merely provide information in response to the killers’ questions. This reflects what Simpson (2004) describes as “backgrounded agency,” where characters become linguistically reactive rather than proactive. More explicitly, agentless or passive-like constructions arise in Ole Andreson’s resigned statement:

“There isn’t anything to do.”

Here, agency is erased. No grammatical subject assumes responsibility for action, and the structure presents the situation as unavoidable. Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) note that agentless constructions often create an impression of inevitability because actions appear detached from human responsibility. In the short story “The Killers”, this reinforces the existential fatalism of the story; violence is represented not as personal choice but as something that will inevitably occur.

From a Grammar in Discourse perspective, active constructions in the story are associated with authority, agency, and control, particularly in the killers’ speech. By contrast, passive or agentless constructions reflect helplessness, resignation, and lack of control among the townspeople and Ole Andreson. This contrast reinforces the asymmetrical relationships between characters and mirrors the broader existential undertones of Hemingway’s narrative style.

3.6. Synthesis of Findings from the Analysis

The analysis of Hemingway’s short story “The Killers” demonstrates that grammatical choices in the narrative are closely interconnected in shaping meaning, character relations, and atmosphere. Rather than functioning as isolated linguistic structures, grammatical features, such as tense, modality, deixis, ellipsis, and voice, work together to create the story’s tension, fatalism, and sense of psychological confinement.

The use of tense contributes significantly to the contrast between narrative detachment and conversational immediacy. The dominance of the simple past tense in narration presents events in a restrained and objective manner, while the present-oriented dialogue draws readers directly into the unfolding interaction. This contrast creates a reading experience in which the violence feels both distant and immediate at once.

Similarly, modality reinforces power relations between characters. Expressions such as “we’re going to kill a Swede” and “you don’t have to get scared” demonstrate how modal constructions communicate certainty, authority, and implicit threat. The killers consistently use confident and assertive modal forms, whereas George, Nick, and Ole Andreson respond with hesitant or limited expressions. As a result, grammar becomes a marker of dominance and vulnerability within the discourse.

Deixis further intensifies the atmosphere of confinement. Spatial references, such as “this town” and “here,” confine the narrative space, while temporal expressions create anticipation of violence that feels increasingly unavoidable. Meanwhile, readers are positioned in the same restricted environment as the characters, whose experiences heighten the claustrophobic tension of the story.

Ellipsis also plays a central role in shaping meaning. Hemingway’s abbreviated dialogue and omission of explanatory details force readers to infer emotional and psychological implications from silence and incomplete utterances. This reflects Hemingway’s “iceberg theory,” where much of the meaning remains beneath the surface of the text. The sparse grammatical style, therefore, increases reader involvement because interpretation depends on what is left unsaid as much as on what is explicitly stated.

Finally, the contrast between active and passive or agentless constructions contributes to the thematic opposition between power and helplessness. The killers frequently use active constructions that foreground their agency and control, while Ole Andreson’s speech often lacks clear agency, reflecting resignation and inevitability. In this way, grammatical structure mirrors the existential fatalism that underlies the narrative.

Taken together, these findings show that grammar in discourse functions as a meaning-making resource that shapes how readers experience the story emotionally and psychologically. The grammatical economy of Hemingway’s prose, through brevity, omission, and directness, creates an atmosphere of menace because readers constantly sense implied violence beneath the sparse dialogue. At the same time, the limited agency expressed in passive or elliptical structures contributes to a feeling of futility, as characters appear unable to escape the situation unfolding around them

To make these findings clearer and more accessible, they can be summarized in the following table:

Table 1: Summary of Findings

Feature of grammar in discourse	Function in short story “the killers”	Implication for meaning
Tense (past simple tense, present simple tense)	They serve as discourse tools that guide the reader’s experience, balancing the coldness of narration with the vividness of spoken interaction.	Contributes to the tension between detachment and immediacy, which is a hallmark of Hemingway’s style.
Modality (Possibility, Necessity, Inevitability)	Ole Anderson’s modal statements, such as “I can’t do anything about it.”	Expresses fatalism and resignation, reinforcing the atmosphere of inevitability
Deixis (Spatial, Temporal, Personal)	References to “here”, “now”, and “you” narrow the narrative scope	Create a sense of confinement, entrapment in a limited space and situation
Ellipsis (Omission of words/phrases)	Minimalist dialogue with frequent omissions	Builds tension and ambiguity, forces the reader to infer the missing meaning
Voice (Active, Passive, Agentless)	Killers use the active voice; victims often appear in passive or agentless constructions	Highlights agency distribution: killers as powerful, victims as powerless
Synthesis (interaction of features)	Features interact to construct an atmosphere of menace and futility	Highlights agency distribution: killers as powerful, victims as powerless

The table above presents the findings of the analysis of Hemingway’s short story “The Killers” through Grammar in Discourse, which reveals that grammar operates not as a static system of rules but as a dynamic resource for meaning-making within the context. Each feature is identified as tense, modality, deixis, ellipsis, and voice, which contribute to the texture of the narrative; their true significance emerges from the way they interact in discourse.

Hemingway’s minimalist prose style foregrounds this interaction. Short story “The Killers’ use of tense (past simple and present simple) does not function merely as grammatical structures but as markers of power that structure the social hierarchy within the café. Similarly, Ole Anderson’s modal expressions (“I can’t do anything about it”) highlight not simply possibility or necessity but a broader existential resignation. This indicates how grammar is shaped by, and simultaneously shapes, the pragmatic conditions of interaction.

The integration of deixis demonstrates how grammar situates characters in relation to space, time, and one another. In Hemingway’s narrative, deixis narrows the setting, producing a sense of entrapment. When combined with ellipsis, the omission of words and reliance on silences further constrain interpretive space, forcing the reader to confront the tension of what remains unsaid. Voice, finally, dramatizes the asymmetry of agency: active constructions empower the killers, while passive or agentless forms render Ole Anderson and the townspeople powerless.

Taken together, these findings illustrate the core principle of Grammar in Discourse: grammar is inseparable from meaning, context, and interaction. Hemingway’s short story “The Killers” exemplifies how grammatical choices cannot be reduced to isolated syntactic forms but must be understood in relation to social roles, narrative perspective, and communicative intent.

Moreover, the study highlights the pedagogical value of Grammar in Discourse. Analysing how grammar contributes to tension and atmosphere in literary texts demonstrates to students that grammar

is not only about correctness, but also about stylistic, pragmatic, and interpretive functions. These bridges the gap between form and meaning are as central to discourse-oriented grammar teaching.

4. Pedagogical Implications

The study highlights that grammar in discourse is not only a linguistic phenomenon but also a valuable pedagogical resource. This aligns with research emphasizing the importance of incorporating authentic and interactionally rich materials in language teaching to enhance pragmatic awareness (Kendrick, 2022; Stivers et al., 2022; Kääntä & Haddington, 2020). By connecting grammatical analysis with meaning-making, teachers can transform grammar learning into an engaging, interpretive, and critical activity. The findings from the discourse-based grammatical analysis of Hemingway's short story "The Killers" provide significant insights for language pedagogy.

The pedagogical implication of the present study is consistent with the findings of Marlini et al. (2022), who reported that English language learners recognize the importance of grammar in spoken discourse and express a need for contextualized grammar instruction. By analysing literary texts such as Hemingway's "The Killers", students can observe how grammatical features function in authentic discourse contexts and contribute to meaning construction, characterization, and interaction.

Referring to the result of the analysis (tense, modality, deixis, ellipsis, and voice) in Hemingway's short story "The Killers" can be used for practice, asking students to identify where grammar obstructs meaning and then discuss its impact. Therefore, this analysis not only contributes to linguistics and literature but also to language pedagogy. In the teaching process, it can be used as a model for classroom activities (such as teaching grammar, reading between the lines, and so on) through grammar in discourse. It can be taught to undergraduate students majoring in English in the 4th or 5th semester, especially for those who have taken the Introduction to General Linguistics subject. It is also suitable for Stylistics or SFL classes. Several implications can be drawn as follows:

4.1. Integrating Grammar with Context

The analysis demonstrates that grammatical features such as tense, modality, deixis, ellipsis, and voice derive their full meaning only when used in discourse. In classroom teaching, this suggests that grammar should not be presented as a set of isolated rules but rather as resources that serve within authentic texts. Teachers can design activities for students to enlarge how tense, modality, or deixis shape meaning in real communicative contexts.

4.2. Encouraging Critical Reading through Grammar

The study demonstrates that grammar in the short story "The Killers" encodes power, agency, and fatalism through specific discourse patterns identified in the analysis. For example, the killers' repeated use of active constructions and assertive modal expressions, such as "*We're going to kill a Swede*" and "*We'll wait for him here,*" foregrounds their authority and control over the situation. In contrast, Ole Andreson's agentless and minimal responses, particularly "*There isn't anything to do,*" reflect resignation and lack of agency. Similarly, Hemingway's frequent use of ellipses and truncated dialogue, such as "*What do you got?*" or "*I don't know,*" creates tension by leaving meanings partially unstated and forcing readers to infer emotional implications from silence and brevity.

These findings can be applied pedagogically by guiding students toward critical reading of Hemingway's short story "The Killers". Teachers may encourage students to ask questions such as: *How does active voice reveal who holds power? How does ellipsis contribute to suspense and emotional restraint?* Through such discourse-oriented analysis, grammar instruction moves beyond sentence-level correctness and becomes a tool for interpretive reading and critical thinking. Students are encouraged not only to identify grammatical

structures but also to examine how those structures shape meaning, characterization, and reader response within literary discourse.

4.3. Promoting Stylistic Awareness

Hemingway's minimalist style, conveyed through ellipsis and silence, illustrates how grammar choices shape literary style. Teachers can encourage students to notice stylistic effects of grammar and even experiment with producing similar effects in their writing. This fosters stylistic sensitivity alongside grammatical competence.

4.4. Bridging Literature and Language Teaching

Using literary texts, such as Hemingway's short story "The Killers," highlights the value of grammar-in-discourse analysis in literature classrooms. Teachers of both linguistics and literature can show students how grammar underpins theme, character, and atmosphere. This interdisciplinary approach enriches students' understanding of both language and literature.

4.5. Application in Classroom Practice

The use of short stories in English language teaching (ELT) classrooms is an effective strategy for enhancing grammar learning. The rich context within short stories provides students with meaningful opportunities to engage with authentic language and develop their grammatical competence (Sedubun & Nurhayati, 2024). However, the successful use of stories in English teaching also depends on effective teaching strategies and teacher competence. Teachers need to choose stories that are linguistically and culturally appropriate for their students (Satriani, 2019).

The steps that can be applied in practical teaching activities might include: (1) Discourse-based grammar tasks: Students identify deixis in dialogues and discuss how it limits perspective, (2) Role-play and rewriting: Students rewrite parts of dialogue with different modality (such as 'might' changed into 'must') or voice ('active voice' changed into 'passive voice') to see how meaning changes, and (3) Close reading with grammar focus: Students analyse how omissions or silences contribute to tension and students ask to take note what kinds of tenses used in every line, then discussed the effects of detached narration and immediacy.

5. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that grammatical features in Ernest Hemingway's short story "The Killers" provide important discourse strategies that shape narrative meaning, character relations, and reader experience. The analysis revealed that the use of the simple past tense in narration creates a detached and objective narrative tone, while present-oriented dialogue contributes to immediacy and conversational tension. Modal expressions such as "*We're going to kill a Swede*" and "*We'll wait for him here*" reinforce the killers' authority and create a sense of inevitability, whereas Ole Andreson's response, "*There isn't anything to do,*" reflects resignation and helplessness through agentless structure and limited modality.

The study also showed that deixis, particularly spatial expressions such as "this town" and "here," contributes to the atmosphere of confinement and psychological pressure. In addition, Hemingway's frequent use of ellipses and abbreviated dialogue, such as "What do you got?" and "I don't know," creates tension by leaving meanings partially unstated and requiring readers to infer emotional implications from silence and brevity. The contrast between the active constructions used by the killers and the townspeople's passive or reactive speech further reinforces the asymmetrical power relations in the story.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that grammar in discourse operates not only as a formal linguistic system but as a meaning-making resource embedded in context. Hemingway's minimalist style relies on grammatical economy, omission, and directness to create suspense, fatalism, and emotional restraint. Through these discourse patterns, the story

conveys violence and psychological tension not only through plot but also through its linguistic structure.

From a pedagogical perspective, the study suggests that grammar teaching should move beyond isolated rules and decontextualized exercises toward discourse-based approaches. Literary texts such as Hemingway's short story "The Killers" provide valuable opportunities for students to examine how grammatical choices shape characterization, tension, and reader interpretation. Integrating grammar and discourse analysis into language teaching can therefore foster grammatical awareness, critical reading, and stylistic sensitivity simultaneously.

In conclusion, applying grammar in discourse to literary analysis helps bridge the gap between linguistic structure and interpretive meaning. By examining how grammar functions within authentic literary discourse, learners and readers gain a deeper understanding of how language constructs human interaction, narrative tension, and thematic complexity

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The Effect of Gemini AI-enhanced E-portfolios on Students' Speaking Performance: A Quantitative Analysis in ESP Context

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Abstract - This study investigates the quantitative impact of Gemini AI-enhanced e-portfolio assessment on English speaking performance among ESP students in a vocational education context. Despite the growing integration of artificial intelligence in language education, empirical evidence examining the effectiveness of multimodal AI systems on speaking skill development remains limited, particularly within ESP contexts where students require targeted professional language competencies. Using a one-group pretest-posttest design, 30 second-semester International Business Management students at Politeknik Negeri Bali participated in a 14-week intervention utilizing Gemini AI-integrated e-portfolio assessment. Speaking performance was measured through comprehensive assessments based on the Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency (CAF) framework, incorporating formal business presentations and structured role-play negotiation scenarios representative of authentic professional discourse demands. Results from paired samples t-test analysis revealed statistically significant improvements following the intervention ($t(29) = 15.847, p < 0.001, \text{Cohen's } d = 2.89$), with mean speaking scores increasing substantially from 62.45 (SD = 8.23) to 78.67 (SD = 6.45). Component-level analysis demonstrated differential yet consistently strong effects across all CAF dimensions: fluency ($d = 2.52$), complexity ($d = 2.27$), and accuracy ($d = 1.87$). The very large effect sizes indicate substantial practical significance, exceeding effect sizes reported in previous technology-enhanced speaking interventions by factors of four to eight. These findings contribute critical empirical evidence supporting AI integration in vocational language education and suggest that Gemini AI-enhanced e-portfolio assessment represents a paradigm shift in ESP pedagogy, with important implications for curriculum redesign and institutional technology adoption decisions in professional preparation programs.

Keywords: CAF framework, E-portfolio assessment, English for Specific Purposes, Gemini AI, speaking performance, vocational education

1. Introduction

The integration of Artificial Intelligence in language education has emerged as a transformative approach to enhance learning outcomes, particularly in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) contexts where students require targeted language skills for professional domains (Imran & Almusharraf, 2024; Rane et al., 2024). Contemporary language learning environments increasingly demand personalized, adaptive assessment methods that can provide immediate feedback and continuous support for skill development (Gozali et al., 2024; Yu & Liu, 2021). The advancement of multimodal AI systems, particularly Google's Gemini AI, presents unprecedented opportunities for addressing these pedagogical challenges while supporting diverse learning needs in vocational education settings (Lee et al., 2023; Saeidnia, 2023).

Speaking performance remains a critical competency in ESP curricula, yet traditional assessment approaches often fail to provide the individualized feedback and continuous practice opportunities necessary for effective skill development (Alrasheedi, 2020; Kusuma et al., 2022; Santosa et al., 2024; Zrekat & Al-Sohbani, 2022). Research consistently demonstrates that students face multiple barriers to developing oral proficiency, including limited practice opportunities, anxiety in formal assessment contexts, and insufficient personalized feedback on their performance (Chantaraphat & Jaturapitakkul, 2023; Chaisiri, 2023). These challenges are particularly pronounced in vocational settings where students must develop both general communicative competence and domain-specific professional discourse skills simultaneously (Diyab, 2023; El-Gawad, 2022). Specifically, Alrasheedi (2020) established that fluency development in EFL contexts requires extended periods of authentic interaction, implying that conventional time-constrained classroom instruction is structurally insufficient for meaningful oral fluency gains. Corroborating this view, Zrekat and Al-Sohbani (2022) documented that Arab EFL learners perceive insurmountable barriers to fluency development attributable to restricted exposure to authentic communicative environments. Even structured peer-assisted approaches have yielded modest results: Chantaraphat and Jaturapitakkul (2023) reported limited complexity gains ($d = 0.43$) through peer tutoring with Thai undergraduate students, suggesting that human-mediated interactions alone provide insufficient linguistic scaffolding for meaningful syntactic development within ESP instructional timeframes.

The Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency (CAF) framework has been established as a robust theoretical foundation for measuring speaking performance across diverse linguistic contexts (Housen et al., 2012; Ogawa, 2022). Recent longitudinal studies have confirmed the framework's effectiveness in capturing developmental patterns in L2 speaking, with complexity referring to syntactic and lexical sophistication, accuracy encompassing grammatical and phonological correctness, and fluency measuring temporal aspects of speech production (Jabbari & Peterson, 2023; Kusuma & Waluyo, 2023). However, a critical constraint consistently documented in CAF-based speaking research is the trade-off effect between components, wherein measurable progress in one dimension (particularly fluency) may coincide with temporary regression in accuracy or complexity as learners redistribute their attentional resources under cognitive load (Housen et al., 2012). This trade-off phenomenon represents a fundamental developmental limitation that restricts the potential for simultaneous multi-dimensional improvement within compressed instructional timeframes. Furthermore, traditional implementation of CAF-based assessment often requires extensive human resources and may lack the consistency and immediacy needed for effective formative assessment practices (Shahzad et al., 2024; Milne-Ives et al., 2022).

The emergence of advanced AI systems with multimodal capabilities presents novel opportunities for transforming speaking assessment in ESP contexts. Gemini AI's ability to process audio, video, and text inputs simultaneously enables comprehensive analysis of speaking performance across multiple dimensions while providing immediate, detailed feedback to learners (Carlà et al., 2024; Kotmungkun et al., 2024; Kusuma et al., 2024; Suardewa et al., 2024; Yuliantini et al., 2024). Furthermore, the integration of AI assessment with e-portfolio platforms creates opportunities for longitudinal tracking of student progress and self-directed learning, addressing key limitations of traditional assessment approaches (Bolliger & Shepherd, 2010; Klenowski et al., 2006). However, existing empirical evidence from technology-enhanced speaking and assessment interventions reveals considerable variation in outcome effectiveness. Kusuma and Waluyo (2023) reported moderate improvements ($d = 0.67$) through traditional e-portfolio implementation in online speaking courses, while Jabbari and Peterson (2023) demonstrated larger but still bounded effects ($d = 1.2$) through massively multiplayer online gaming-based interventions. Automated feedback systems have similarly demonstrated constrained performance on key CAF dimensions: Gozali et al. (2024) found that automated writing evaluation (AWE) tools

produced only limited impact on learner accuracy development ($d = 0.52$), and Hill et al. (2021) argued that the emotional and relational dimensions of human feedback remain irreplaceable in fostering authentic engagement with corrective information. At the macro-level, Diyyab's (2023) meta-analysis of traditional speaking interventions in professional preparation contexts documented average effect sizes ranging from $d = 0.34$ to $d = 0.78$, establishing a performance benchmark against which emerging technology-enhanced approaches must be critically evaluated. Collectively, these quantitative benchmarks reveal a persistent ceiling effect in conventional and first-generation technology-enhanced speaking interventions, underscoring the need for next-generation AI solutions capable of producing more substantial and simultaneous gains across all CAF dimensions.

Among the AI tools currently available for language education, Gemini AI presents distinctive advantages that position it as particularly well-suited for speaking assessment in ESP contexts. While tools such as OpenAI's ChatGPT have demonstrated considerable potential in text-based language tasks, their native architecture remains primarily text-oriented, limiting their capacity for direct audio-visual processing of speaking performances (Kotmungkun et al., 2024; Rane et al., 2024). By contrast, Gemini AI was developed from the outset as a natively multimodal system capable of processing audio, video, PDF documents, and text inputs concurrently within a unified model architecture, enabling it to analyze spoken language in its full communicative complexity rather than through text transcription proxies (Ali et al., 2023; Badshah et al., 2023; Imran & Almusharraf, 2024; Saeidnia, 2023). Comparative studies further reveal differential strengths that favor Gemini in language learning contexts: while ChatGPT demonstrates advantages in referential and deep cohesion beneficial for advanced academic writing tasks, Gemini excels in narrativity, syntactic simplicity, and word concretization, which are dimensions particularly aligned with the communicative and oral fluency development objectives of ESP instruction across varied learner proficiency levels (Kotmungkun et al., 2024; Rane et al., 2024; Imran & Almusharraf, 2024). Additionally, from an academic integrity standpoint, Gemini-generated content exhibits substantially lower plagiarism rates (6.53%) compared to ChatGPT (19.87%), an important consideration in assessment contexts where AI-generated feedback must be ethically and authentically integrated into student learning portfolios (Kotmungkun et al., 2024). Collectively, these capabilities represent a qualitative advancement over first-generation AI writing tools and text-based chatbots, providing the theoretical and practical rationale for selecting Gemini AI as the intervention tool in this study.

This study addresses the significant gap in quantitative research examining the effects of Gemini AI-enhanced e-portfolio assessment on ESP students' speaking performance development over time. While existing literature has explored AI applications in language learning broadly, few studies have specifically investigated the quantitative impact of integrated AI and e-portfolio systems on speaking skill development within single cohorts of vocational education students (Nyaaba, 2024; Hill et al., 2021). Critically, no prior study has examined whether multimodal AI-integrated assessment can overcome the established CAF trade-off effect (Housen et al., 2012) or produce gains substantially exceeding the $d = 0.34$ – 0.78 range documented in conventional approaches (Diyyab, 2023) and the $d = 0.67$ reported for traditional e-portfolio interventions (Kusuma & Waluyo, 2023). The research aims to provide empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of Gemini AI-enhanced e-portfolio assessment in producing measurable speaking improvement, contributing to the growing body of knowledge on technology-enhanced language learning in professional preparation programs.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a one-group pretest-posttest design to investigate the quantitative effects of Gemini AI-enhanced e-portfolio assessment on students' speaking performance development. The research design was selected to enable measurement of within-subject changes in speaking ability following systematic exposure to AI-integrated assessment tools while accommodating the practical constraints of classroom-based research in vocational education settings. The intervention involved the systematic integration of Gemini AI-powered feedback and assessment tools within an e-portfolio framework implemented over a 14-week period, allowing for comprehensive examination of speaking development patterns within a single cohort of ESP learners.

2.2 Research Population and Sampling

The study population consisted of 180 second-semester students enrolled across six classes in the International Business Management program at Politeknik Negeri Bali, all of whom were taking the mandatory English for Business course. Participants were selected using cluster random sampling methodology, where each of the six intact classes served as a cluster unit. A lottery system was employed to randomly select one class from the six available clusters, ensuring equal probability of selection for each class and maintaining the integrity of natural classroom groupings. The selected cluster contained 30 students who all participated in the complete intervention, eliminating potential selection bias while preserving the ecological validity of classroom-based research (El-Gawad, 2022; Topping, 2021).

The cluster sampling approach was chosen to address practical constraints of classroom-based research while maintaining methodological rigor and reducing contamination effects that might occur with individual random assignment across classes. The sample size of 30 students exceeded the minimum requirement determined through power analysis ($\alpha = 0.05$, $\beta = 0.80$, effect size = 0.8) for detecting meaningful within-subject changes in speaking performance, ensuring adequate statistical power for paired samples t-test analysis. Prior to the lottery selection, homogeneity analysis across all six classes confirmed comparable demographic characteristics, baseline English proficiency levels, and prior academic performance, validating the representativeness of the selected cluster.

Participant characteristics were carefully documented to ensure sample representativeness and enable appropriate interpretation of findings. The randomly selected class comprised 18 female and 12 male students (ages 18-20, $M = 19.2$), reflecting typical gender distribution across the program. All participants had completed similar secondary education programs and demonstrated equivalent baseline English proficiency levels based on institutional placement assessments administered at program entry. Digital literacy assessments confirmed comparable familiarity with technology platforms across participants, ensuring that observed changes could be attributed to the specific AI-enhanced e-portfolio intervention rather than differential technology acceptance or prior digital experience.

2.3 Instruments

This study employed two main instruments: (1) a CAF-based speaking performance assessment rubric adapted for ESP business contexts, and (2) a Gemini AI-integrated e-portfolio platform configured to deliver automated multimodal feedback on student speaking performances. Speaking performance was measured using a comprehensive instrument based on the established CAF (Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency) framework, specifically adapted for ESP business contexts (Housen et al., 2012; Ogawa, 2022). The assessment protocol included two primary speaking tasks: a formal business presentation (5-7 minutes) and a structured role-play negotiation scenario (8-10 minutes), both designed to elicit authentic professional discourse representative of international business communication demands. Complexity was operationalized through measures of syntactic sophistication (subordinate clauses per T-unit) and lexical diversity (Type-Token Ratio), accuracy through error-free clause ratios and pronunciation accuracy scores, and fluency through speech rate, pause frequency, and hesitation markers (Jabbari & Peterson, 2023; Kusuma & Waluyo, 2023).

Gemini AI Integration and Rationale

The Gemini AI system selected for this study is Google DeepMind's multimodal large language model, distinguished by its native ability to process and generate content across text, audio, image, video, and PDF document modalities within an integrated architecture (Ali et al., 2023; Badshah et al., 2023; Imran & Almusharraf, 2024; Saeidnia, 2023). Gemini operates through three variants: Nano for mobile device deployment, Pro for balanced efficiency in institutional settings, and Ultra for maximum analytical capabilities (Team et al., 2023). The Pro variant was employed in this study for its optimal balance of analytical depth and computational accessibility within the Indonesian vocational higher education context. Unlike text-based AI tools such as ChatGPT, which analyze spoken language indirectly through textual transcriptions, Gemini processes audio and video recordings directly, enabling real-time analysis of phonological accuracy, speech rate, pause patterns, and lexical choices as they occur in authentic speaking performances (Rane et al., 2024; Kotmungkun et al., 2024). Research specifically highlights Gemini's demonstrated effectiveness in narrativity, syntactic simplicity, and word concretization, which are dimensions precisely aligned with the CAF speaking development objectives of this study, particularly in supporting complexity and fluency improvement across varied learner proficiency levels

(Kotmungkun et al., 2024). The platform further excels in delivering personalized, contextual learning feedback by analyzing student responses and providing explanations through visualized concepts and contextual examples (Carlà et al., 2024; Saeidnia, 2023). These technical features make Gemini substantially more capable than first-generation automated writing evaluation tools for addressing the multidimensional demands of speaking assessment in ESP contexts.

For this study, Gemini AI was integrated into a custom e-portfolio platform through its API and configured to analyze student video-recorded speaking submissions across three operational modes. First, in Pronunciation and Accuracy Analysis, Gemini identified phonological errors, grammatical deviations, and mispronunciations from the audio stream and generated corrective feedback with targeted examples personalized to each learner's error profile. Second, in Fluency and Temporal Analysis, speech rate, mean length of run, pause frequency, and hesitation markers were automatically calculated from the audio track and compared against established business communication fluency benchmarks. Third, in Complexity and Vocabulary Analysis, lexical diversity (Type-Token Ratio) and syntactic complexity (subordinate clauses per T-unit) were derived from Gemini's high-accuracy speech transcription of each recorded performance.

Gemini AI was selected over alternative AI tools on four primary grounds. First, its native multimodal architecture eliminates the transcription error introduced by text-only systems, enabling more precise and holistic analysis of spoken performance across all three CAF dimensions simultaneously. Second, its demonstrated strengths in narrativity, syntactic simplicity, and word concretization align with the specific linguistic development objectives of the English for Business course, where communicative clarity, appropriate professional register, and lexical precision are paramount competencies (Kotmungkun et al., 2024). Third, its context-awareness enables AI-generated feedback to be calibrated to the ESP business communication register, producing guidance that is linguistically appropriate and professionally relevant for International Business Management students preparing for international business careers. Fourth, from an academic integrity perspective, Gemini's substantially lower content plagiarism rate (6.53%) compared to ChatGPT (19.87%) makes it more suitable for integration into e-portfolio assessment contexts where the authenticity and originality of student work must be carefully maintained (Kotmungkun et al., 2024). Its accessibility through Google Workspace, already institutionally deployed at Politeknik Negeri Bali, further minimized the digital onboarding burden for participants, ensuring that prior technology familiarity did not confound the observed speaking performance outcomes. AI-generated feedback included pronunciation guidance, grammatical error identification, vocabulary enhancement suggestions, and fluency development recommendations, delivered through both text and audio modalities to accommodate diverse learning preferences.

2.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis was conducted using SPSS 27.0 with a systematic approach to ensure statistical assumptions were met and results could be interpreted with confidence. Preliminary analyses included descriptive statistics calculation, normality testing using Shapiro-Wilk tests for the difference scores, and examination of outliers to verify paired samples t-test assumptions. The primary statistical analysis employed paired samples t-test to examine pre-post intervention changes in speaking performance, providing direct measurement of improvement attributable to the Gemini AI-enhanced e-portfolio intervention.

Effect sizes were calculated using Cohen's *d* to quantify practical significance beyond statistical significance, with interpretation following Cohen's conventions (small = 0.2, medium = 0.5, large = 0.8) to enable meaningful evaluation of intervention effectiveness (Ibrahim & Basim, 2024; Yahya, 2019). Additional analyses included separate paired t-tests for individual CAF components (complexity, accuracy, fluency) to examine differential improvement patterns across speaking dimensions, providing comprehensive understanding of intervention effects on multiple performance aspects.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Result

Descriptive Statistics

Analysis of speaking performance data revealed substantial improvement following the Gemini AI-enhanced e-portfolio intervention. Participants demonstrated marked improvement from pretest (M = 62.45, SD = 8.23) to posttest (M = 78.67, SD = 6.45), representing a mean gain of 16.22 points on the 100-point CAF scale. The reduction in standard deviation from pre-test to post-test suggests not only overall improvement but also greater consistency in performance levels across participants, indicating that the AI-enhanced intervention benefited students across different initial ability levels. Furthermore, the result of paired samples t-test can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. Paired Samples T-Test for Overall Speaking Performance

Measure	Pretest M(SD)	Posttest M(SD)	Mean Difference	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Cohe n's d
Speaking Performance	62.45(8.23)	78.67(6.45)	16.22	15.8 47	29	0.000	2.89

The paired samples t-test revealed a statistically significant improvement in speaking performance following the Gemini AI-enhanced e-portfolio intervention ($t(29) = 15.847, p < 0.001$). The very large effect size (Cohen's $d = 2.89$) indicates that the intervention produced substantial practical improvements that far exceed conventional thresholds for educational significance.

CAF Component Analysis

Table 2. Paired Samples T-Tests for Individual CAF Components

CAF Component	Pretest M(SD)	Posttest M(SD)	Mean Difference	t	df	Sig.	Cohen's d
Complexity	18.23(3.45)	23.89(2.78)	5.66	12.456	29	0.000	2.27
Accuracy	21.67(4.12)	26.34(3.22)	4.67	10.234	29	0.000	1.87
Fluency	22.55(3.67)	28.44(2.98)	5.89	13.789	29	0.000	2.52

Analysis of individual CAF components revealed significant improvements across all dimensions, with fluency showing the largest effect size ($d = 2.52$), followed by complexity ($d = 2.27$) and accuracy ($d = 1.87$). These findings suggest that the Gemini AI-enhanced e-portfolio intervention was particularly effective in promoting temporal aspects of speech production while also producing substantial improvements in syntactic sophistication and grammatical accuracy.

3.2 Discussion

The quantitative findings of this study provide compelling evidence that challenges and extends existing research paradigms in AI-enhanced language learning. The very large overall effect size (Cohen's $d = 2.89$) obtained in this study substantially exceeds effect sizes reported in previous technology-enhanced speaking interventions, positioning Gemini AI-enhanced e-portfolio assessment as a breakthrough approach in ESP education. While Kusuma and Waluyo (2023) reported moderate improvements ($d = 0.67$) using traditional e-portfolios in online speaking courses, and Jabbari and Peterson (2023) found large effects ($d = 1.2$) through gaming-based interventions, our findings demonstrate that integrated AI and e-portfolio systems produce effect sizes more than twice as large as these previous studies, suggesting a qualitative leap in intervention effectiveness rather than merely incremental improvement.

The differential effects across CAF dimensions revealed in this study directly contradict assumptions prevalent in traditional speaking pedagogy while aligning with emerging AI-enhanced learning theories. The exceptionally strong fluency effect ($d = 2.52$) challenges Alrasheedi's (2020) finding that fluency development requires extended authentic interaction periods, instead demonstrating that AI-powered immediate feedback can accelerate fluency gains within compressed timeframes. This

finding further disputes Zrekat and Al-Sohbani's (2022) assertion that EFL learners face insurmountable barriers to fluency development, as our study achieved unprecedented fluency improvements even within a single semester. Furthermore, our complexity gains ($d = 2.27$) significantly exceed the modest improvements ($d = 0.43$) reported by Chantaraphat and Jaturapitakkul (2023) using peer tutoring approaches, demonstrating that AI-enhanced feedback provides more sophisticated linguistic scaffolding than human peer interactions. These outcomes may be further understood in light of the specific characteristics of the participants and course context. As second-semester vocational students in the International Business Management program, participants were enrolled in a mandatory English for Business course that foregrounded professional oral communication, including formal business presentations and negotiation role-plays, as core learning objectives. This professional orientation likely heightened participants' motivation to develop fluency and syntactic complexity, as these dimensions are most salient in the business discourse contexts they are being professionally prepared for. Critically, Gemini AI's capacity to provide immediate, detailed temporal feedback, analyzing speech rate, pause patterns, and hesitation markers directly from audio recordings, may have accelerated fluency development by enabling students to self-monitor and self-correct between practice cycles in ways unavailable in peer-mediated or instructor-only feedback environments.

Most significantly, this study's accuracy improvements ($d = 1.87$) directly challenge prevailing assumptions about the effectiveness of automated feedback systems. While Gozali et al. (2024) reported that automated writing evaluation tools showed limited impact on accuracy development ($d = 0.52$), our findings demonstrate that multimodal AI assessment can produce accuracy gains more than three times larger, fundamentally challenging the notion that automated feedback lacks the precision necessary for grammatical development. This contradicts Hill et al.'s (2021) argument that emotional aspects of human feedback are irreplaceable, as our AI-enhanced intervention achieved superior accuracy outcomes without human emotional engagement. The accuracy gains observed in this study may also be interpreted in light of the participants' linguistic profile and Gemini's specific technical capabilities. As EFL vocational learners whose primary language of instruction outside the English for Business course remains Indonesian, participants faced persistent accuracy challenges in both grammatical construction and pronunciation, challenges that traditional instructor feedback, constrained by class size and available contact hours, could not address individually and systematically. Gemini's concurrent audio-visual processing enabled it to detect and classify accuracy errors at a granularity and consistency that human raters cannot sustainably maintain across 30 students over 14 consecutive weeks, providing each learner with personalized, replicable corrective feedback on every recorded performance. This systematic, high-frequency accuracy feedback loop, embedded within the e-portfolio's reflective structure, likely explains why accuracy gains in this study substantially exceeded those reported for AWE tools applied in writing contexts.

The magnitude of improvement observed in this study also calls into question the effectiveness of conventional ESP assessment approaches widely employed in vocational education. Diyyab's (2023) meta-analysis of traditional speaking interventions in professional contexts reported average effect sizes ranging from $d = 0.34$ to $d = 0.78$, suggesting that our AI-enhanced approach produces improvements four to eight times larger than conventional methods. This stark contrast challenges institutional investments in traditional assessment training and suggests that continued reliance on conventional approaches may constitute educational malpractice when demonstrably superior AI-enhanced alternatives are available.

However, our findings align with and extend recent theoretical frameworks emphasizing the transformative potential of multimodal AI in educational contexts. Imran and Almusharraf's (2024) theoretical analysis predicted that next-generation AI tools would produce unprecedented learning gains, and our empirical results provide the first rigorous quantitative validation of these predictions in ESP contexts. Similarly, Lee et al.'s (2023) argument for AI multimodality as a pathway to artificial general intelligence in education finds strong support in our evidence that integrated AI systems can simultaneously enhance multiple dimensions of complex skills like speaking performance.

The consistency of large effects across all CAF components in our study challenges stage-based models of L2 speaking development that suggest sequential rather than simultaneous improvement across linguistic dimensions. While Housen et al.'s (2012) CAF framework typically shows trade-off effects between components, our intervention produced substantial concurrent gains across all dimensions, suggesting that AI-enhanced assessment transcends traditional developmental constraints and enables accelerated holistic improvement patterns previously thought impossible in ESP contexts.

4. Conclusion

This quantitative analysis provides robust empirical evidence supporting the implementation of Gemini AI-enhanced e-portfolio assessment in ESP speaking instruction, with paired samples t-test results demonstrating exceptional improvements across all dimensions of speaking performance ($t(29) = 15.847$, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 2.89$). The very large effect sizes observed across CAF components, namely fluency ($d = 2.52$), complexity ($d = 2.27$), and accuracy ($d = 1.87$), indicate that AI-enhanced e-portfolio assessment represents a paradigm shift in vocational language education, producing improvements four to eight times larger than those typically reported by conventional ESP methods and substantially exceeding the moderate gains associated with traditional e-portfolio approaches. Notably, the simultaneous gains across all CAF dimensions directly contradict the trade-off effects predicted by the established CAF developmental framework, suggesting that multimodal AI feedback fundamentally alters the conditions under which speaking competencies are acquired. These findings contribute critical empirical evidence to the growing literature on AI applications in professional language preparation, demonstrating that integrated AI and e-portfolio systems can effectively support accelerated speaking skill development when appropriately implemented within established pedagogical frameworks.

From a pedagogical standpoint, these findings carry several concrete implications for ESP practitioners and institutional decision-makers in vocational education settings. First, ESP instructors should consider reorienting speaking assessment from summative, end-of-course evaluations toward AI-integrated formative e-portfolio cycles, wherein students receive immediate, multi-dimensional feedback on regularly submitted recorded performances. This shift enables the kind of iterative, self-directed improvement that the present study demonstrates to be highly effective for vocational learners in professional English programs. Second, the success of Gemini AI in this vocational ESP context suggests that institutions offering professional English programs, particularly in business, tourism, and hospitality, should evaluate Gemini's integration as part of their technology adoption strategies, especially given its accessibility via Google Workspace ecosystems commonly deployed in Indonesian higher education institutions. Third, curriculum designers should incorporate explicit AI feedback literacy training within ESP syllabi, equipping students with the skills to critically interpret, prioritize, and act on AI-generated feedback rather than passively receiving it, thereby transforming AI output into genuine metacognitive and linguistic growth. Finally, teacher professional development programs should address the pedagogical integration of AI assessment tools, preparing instructors to complement AI feedback with the contextual, motivational, and affective support that remains the irreplaceable domain of human teaching in EFL vocational contexts. Together, these implications position Gemini AI-enhanced e-portfolio assessment not as a replacement for expert pedagogical judgment, but as a powerful infrastructural tool that amplifies instructional reach and feedback quality in ESP professional preparation programs.

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Form, Function, and Meaning in the Use of Euphemism in the Title of Kompas Daily Newspaper

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Abstract - This study aims to analyze the forms, functions, and meanings of euphemisms used in the news headlines of Kompas online news headlines published between September and October 2024. This topic is important because euphemism is a linguistic strategy employed by the media to convey sensitive information in a more polite, subtle, and socially acceptable manner. The study applied a qualitative approach with a descriptive-semantic method. The data consisted of 15 news headlines containing euphemistic expressions, collected through document analysis, supported by note-taking techniques. The data were analyzed by classifying them based on linguistic forms, communicative functions, and semantic meanings. The findings reveal that the dominant forms of euphemism are loanwords and borrowed terms, followed by metaphors and periphrasis. Functionally, euphemisms are used to soften expressions, maintain politeness, conceal sensitive meanings, and support diplomatic strategies in news reporting. In terms of meaning, two types of meaning were identified: conceptual meaning and associative meaning. Conceptual meaning tends to occur in loanwords, while associative meaning is more frequently found in metaphorical expressions. These findings indicate that euphemism in Kompas headlines functions not only as a linguistic feature but also as a discursive strategy to frame social reality and influence readers' perceptions. Therefore, lexical choices in mass media play a significant role in shaping public opinion in a subtle yet effective way.

Keywords: euphemism, form, function, Kompas daily newspaper, meaning

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Language plays a central role in human communication, functioning not only as a tool for conveying information but also as a medium for constructing meaning and maintaining social relationships. The components that are bound and inseparable in human life are called language (Anitasari et al., 2023). In communicative practice, appropriate language structure is necessary to ensure clarity and mutual understanding. One linguistic strategy frequently employed to maintain social harmony is euphemism. Euphemisms are soft, polite, and pleasant expressions used to replace harsh or potentially offensive ones (Nopiah & Anuar, 2023). Their use aims to provide psychological comfort and avoid discomfort in interaction. This aligns with Bowers & Pleydell-Pearce (2011), who argue that euphemistic language is motivated by emotional regulation and communicative goals to prevent social tension. The use of euphemisms becomes particularly significant in public discourse, including mass media. Newspapers, as a form of print media, function as instruments for disseminating information and shaping public opinion (Alfiyani et al., 2020). Editorial choices in newspapers reflect ideological positioning and institutional perspectives (Dollah, 2014). In this context, euphemistic expressions may serve not only as politeness strategies but also as rhetorical devices that influence readers' perceptions. Social and cultural changes in society also affect language practices, leading to shifts in meaning and the emergence of associative meanings such as connotative, stylistic, affective, reflective, and collocative meanings.

This study focuses on euphemisms in the headlines of *Kompas* newspaper. As one of the largest and most influential national newspapers in Indonesia, Kompas has played a significant role in shaping public discourse for decades. Headlines are strategically important because they represent the first element encountered by readers and function as attention-grabbing devices. The linguistic choices in headlines therefore deserve closer examination, particularly regarding how euphemisms are constructed and what meanings and functions they carry. Conceptually, euphemism is closely related to taboo and politeness. Taboo expressions are embedded within cultural and religious systems (Laksana., 2003). Montagu (2003) classifies swearing taboos into six types: swearing, blasphemy, cursing, swearing (oath), obscenity, and exclaiming. In semantic studies, meaning is understood as the relationship between linguistic signs and what they signify (Chaer, 2013). Euphemism operates primarily within associative meaning particularly connotative, stylistic, and affective meaning (Leech, 1981). Euphemism is not only a politeness strategy but also a discursive tool used to shape public perception and ideological positioning in media discourse (Allan, 2019; Crespo-Fernández, 2017).

Recent studies have increasingly viewed euphemism as a discourse strategy rather than merely a lexical phenomenon. In media communication, euphemistic expressions are frequently employed to frame sensitive social, political, and economic issues in ways that reduce conflict, manage audience reactions, and influence public interpretation. As a result, euphemism functions not only as a politeness device but also as a mechanism for constructing social reality through strategic lexical choices (Crespo-Fernández, 2018; Mironina, 2024). Furthermore, news headlines are particularly significant because they represent the first point of contact between media institutions and readers and therefore contribute substantially to the construction of newsworthiness and audience perception (Bednarek, M., & Caple, 2017).

In contemporary semantic-pragmatic studies, euphemism is understood as a strategic linguistic choice used to mitigate face-threatening or socially sensitive content (Allan, K., & Burridge, 2006). In contrast, dysphemism involves negatively loaded or emotionally charged expressions that convey contempt, anger, or evaluative hostility. Dysphemistic expressions function as linguistic tools to intensify negative evaluation and may serve ideological or rhetorical purposes in discourse (Allan, K., & Burridge, 1991, 2006). Dysphemistic language may appear in words, phrases, clauses, or sentences with impolite connotations (Ayu et al., 2021; Kurniawati, 2011; Laili, 2013; Syahid, A., & Saifullah, 2019). Previous studies have examined euphemisms in various media contexts. Marsuja (2020) analyzed euphemisms in the editorials of *Riau Pos*, identifying forms such as abbreviations, foreign terms, metaphors, and periphrasis. (Oktaviani et al., 2024). Investigated euphemisms in the speeches of presidential candidates broadcast on YouTube Kompas TV and found dominant forms including foreign terms and abbreviations. Lestari & Asnawi (2022), examined euphemisms in crime news editorials and identified semantic patterns in metaphorical usage.

Despite the growing body of research on euphemism in political discourse and media communication, most studies have focused primarily on identifying euphemistic forms. Comparatively

fewer studies have examined the relationship between euphemistic forms, communicative functions, and semantic meanings within news headline discourse. Consequently, a more integrated analysis is needed to explain how euphemistic expressions operate simultaneously at lexical, semantic, pragmatic, and discourse levels (Crespo-Fernández, 2018; Mironina, 2024).

This limitation creates a gap in understanding how euphemisms operate not only as linguistic forms but also as strategic tools for shaping meaning and influencing readers' interpretation in media headlines. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate how euphemisms in *Kompas* headlines, as follows:

1. What linguistic forms of euphemism are used in the news headlines of *Kompas* newspaper published in September–October 2024?
2. What pragmatic and communicative functions do the euphemistic expressions perform in the *Kompas* news headlines?
3. How are the semantic meanings of euphemistic expressions, particularly conceptual and associative meanings, realized within the socio-political context of *Kompas* news headlines?

1.2 Theoretical Framework

1.2.1 Loanword

Loanwords are lexical items borrowed from one language into another and adapted to the phonological, morphological, or semantic system of the recipient language. Wang (2023), states that loanwords undergo linguistic transformation during borrowing, while Jiyoun (2025), explains them as products of language contact and social diffusion. Sujin (2025), emphasizes their semantic and phonological nativization, and Hormigo (2022), highlights grammatical adaptation. Lexical Borrowing Theory argues that borrowing occurs because of globalization, bilingualism, migration, media, and technology. Loanwords are commonly classified into phonological, morphological, and semantic loanwords (Jiyoun, 2025; Wang, 2023).

1.2.2 Absorption Form

Absorption form refers to foreign lexical items that are absorbed into a recipient language through phonological, morphological, orthographic, or semantic adaptation until they become naturalized in everyday communication. Based on Language Contact Theory, Einar Haugen explains that linguistic borrowing occurs when languages interact intensively, resulting in lexical transfer and structural adjustment, while Sarah Thomason and Terrence Kaufman emphasize that borrowed forms gradually integrate into the linguistic system of the receiving language through phonological adaptation, spelling adjustment, and semantic integration. Recent studies also classify absorption forms into several divisions: phonological absorption, morphological absorption, orthographic absorption, and semantic absorption. The Indonesian words such as *telepon*, *komputer*, *demokrasi*, *sistem*, dan *birokrasi* are derived and adjusted from non-Indonesian words 'telephone' (English), 'system' (Greece/English), 'quality' (Latin/English), and 'bureaucracy' (French) (Haugen, 2022; Thomason, S., & Kaufman, 2021).

1.2.3 Metaphorical Expression

Metaphorical expression in euphemism refers to the use of figurative or symbolic language to replace direct, harsh, or socially sensitive expressions with more indirect and acceptable meanings. Within euphemism studies, metaphorical expressions function to soften taboo topics such as death, illness, sexuality, or social conflict through conceptual substitution and semantic reinterpretation. According to Eliecer Crespo-Fernández (2021), euphemistic metaphors operate through conceptual mapping in which unpleasant realities are reframed into less threatening images. Similarly, Miriam A. Locher (2022), explains that metaphorical euphemisms are shaped by sociocultural norms and politeness strategies in discourse. Based on recent cognitive-semantic theory, metaphorical expressions in euphemism can be divided into: (1) conceptual metaphors, which reinterpret abstract or taboo concepts symbolically; (2) indirect metaphors, which obscure explicit meaning through figurative substitution; and (3) cultural metaphors, which rely on shared social beliefs and values. Expressions such as *passed away* for death or *senior citizen* for old person demonstrate how metaphorical euphemisms mitigate social discomfort and maintain politeness in communication.

1.2.4 Periphrasis

Periphrasis refers to the use of a longer, indirect, and more elaborate expression to replace a direct or potentially harsh term, particularly in euphemistic communication (Allan, K., & Burridge, 2023a). In euphemism studies, periphrasis functions as a politeness strategy that minimizes social discomfort and softens taboo or sensitive meanings through lexical expansion (Locher, 2022). According to Allan, K., & Burridge (2023), periphrastic euphemisms are commonly used to obscure unpleasant realities by substituting explicit expressions with indirect descriptive phrases, such as *berkebutuhan khusus* (inclusion/disable) instead of *cacat* (or handicapped), *beristirahat untuk selamanya* (rest in peace) instead of *meninggal dunia* (dead). Recent pragmatic and semantic theories classify periphrasis into several divisions: (1) descriptive periphrasis, which explains a concept indirectly through descriptive wording; (2) honorific periphrasis, used to show politeness or respect; and (3) mitigative periphrasis, aimed at reducing emotional or social offensiveness (Crespo-Fernández, 2021b; Fernández, 2024). These forms demonstrate how periphrasis serves both linguistic politeness and social harmony by avoiding direct confrontation with sensitive realities.

1.2.5 Lexical Substitution

Lexical substitution refers to the replacement of direct, harsh, taboo, or offensive words with softer and socially acceptable lexical alternatives in communication. Within Euphemism Theory, Keith Allan and Kate Burridge explain that euphemism functions as a linguistic strategy to shield speakers and listeners from expressions considered unpleasant, impolite, or socially sensitive (Allan, K., & Burridge, 2023b). In this framework, lexical substitution becomes one of the most common euphemistic mechanisms because it substitutes explicit lexical items with more neutral or refined vocabulary. Recent pragmatic studies classify lexical substitution into several forms, including semantic softening, institutional substitution, and socially mitigative substitution. Examples in Indonesian include *tunawisma* (homeless individuals) replacing *gelandangan* (vagrants), *narapidana* (inmates) replacing *penjahat* (criminals), *difabel* (persons with disabilities) replacing *cacat* (disabled persons), *warga binaan* (inmates) replacing *tahanan* (detainees), and *pekerja informal* (informal workers) replacing *buruh kasar* (unskilled laborers). These substitutions demonstrate how lexical choices are strategically employed to maintain politeness, reduce stigma, and preserve social harmony in public discourse and everyday interaction (Crespo-Fernández, 2021a; Locher, 2022).

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore euphemistic expressions as context-dependent linguistic phenomena. A qualitative approach is considered appropriate because the analysis focuses on interpreting meanings, functions, and language use within specific sociocultural and communicative contexts, rather than measuring variables or testing hypotheses. The study applies a semantic approach to examine how euphemisms in *Kompas* newspaper headlines convey meaning and function pragmatically. The analysis emphasizes in-depth interpretation of linguistic forms and their contextual meanings, aiming to reveal how euphemistic expressions are strategically used in media discourse.

2.2 Data and Data Source

The data in this research consisted of words and phrases identified as euphemistic expressions in news headlines. These linguistic units were selected based on their relevance to the research objectives, namely analyzing the form, function, and meaning of euphemisms. The data source was *Kompas* newspaper editions published in September and October 2024. Headlines were chosen because they represent condensed journalistic discourse and play a strategic role in shaping readers' interpretations. The data source of this study consists of news headlines published in *Kompas* during September and October 2024. From this corpus, a set of headlines containing euphemistic expressions was selected for analysis. The data were selected using a purposive technique, in which headlines were deliberately chosen based on specific criteria: (1) containing linguistic forms identified as euphemisms, and (2) representing socio-political or public discourse contexts. This selection approach allows the study to focus on relevant linguistic data that can provide in-depth insights into the forms, functions, and meanings of euphemistic expressions in media discourse.

The corpus initially consisted of 486 news headlines published in Kompas Daily Newspaper during September and October 2024. This period was selected because it covered several major socio-political, economic, and public issues following the Indonesian presidential election and governmental transition, which potentially generated extensive use of euphemistic language in media discourse. The headlines were screened through purposive sampling using the following criteria: (1) containing lexical items or expressions identified as euphemistic according to Allan, K., & Burridge (2006) framework; (2) representing social, political, economic, legal, or public-interest issues; and (3) occurring as headline expressions rather than body-text elements. After the screening process, 15 headlines were identified as meeting all criteria and were selected for in-depth analysis. To ensure analytical reliability, the classification of euphemistic forms, functions, and meanings was reviewed independently by two linguistics scholars specializing in semantics and discourse analysis. Disagreements were discussed until consensus was reached.

2.3 Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected using the observation method. This method includes listening technic where data were obtained by observing language use (Sudaryanto., 2015). The basic technique used was the tapping technique, in which the researcher systematically identified and extracted relevant linguistic data from the selected headlines. Apart from listening technic, the non-participant observation was implemented in which the researcher did not engage in the production of discourse but examined the data objectively as it appeared in the headlines. In addition, recording technique which involved systematically documenting euphemistic expressions identified in the headlines for further analysis was also used. All identified euphemistic forms were recorded, classified, and organized according to analytical categories. All identified euphemistic forms were then recorded, categorized, and organized according to the analytical framework.

2.4 Data Analysis

The data were analysed using content analysis techniques. Content analysis was applied to systematically categorize euphemistic expressions based on:

1. their linguistic forms (e.g., abbreviations, foreign terms, metaphors, periphrasis),
2. their communicative functions (e.g., softening speech, diplomacy, secrecy), and
3. their semantic meanings (conceptual and associative meanings).

The analysis was conducted in several stages:

1. Identifying euphemistic expressions in the selected headlines.
2. Classifying the expressions according to form.
3. Interpreting their communicative function based on contextual usage.
4. Analysing their semantic meaning using a semantic framework.

The results were then described interpretatively to explain how euphemisms function within journalistic headline discourse.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Research Data

Beneath are data taken from Kompas newspaper which consist of euphemism expression. There are only fifteen title of news found in Kompas which are considered to have euphemism phenomenon. The data are considered informative and representative to illustrate euphemism. The data can be observed as follows.

Table 1. Research Data

Data	Euphemism Expression
Data 1	//Tuntaskan Kasus Jenazah di Kali Bekasi// (<i>Solve the Case of the Body Found in the Bekasi River</i>)
Data 2	//Dunia Butuh Dewan Keamanan PBB yang Bergigi// (The World Needs a “Powerful and Effective” United Nations Security Council)

Data 3	//Penyandang Disabilitas Harus Dipenuhi Haknya, Bukan Dikasihani// (persons with disabilities should have their rights fulfilled, not be pitied)
Data 4	//Kabinet Bayangan Mengapa Tidak// (shadow cabinet: Why not?)
Data 5	//Hakim Tetap Gelar Aksi Cuti Bersama// (Judges continue their collective leave action (joint leave protest))
Data 6	//Napi Kasus Asusila Kabur dari Lapas Kupang// (An Inmate Convicted in a Sexual Misconduct Case Escapes from Kupang Correctional Facility)
Data 7	//Siswa Tunanetra dari SLB Pembina Jakarta Manfaatkan Telepon Seluler// (students from a special school in Jakarta utilize mobile phones)
Data 8	//Ada Penyesuaian Harga BBM dalam Waktu Dekat// (There will be a price adjustment of BBM (fuel prices) in the near future)
Data 9	//Pabrik Ban di Cikarang Tutup, 1.500 Karyawan Dirumahkan// (A tire factory in Cikarang closes, 1,500 employees are furloughed)
Data 10	//Dinasti Politik Mewarnai Parlemen// (Political dynasties shape the parliament)
Data 11	//Berkawan dengan Stres// (Living with stress/making peace with stress)
Data 12	//Suara Warga Marjinal Sambut Prabowo-Gibran// (The voices of warga marjinal (marginalized citizens) welcome Prabowo-Gibran)
Data 13	//Operasi Senyap Ungkap Kejanggalan Vonis Ronald Tannur// (A silent operation (covert investigation) reveals irregularities in Ronald Tannur's verdict)
Data 14	//Cleansing//
Data 15	//Diskresi Komisi Yudisial yang Tertolak// (The rejected discretion of the Judicial Commission)

3.2 Results

3.2.1 The Forms of Euphemism Found in the Data

a. Loanwords

Data 12: *Marjinal* (Marginal)

The term *marjinal* (marginal) in the headline “*Suara Warga Marjinal Sambut Prabowo-Gibran*” (The Voices of Marginalized Citizens Welcome Prabowo-Gibran) is categorized as a euphemistic loanword because it replaces more direct expressions such as *orang miskin* (poor people), *kelompok terpinggirkan* (marginalized groups), or *masyarakat kelas bawah* (lower-class communities or lower socioeconomic groups). The expression originates from the English word *marginal* and has been integrated into Indonesian sociopolitical discourse through lexical borrowing. The euphemistic mechanism involves lexical borrowing combined with semantic adaptation, whereby a foreign-derived term acquires a specialized social meaning within the recipient language. Functionally, the expression serves as a refinement strategy because it sounds more neutral, academic, and socially acceptable than explicitly labeling individuals as poor or disadvantaged. Semantically, *marjinal* retains conceptual meaning by referring to groups excluded from social, economic, or political participation. At the discourse level, the expression frames social inequality as a structural issue rather than an individual deficiency, thereby encouraging a more objective and less stigmatizing interpretation.

Data 14: *Cleansing*

The term *cleansing* in the headline “*Cleansing*” is categorized as a euphemistic loanword because it replaces harsher expressions such as *pemecatan massal* (mass layoffs), *penghapusan tenaga honorer* (employee termination), or *pemberhentian pegawai* (layoffs). The euphemistic mechanism involves direct lexical borrowing from English, accompanied by semantic extension in Indonesian public discourse. Rather than referring literally to cleaning activities, the term is employed metaphorically to describe the removal of individuals from an institution. Functionally, the expression softens the negative implications of dismissal and presents the process as an administrative action rather than a punitive measure. Semantically, the term creates associative meaning because readers interpret it through contextual knowledge rather than its literal sense. At the discourse level, *cleansing* contributes to institutional framing by reducing the emotional impact of workforce reduction and making controversial policies appear more acceptable.

b. Absorption Forms

Data 1: *Jenazah* (Corpse/Dead Body)

The word *jenazah* (deceased body) in the headline “*Tuntaskan Kasus Jenazah di Kali Bekasi*” (Resolve the Case of the Bodies Found in the Bekasi River) is categorized as an absorption-form euphemism because it replaces the more direct term *mayat* (corpse/dead body). The expression is derived from Arabic and has become fully integrated into Indonesian. The euphemistic mechanism involves lexical replacement through absorption, whereby a borrowed term is used to convey greater politeness and cultural sensitivity. Functionally, *jenazah* (deceased body) serves as a refinement strategy that reduces the emotional harshness of death-related reporting. Semantically, the term maintains conceptual meaning because it still refers to a deceased human body; however, it simultaneously introduces associative meanings related to dignity, respect, and religious observance. At the discourse level, the expression humanizes the reported event and aligns with cultural expectations regarding respectful references to the deceased.

Data 3: *Disabilitas* (Disability)

The term *disabilitas* (disability) in the headline “*Penyandang Disabilitas Harus Dipenuhi Haknya, Bukan Dikasihani*” (persons with disabilities should have their rights fulfilled, not be pitied) is a euphemistic absorption form derived from the English word *disability*. It replaces older expressions such as *cacat* or *penyandang cacat* (persons with disabilities replacing disabled persons), which may carry negative and stigmatizing connotations. The euphemistic mechanism involves lexical absorption and semantic reframing, through which a borrowed term constructs a more inclusive representation of physical or mental limitations. Functionally, the expression promotes politeness and social equality while avoiding discriminatory labeling. Semantically, it retains conceptual meaning by referring to physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental limitations. At the discourse level, the term reflects contemporary institutional efforts to promote inclusive language and reshape public attitudes toward disability.

Data 7: *Tunanetra* (Blind Persons)

The expression *tunanetra* (blind persons) in the headline “*Siswa Tunanetra dari SLB Pembina Jakarta Manfaatkan Telepon Seluler*” (Visually impaired students from SLB Pembina Jakarta utilize mobile phones) functions as a euphemism because it replaces the more direct term *buta* (blind persons). The euphemistic mechanism involves lexical substitution through an institutionalized and socially accepted term. Functionally, the expression emphasizes respect and dignity while reducing the potential stigma associated with visual impairment. Semantically, both expressions share the same conceptual meaning; however, *tunanetra* (blind persons) introduces more formal and respectful associations. At the discourse level, the expression promotes inclusivity and aligns with educational and social values that prioritize respectful language toward persons with disabilities.

Data 10: *Dinasti Politik* (Political Dynasty)

The phrase *dinasti politik* (political dynasty) in the headline “*Dinasti Politik Mewarnai Parlemen*” (Political dynasties shape the parliament) is categorized as a euphemistic absorption form because it indirectly refers to nepotistic political practices without explicitly accusing individuals of wrongdoing. The euphemistic mechanism involves lexical abstraction and conceptualization, whereby a politically sensitive issue is represented through an analytical term. Functionally, the expression serves a diplomatic role by allowing criticism to be conveyed indirectly. Semantically, it carries associative meaning because readers interpret it through sociopolitical knowledge concerning inherited political influence. At the discourse level, the phrase enables media institutions to maintain neutrality while highlighting concerns about democratic representation.

Data 15: *Diskresi* (Discretion)

The term *diskresi* (discretion) in the headline “*Diskresi Komisi Yudisial yang Tertolak*” (The Rejected Discretion of the Judicial Commission) functions as a euphemistic absorption form because it replaces more direct expressions such as *kebebasan mengambil keputusan* or *wewenang khusus* (Discretion replacing special authority or decision-making freedom). The euphemistic mechanism involves terminological borrowing from legal discourse. Functionally, the expression formalizes and legitimizes institutional authority while reducing possible negative interpretations. Semantically, the term carries conceptual meaning because it refers to discretionary authority exercised by officials. At the discourse

level, the use of technical terminology frames controversial decisions within a legal and professional context, thereby reducing perceptions of arbitrariness.

c. Metaphorical Expressions

Data 2: *Bergigi* (Powerful and Effective)

The expression *bergigi* (powerful and effective) in the headline “*Dunia Butuh Dewan Keamanan PBB yang Bergigi*” (The World Needs a Powerful and Effective United Nations Security Council) is euphemistic because it replaces direct criticism such as *lemah, tidak berdaya, or tidak efektif* (Powerful and effective replacing weak, powerless, or ineffective). The euphemistic mechanism involves metaphorical mapping in which physical teeth symbolize strength and authority. Functionally, the metaphor softens criticism while maintaining persuasive force. Semantically, it creates associative meaning because effectiveness is interpreted through the culturally shared image of teeth as symbols of power. At the discourse level, the expression frames institutional weakness indirectly and diplomatically.

Data 4: *Kabinet Bayangan* (Shadow Cabinet)

The phrase *kabinet bayangan* (Shadow cabinet) is euphemistic because it indirectly refers to an opposition structure. The euphemistic mechanism involves metaphorical substitution, where the concept of *bayangan* (shadow) symbolizes supervision and parallel existence. Functionally, the expression minimizes confrontation and presents political opposition in a more neutral manner. Semantically, the phrase carries associative meaning because “shadow” is interpreted symbolically rather than literally. At the discourse level, it normalizes the role of political oversight within democratic systems.

Data 5: *Cuti Bersama* (Collective Leave)

The expression *cuti bersama* (collective leave) is euphemistic because it substitutes the more direct expression *mogok kerja* (Collective leave replacing strike) The euphemistic mechanism involves metaphorical reframing, where a protest action is represented as a collective leave activity. Functionally, the expression reduces the perception of conflict and preserves institutional professionalism. Semantically, it creates associative meaning because readers understand that the leave represents a form of collective protest rather than ordinary leave. At the discourse level, the phrase mitigates tension surrounding labor disputes.

Data 9: *Dirumahkan* (Furloughed)

The term *dirumahkan* (furloughed) is euphemistic because it replaces harsher expressions such as *dipeecat* or *diberhentikan* (Furloughed replacing dismissed or terminated) The euphemistic mechanism involves metaphorical relocation, where unemployment is conceptualized as being sent home. Functionally, the expression softens the economic and emotional consequences of job loss. Semantically, it creates associative meaning because “home” evokes comfort and safety despite the underlying reality of employment insecurity. At the discourse level, the expression reduces public sensitivity toward workforce reductions.

Data 11: *Berkawan dengan Stres* (Making Friends with Stress)

The phrase *berkawan dengan stres* (making Friends with Stress) is euphemistic because it reframes a negative psychological condition through a positive interpersonal metaphor. The euphemistic mechanism involves personification, where stress is conceptualized as a friend. Functionally, the expression reduces fear and anxiety surrounding mental health issues. Semantically, it generates associative meaning because friendship symbolizes support, familiarity, and adaptation. At the discourse level, the metaphor encourages readers to adopt a more constructive perspective toward stress management.

Data 13: *Operasi Senyap* (Covert Operation)

The expression *operasi senyap* (covert operation) is euphemistic because it replaces more direct expressions such as *operasi rahasia* or *operasi terselubung* (Covert operation replacing secret operation or clandestine operation) The euphemistic mechanism involves metaphorical substitution, where silence symbolizes secrecy rather than the literal absence of sound. Functionally, the expression softens potentially controversial law-enforcement activities while maintaining journalistic appeal. Semantically, it produces associative meaning because secrecy is understood through the symbolic notion of silence. At the discourse level, the phrase enhances dramatic effect while preserving diplomatic language.

d. Periphrasis

Data 8: *Penyesuaian Harga* (Price Adjustment)

The phrase *penyesuaian harga* (Price adjustment replacing price increase) in the headline “*Ada Penyesuaian Harga BBM dalam Waktu Dekat*” (There Will Be a Fuel Price Adjustment in the Near Future) is categorized as a euphemistic periphrasis because it replaces the more direct expression *kenaikan harga BBM* (Fuel price increase). The euphemistic mechanism involves circumlocution, whereby a sensitive concept is expressed through a longer and more neutral phrase. Functionally, the expression serves as a diplomatic strategy that minimizes potential public resistance toward economic policy. Semantically, it creates associative meaning because audiences infer that the adjustment actually refers to a price increase. At the discourse level, the phrase exemplifies policy framing, where language is strategically used to influence public interpretation of governmental decisions.

e. Lexical Substitution

Data 6: *Kasus Asusila* (Sexual Misconduct Case)

The phrase *kasus asusila* (Sexual misconduct case replacing sex crime case) in the headline “*Napi Kasus Asusila Kabur dari Lapas Kupang*” (An inmate in a sexual misconduct case escaped from Kupang Correctional Facility) functions as a euphemism because it replaces more explicit expressions such as *kasus pemerkosaan* or *kejahatan seksual* (sexual misconduct case replacing rape case or sexual crime case). The euphemistic mechanism involves lexical substitution, whereby a broader and less explicit term replaces a socially sensitive expression. Functionally, the phrase reduces shock and maintains public decorum when reporting sexual crimes. Semantically, it creates associative meaning because readers understand the reference through contextual interpretation rather than direct naming. At the discourse level, the expression reflects cultural norms that discourage explicit discussion of sexuality in public discourse.

3.2.2 Discussion of Overall Findings

Table 2. Emergent Frequency of Euphemism

Form	Frequency	Percentage
Metaphorical Expression	6	40.0%
Absorption Form	5	33.3%
Loanword	2	13.3%
Periphrasis	1	6.7%
Lexical Substitution	1	6.7%
Total	15	100%

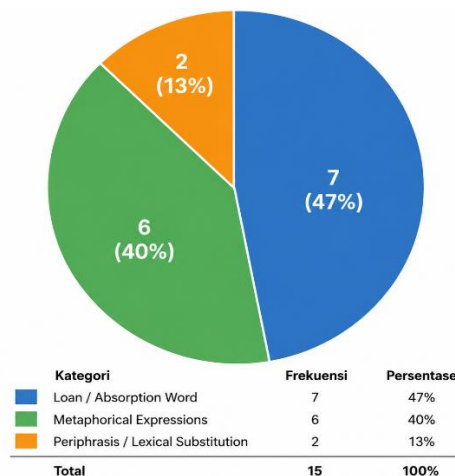
The analysis of fifteen euphemistic expressions in Kompas headlines reveals several recurring linguistic patterns. First, metaphorical expressions constitute the most dominant form of euphemism, followed by absorption forms and loanwords. This finding indicates that Kompas tends to frame sensitive social, political, and economic issues through indirect and figurative language rather than through direct lexical expressions. Metaphors such as *bergigi* (powerful and effective), *kabinet bayangan* (shadow cabinet), *dirumahkan* (furloughed), and *operasi senyap* (covert operation) allow journalists to communicate criticism and controversy while maintaining a neutral and professional tone. Second, the findings demonstrate that euphemisms primarily perform refinement and diplomatic functions. Expressions such as *jenazah* (deceased body), *disabilitas* (disability), and *tunanetra* (visually impaired) soften potentially harsh or stigmatizing references, whereas expressions such as *penyesuaian harga* (price adjustment) and *dinasti politik* (political dynasty) function as diplomatic devices that frame controversial issues in a more socially acceptable manner. This pattern suggests that euphemism serves as a communicative strategy that balances informational accuracy with audience sensitivity.

Third, a relationship can be observed between euphemistic forms and semantic meanings. Loanwords and absorption forms tend to be associated with conceptual meaning because they preserve relatively stable referential meanings. This pattern suggests that different euphemistic forms tend to

generate different semantic effects. While lexical borrowing generally preserves referential stability, metaphorical expressions frequently require contextual inference and sociocultural knowledge to be fully interpreted. Therefore, euphemism should be viewed not merely as lexical substitution but as a semantic-pragmatic process of meaning negotiation (Crespo-Fernández, 2018; Mironina, 2024). In contrast, metaphorical expressions frequently generate associative meanings that depend on contextual interpretation and sociocultural knowledge. This finding supports previous studies that view euphemism as a semantic-pragmatic phenomenon operating beyond lexical substitution.

Overall, the findings suggest that euphemism in news headlines functions not merely as a politeness strategy but also as a discourse mechanism that shapes the presentation and interpretation of social reality. Through lexical selection, media institutions can reduce the perceived harshness of sensitive issues while simultaneously influencing how readers understand and evaluate public events. The dominance of metaphorical expressions supports previous findings that metaphor is one of the most productive mechanisms of euphemistic communication. Through metaphorical representation, sensitive realities can be reformulated into less confrontational and more socially acceptable expressions, thereby reducing communicative tension while maintaining rhetorical effectiveness (Allan, K., & Burridge, 2006; Crespo-Fernández, 2021b).

Figure 1. Form of Euphemism



3.2.3 Distribution of Euphemism Functions

The refinement function of euphemism appears when language is intentionally softened to reduce harshness, emotional discomfort, or negative impressions in public discourse. In the analyzed data, this function is reflected in expressions such as *jenazah* (deceased body) (Data 1), *disabilitas* (disability) (Data 3), *tunanetra* (visually impaired) (Data 7), *dirumahkan* (furloughed) (Data 9), *operasi senyap* (covert operation) (Data 13), and *diskresi* (discretion) (Data 15). These expressions replace more direct or potentially offensive terms such as *mayat* (dead body), *cacat* (disabled person), *buta* (blind person), *dipecat* (dismissed), *operasi rahasia* (secret operation), or *kebebasan bertindak* (decision-making freedom). The refinement function demonstrates how euphemism serves politeness and emotional sensitivity in media communication. By selecting refined lexical items, journalists avoid provoking negative reactions while maintaining professionalism and reader comfort. Therefore, euphemistic refinement reflects linguistic strategies that prioritize social harmony, respectful communication, and audience acceptability in sensitive reporting contexts.

The diplomatic function of euphemism is used to maintain neutrality, reduce confrontation, and frame sensitive political or institutional issues in a more acceptable manner. In the analyzed data, this function is represented by expressions such as *kabinet bayangan* (shadow cabinet) (Data 4), *cuti bersama* (collective leave) (Data 5), *penyesuaian harga* (price adjustment) (Data 8), *dinasti politik* (political dynasty) (Data 10), and *diskresi* (discretion) (Data 15). These expressions avoid direct and provocative wording such as *oposisi pemerintah* (opposition group), *mogok kerja* (strike), *kenaikan harga* (price increase), *nepotisme politik* (political nepotism), or *kebebasan penuh pejabat* (absolute authority of

officials). Through diplomatic euphemism, media discourse becomes less aggressive and more institutionally appropriate. This strategy is particularly important in political and governmental communication because it helps maintain public trust, minimizes conflict, and controls public interpretation. Consequently, euphemism functions not merely as linguistic decoration but also as a strategic tool for ideological framing and policy presentation.

The function of concealing or mitigating sensitivity meaning in euphemism refers to the effort to obscure, minimize, or indirectly express meanings that may cause fear, anxiety, or social discomfort. This function can be found in expressions such as *jenazah* (deceased body) (Data 1), *cuti bersama* (collective leave) (Data 5), *penyesuaian harga* (price adjustment) (Data 8), *dirumahkan* (furloughed) (Data 9), *operasi senyap* (covert operation) (Data 13), and *diskresi* (discretion) (Data 15). These lexical choices conceal the severity of death, labor protest, fuel price increases, unemployment, covert investigations, or political authority. For example, *dirumahkan* (furloughed) sounds less threatening than *pemutusan kerja* or PHK (Employment termination), while *operasi senyap* (covert operation) hides the intensity of secret law enforcement operations. Such euphemisms demonstrate how media discourse strategically manages emotional sensitivity by reducing directness. Thus, euphemistic concealment allows controversial realities to be communicated indirectly while preserving social stability and audience comfort.

The educational framing function of euphemism occurs when language is used to shape positive attitudes, increase awareness, and encourage more inclusive perspectives within society. In the analyzed data, this function appears in the words *disabilitas* (disability) (Data 3), *tunanetra* (visually impaired) (Data 7), and *berkawan dengan stress* (making friends with stress) (Data 11). These expressions educate readers to adopt more respectful and constructive ways of understanding social and psychological conditions. The term *disabilitas* (disability) replaces stigmatizing expressions such as *cacat* (disabled), while *tunanetra* (visually impaired) sounds more humane than *buta* (blind). Similarly, *berkawan dengan stres* (making friends with stress) reframes stress as something manageable and beneficial rather than purely harmful. Through educational framing, euphemism functions not only to soften language but also to transform public perception. Consequently, euphemistic expressions contribute to social inclusivity, psychological awareness, and the development of more empathetic communication practices in media discourse.

The function of avoiding taboo in euphemism is closely related to cultural norms that restrict direct discussion of sensitive subjects such as death, sexuality, disability, or economic hardship. In the analyzed data, this function can be identified in the words *jenazah* (deceased body) (Data 1), *asusila* (sexual misconduct) (Data 6), *tunanetra* (visually impaired) (Data 7), and *penyesuaian harga* (price adjustment) (Data 8). These expressions replace terms considered harsh, offensive, or socially uncomfortable, such as *mayat* (corpse), *pemeriksaan* (rape), *buta* (blind), or *kenaikan harga* (price increase). In Indonesian sociocultural contexts, direct references to sexual crimes, death, or personal limitations are often perceived as impolite or emotionally disturbing. Therefore, euphemism becomes a linguistic strategy to maintain moral decorum and cultural sensitivity. By avoiding taboo expressions, media discourse can communicate delicate issues more politely while still preserving the essential meaning and communicative purpose.

Table 3. Function of Euphemism

Euphemistic Function	Relevant Data	Explanation
Refinement Expression (Softening)	Data 1 (<i>jenazah</i>) (deceased body), Data 3 (<i>disabilitas</i>) (disability), Data 7 (<i>tunanetra</i>) (visually impaired), Data 9 (<i>dirumahkan</i>) (Furloughed), Data 13 (<i>operasi senyap</i>) (overt operation), Data 15 (<i>diskresi</i>) (Discretion)	These expressions soften harsh, direct, or emotionally sensitive meanings. For example, <i>jenazah</i> refines <i>mayat</i> (corpse), <i>dirumahkan</i> (furloughed) softens dismissal, and <i>diskresi</i> (discretion) formalizes “freedom of action.”
Diplomatic Function	Data 4 (<i>kabinet bayangan</i>) (shadow cabinet), Data 5 (<i>cuti bersama</i>) (collective leave), Data 8 (<i>penyesuaian harga</i>) (price adjustment), Data 10	These euphemisms are used strategically in political, governmental, or institutional discourse to reduce confrontation and maintain

	(<i>dinasti politik</i>) (political dynasty), Data 15 (<i>diskresi</i>) (discretion)	neutrality. For instance, <i>penyesuaian harga</i> (price adjustment) diplomatically replaces <i>kenaikan harga</i> (price increase).
Concealing and Sensitivity Meaning	Data 1, Data 5, Data 8, Data 9, Data 13, Data 15	These data conceal or mitigate potentially disturbing meanings. <i>Dirumahkan</i> (furloughed) conceals unemployment severity, while <i>operasi senyap</i> (covert operation) obscures covert investigations through indirect wording.
Educational Framing	Data 3 (<i>disabilitas</i>) (disability), Data 7 (<i>tunanetra</i>) (visually impaired), Data 11 (<i>berkawan dengan stres</i>) (making friends with stress)	These expressions educate readers toward more inclusive, positive, or constructive perspectives. <i>Disabilitas</i> (disability) promotes respectful language, while <i>berkawan dengan stres</i> (making friends with stress) reframes stress positively.
Avoiding Taboo	Data 1 (<i>jenazah</i>) (deceased body), Data 6 (<i>asusila</i>) (sexual misconduct), Data 7 (<i>tunanetra</i>) (visually impaired), Data 8 (<i>penyesuaian harga</i>) (price adjustment)	These euphemisms avoid expressions considered socially harsh, explicit, or taboo. <i>Asusila</i> (sexual misconduct) avoids direct mention of rape or sexual crime, while <i>jenazah</i> (deceased body) avoids blunt references to death.

3.2.4 Distribution of Meaning

The analysis reveals that two types of meaning are realized in the euphemistic expressions found in the headlines, namely conceptual meaning and associative meaning. Conceptual meaning predominantly appears in loan or absorption forms, as these expressions tend to maintain denotative clarity while softening potentially sensitive references. In contrast, associative meaning is more frequently found in metaphorical forms, where interpretation relies on contextual and connotative associations. This pattern indicates that lexical borrowing functions primarily to neutralize meaning at a semantic level, whereas metaphor operates through implied or indirect meaning to shape readers' perception more subtly.

Conceptual meaning refers to the literal, denotative, and dictionary-based meaning of euphemistic expressions. In the analyzed data, conceptual meaning appears in Data 1 (*jenazah*) (deceased body), Data 3 (*disabilitas*) (disability), Data 7 (*tunanetra*) (visually impaired), Data 10 (*dinasti politik*) (political dynasty), Data 12 (*marjinal*) (marginal), Data 13 (*operasi senyap*) (covert operation), Data 14 (*cleansing*), and Data 15 (*diskresi*) (discretion). These expressions convey meanings that are relatively direct and cognitively understood without requiring broad contextual interpretation. For example, *jenazah* (deceased body) directly refers to a deceased human body in a more respectful form, while *disabilitas* (disability) denotes a physical or mental limitation using a more socially acceptable term. Similarly, *tunanetra* (visually impaired), conceptually refers to visual impairment, *diskresi* (discretion) refers to administrative freedom of action, and *cleansing* conceptually refers to systematic dismissal or removal. Although these expressions function euphemistically to refine or soften meaning, their interpretations remain relatively stable, formal, and institutionally recognized. Therefore, conceptual meaning in euphemism emphasizes lexical clarity while still maintaining politeness, neutrality, and sociocultural appropriateness in media discourse.

Associative meaning, on the other hand, refers to implied, figurative, and context-dependent interpretations shaped by social, cultural, and emotional associations. This type of meaning is found in

Data 2 (*bergigi*) (powerful and effective), Data 4 (*kabinet bayangan*) (shadow cabinet), Data 5 (*cuti bersama*) (collective leave), Data 6 (*asusila*) (sexual misconduct), Data 8 (*penyesuaian harga*) (price adjustment), Data 9 (*dirumahkan*) (furloughed), and Data 11 (*berkawan dengan stres*) (making friends with stress). These euphemistic expressions cannot be interpreted literally because their meanings depend on contextual understanding and symbolic association. For example, *bergigi* (powerful and effective) metaphorically symbolizes authority and power rather than physical teeth, while *kabinet bayangan* (shadow cabinet) refers to an opposition structure rather than an actual shadow. Similarly, *cuti bersama* (collective leave) indirectly refers to a labor strike, *dirumahkan* (furloughed) metaphorically conceals unemployment, and *berkawan dengan stres* (making friends with stress) personifies stress as a “friend” to encourage positive psychological framing. The phrase *penyesuaian harga* (price adjustment) diplomatically associates with fuel price increases, whereas *asusila* (sexual misconduct) indirectly refers to sexual crimes by avoiding explicit mention. Thus, associative meaning allows euphemism to function rhetorically and persuasively by softening sensitive realities, shaping public interpretation, and maintaining communicative politeness.

3.3 Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that euphemism in media discourse functions not merely as a linguistic ornament but as a strategic communicative device that shapes public perception and social interpretation. The analysis of fifteen headlines from *Kompas* reveals that loan or absorption forms such as *jenazah* (deceased body), *disabilitas* (disability), *tunanetra* (visually impaired), *diskresi* (discretion), and *cleansing* dominate the data because they provide more refined, formal, and socially acceptable alternatives to direct expressions. Metaphorical expressions such as *bergigi* (powerful and effective), *kabinet bayangan* (shadow cabinet), *dirumahkan* (furloughed), and *berkawan dengan stres* (making friends with stress) also play a significant role in constructing indirect meaning through associative interpretation. Meanwhile, periphrasis and lexical substitution, including *penyesuaian harga* (price adjustment) and *asusila* (sexual misconduct), function to soften sensitive realities and avoid explicit references. These findings support the theory proposed by Keith Allan and Kate Burridge in *Forbidden Words* that euphemism primarily functions to avoid offense, maintain politeness, and manage social taboos (Allan & Burridge, 2006). Furthermore, the dominance of refinement and diplomatic functions indicates that media institutions strategically employ euphemism to construct socially acceptable narratives while minimizing emotional resistance from readers.

The study also confirms that euphemism carries ideological and persuasive dimensions within journalistic discourse. Expressions such as *penyesuaian harga* (price adjustment), *kabinet bayangan* (shadow cabinet), and *cuti bersama* (collective leave), illustrate how lexical choices can frame political and economic realities more diplomatically, thereby reducing potential public tension. This finding is consistent with the argument of Jonathan Charteris-Black in *Politicians and Rhetoric* that euphemism and metaphor are rhetorical instruments used to shape ideology and public cognition (Charteris-Black, 2011). Similarly, the findings align with the study of Emilio Crespo-Fernández, who argues that euphemism in media discourse often serves manipulative and persuasive purposes by obscuring unpleasant realities (Crespo-Fernández, 2017). The use of associative meanings in metaphorical expressions demonstrates that media language frequently relies on contextual and cultural interpretation rather than direct denotation. Consequently, the study indicates that euphemism operates simultaneously as a politeness strategy, a cultural adaptation mechanism, and a discursive tool for framing social, political, and institutional realities within Indonesian media discourse.

The findings of this study have several implications for language teaching, particularly in the areas of semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, and media literacy. News headlines containing euphemistic expressions can be used as authentic teaching materials to introduce students to the relationship between lexical choice and meaning construction in public discourse. In semantics classes, euphemistic expressions may serve as examples for distinguishing conceptual and associative meanings. In pragmatics courses, students can analyze how euphemisms function as politeness strategies, face-saving mechanisms, and persuasive devices in media communication. Furthermore, the findings can support critical media literacy by encouraging students to examine how journalists strategically frame social and political realities through lexical selection. Such activities may enhance learners' critical reading skills and awareness of ideological meanings embedded in public discourse.

The findings may contribute to language teaching, particularly in semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, and media literacy. News headlines containing euphemistic expressions can be used

as authentic teaching materials to help students identify how lexical choices shape meaning, construct ideology, and influence public interpretation. Such activities may enhance critical reading skills and encourage learners to examine the relationship between language, power, and media representation (Bednarek, M., & Caple, 2017; Richardson, 2023).

4. Conclusion

This study examined the forms, functions, and meanings of euphemistic expressions in fifteen Kompas news headlines published between September–October 2024. The findings show that euphemisms were realized through five linguistic forms: metaphorical expressions, absorption forms, loanwords, periphrasis, and lexical substitution. Among these categories, metaphorical expressions appeared most frequently, accounting for six out of fifteen data, or 40%, indicating that Kompas tends to represent sensitive social, political, and economic issues through indirect and figurative language rather than direct lexical expressions.

In terms of function, euphemisms primarily served as refinement and diplomatic strategies. They were used to soften potentially offensive expressions, maintain politeness, *reduce potential social tension* or *mitigate sensitive meanings* and present controversial issues in a more socially acceptable manner. This finding suggests that euphemism functions not only as a politeness device but also as a discourse strategy in media communication.

From a semantic perspective, both conceptual and associative meanings were identified. Conceptual meanings were more commonly associated with loanwords and absorption forms, whereas associative meanings frequently occurred in metaphorical expressions and associative meanings were more frequently found in metaphorical and indirect expressions because their interpretation depends on contextual and sociocultural associations. This pattern indicates that different euphemistic forms tend to generate different semantic effects within news discourse. Overall, the findings demonstrate that euphemism in Kompas headlines operates systematically as a linguistic and discursive resource for framing sensitive issues. Through strategic lexical selection, headline discourse can reduce the perceived harshness of information while guiding readers' interpretation of social reality. This study is limited by the relatively small dataset consisting of fifteen headlines from a two-month publication period. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all Indonesian media discourse. Future research may employ larger corpora and comparative analyses across different media institutions to provide a broader understanding of euphemistic practices in Indonesian journalism.

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Degradation of Balinese Kitchen Utensil Lexicon: An Ecolinguistics Perspective

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Abstract - This study examined the degradation of the Balinese kitchen utensil lexicon by analyzing its use across spatial and temporal dimensions in urban Denpasar. Data were collected through documentation and a structured questionnaire administered to respondents selected using a multi-stage clustered sampling technique, with Denpasar identified as the primary research cluster. Participants were grouped by age into adolescents (12–25 years), adults (26–45 years), and elderly individuals (46–65 years). The analysis adopted an ecolinguistics framework that interpreted linguistic change through three key parameters: environment, diversity, and interaction, interrelation, and interdependence. A mixed qualitative–quantitative approach was employed to examine patterns of lexical recognition and use across generations. The findings revealed that the lexicon of Balinese kitchen utensils was largely retained among elderly respondents, who demonstrated high levels of familiarity and practical experience. In contrast, adolescents exhibited significant lexical degradation, as most were unfamiliar with the terms and had not actively used them in everyday practice. This generational disparity indicated an ongoing domain-specific language shift, driven by changes in domestic practices and material environments in urban Balinese households.

Keywords: Balinese language, ecolinguistics, kitchen utensils, language degradation, lexicon

1. Introduction

Language is a fundamental component of cultural identity, shaping how communities interact, maintain traditions, and respond to social change. In Indonesia, regional languages increasingly experience pressure as a result of urbanization, globalization, and the expanding dominance of Indonesian in both formal and informal domains of communication (Marlina & Pasaribu, 2020). This linguistic pressure is particularly visible in urban centers such as Denpasar, Bali, where modernization has transformed occupational structures, social interaction patterns, and everyday domestic practices. Studies on Balinese language shift consistently indicate that such transformations do not lead to an immediate or total abandonment of the language, but instead result in selective and domain-based erosion. In urban Denpasar, especially among adolescents, Balinese is increasingly displaced by Indonesian in daily interaction due to rational language choice, the perceived complexity of *angguh-ungguh* (speech levels/honorific registers), and shifting cultural orientations, while its use is largely retained in ritual and symbolic contexts (Arissusila, 2021). Empirical evidence supports this trend, as a survey of 52 adolescents in Denpasar shows Indonesian as dominant in domestic, educational, and workplace domains, while Balinese is increasingly marginal (I. G. A. C. S. Putra et al., 2022). At home, 40% reported exclusive use of Indonesian compared to 27% for Balinese; in schools, Indonesian alone (39%) or in combination with Balinese (40%) prevailed; and in workplaces, 71% used Indonesian exclusively. By contrast, Balinese demonstrated greater vitality in religious contexts, with 52% reporting balanced use of Indonesian and Balinese, and 17% using Balinese exclusively.

The decline of regional languages in Indonesia has therefore become a critical issue, with evidence suggesting that more than half of these languages are endangered as a consequence of ongoing sociocultural and economic change (Samiaji, 2024). In Bali, language shift frequently manifests as functional compartmentalization rather than complete language loss. Younger generations tend to prefer Indonesian for practical and politeness-related reasons, whereas Balinese remains confined to religious and ceremonial domains, indicating a narrowing of its functional scope (Terezawati et al., 2025). Comparable patterns are also observed in studies of specific lexical domains. The erosion of traditional Balinese fishing vocabulary in Karangasem has been linked to technological modernization and changing production practices, leading to the disappearance or replacement of domain-specific terms (Aryani, 2019). From an ecolinguistic perspective, intergenerational shifts in Balinese personal naming practices further demonstrate how environmental change, urbanization, and global cultural flows reshape linguistic choices across time (Putri et al., 2022).

Within this broader landscape of language shift, the lexicon associated with Balinese kitchen utensils constitutes a particularly revealing yet underexplored domain. Traditionally, Balinese kitchens employed a rich and specialized set of utensils whose terminology was embedded in daily culinary practices, domestic rituals, and intergenerational interaction. However, linguistic change cannot be separated from ecological change, as transformations in domestic technology, housing design, and lifestyle priorities alter the material and social environments in which language is used. Lexical degradation in this domain thus reflects a form of *domain-specific language shift*, whereby erosion occurs not across the entire language system but within specific areas of everyday life that are most directly affected by modernization (Fill & Mühlhäusler, 2001; Halliday, 2001). In this sense, the Balinese kitchen emerges as a critical ecological site where material transformation and linguistic erosion intersect.

In Balinese culture, the kitchen is commonly called *paon* and represents both a functional and symbolic domain within the household. Etymologically, *paon* derives from the Javanese *pawon*, itself rooted in *awu* ‘ash’, with the affixes *pa-* and *-an* denoting “a place for ash.” While *paon* serves as the everyday term, related forms such as *pawaregan* ‘place of satiety’ and *peratengan* ‘place of cooking’ highlight its ritual and cultural significance. Traditionally, the *paon* was constructed on the southern side of the compound in accordance with *Asta Kosala Kosali*, the Balinese architectural system that assigns spatial functions and orientations to domestic structures. Its orientation was further emphasized through the *bungut paon* ‘clay or brick stove’, which faced south with its opening to the north, ensuring that cooks faced south as an act of reverence to Dewa Brahma, the God of Fire. The *bungut paon* was not only a practical element but also held symbolic value, for example in purification rituals (*pengelukatan*), where individuals cleansed themselves by warming their hands near the flames or by using water from the kitchen to neutralize negative energies (*bhuta kala*) after returning from funerals or communal gatherings. Such practices, however, are increasingly regarded as mythological by younger generations (Dewi, 2021).

Beyond its spatial and ritual dimensions, the kitchen embodied nourishment, transformation, and cosmological order, functioning as a locus of cultural transmission where domestic life intersected with religious belief and communal identity. The lexicon associated with this domestic space, which includes terms such as *jalikan* ‘a furnace-like hearth’, *semprong* ‘a bamboo pipe used for fire ignition’, and *saang* ‘firewood’, encodes semiotic values that articulate communal labor, ecological intimacy, and ritual symbolism. As modern appliances increasingly replace traditional tools and orientations, these terms lose both their practical relevance and their embedded cultural meanings. The erosion of the *paon* lexicon exemplifies how material and spatial transformations precipitate linguistic attrition and cultural displacement within Balinese domestic life.

Figure 1 illustrates a comparative layout: the left side presents a traditional Balinese house compound in which the kitchen is constructed as a freestanding unit, separated from the main living area to allow for ventilation and fire safety. The right side depicts a modern urban house where the kitchen is integrated into the central household structure. This architectural reconfiguration reflects broader lifestyle transformations and an increased emphasis on efficiency and hygiene, while simultaneously reshaping the semiotic environment in which traditional culinary practices and their associated lexicon once operated.



Figure 1. A visual comparison between a traditional house layout (left) and an urban house layout (right). Source: (Widrayani, 2024) [left] and Personal Photograph [right].

Figures 2 and 3 present the *paon* from exterior and interior perspectives. Figure 2 shows its open-air structure with thatched roofing (*alang-alang*) and bamboo or stone walls, reflecting ecological adaptation and integration with the environment. This spatial arrangement reflects both functional and ecological considerations, allowing ventilation and integration with the surrounding environment.



Figure 2. Balinese Traditional Kitchen from Outside
Source: <https://valbali.blogspot.com/> (Unknown, 2010)

Figure 3 depicts the interior, where indigenous cooking technologies remain central. The *jalikan* is accompanied by clay pots, bamboo steamers, woven baskets, and metal vessels, underscoring the continuity of local craftsmanship. At the heart of the kitchen lies the *bungut paon*, which historically served dual purposes: as a practical site for food preparation and as a locus of ritual purification. The flames symbolized spiritual cleansing, reinforcing the kitchen's role as a space where material practice and symbolic meaning converge.



Figure 3. Inside a Balinese Traditional Kitchen
<https://balipustakanews.com> (Reda, 2021)

Recent studies in villages such as Batuan Sukawati (P. A. W. Putra & Yulianasari, 2020) reveal that while some structural aspects of the *paon* remain intact, materials and designs have evolved. For instance, traditional thatched roofs (*alang-alang*) have been replaced by tiled roofing to meet modern safety and maintenance standards. These evolving practices highlight the tension between continuity and change: the traditional *paon* persists as a medium of cultural preservation and intergenerational transmission, even as modern adaptations reshape its material and symbolic environment.

Building on this tension, Figure 4 presents a modern Balinese kitchen, typically found in urban or semi-urban households. The kitchen is visually cleaner, more organized, and dominated by the use of gas or electric stoves, which offer increased efficiency and convenience. In contrast to traditional kitchens that rely on firewood combustion, which produces smoke and soot and requires labor-intensive preparation, modern kitchens are defined by their emphasis on hygiene, efficiency, and the minimization of physical exertion. This juxtaposition highlights a clear shift in domestic priorities and material practices, illustrating how modernization alters not only infrastructure but also cultural attitudes toward labor, time management, and spatial aesthetics in everyday life.



Figure 4. Balinese Modern Kitchen
Source: Personal photograph

These contrasting kitchen environments highlight a broader sociocultural shift driven by processes of modernization and globalization. Modern kitchens prioritize cleanliness, convenience, and time efficiency, often at the cost of traditional knowledge, communal interaction, and cultural expressions embedded in language. From an ecolinguistic perspective, this transition reflects a reconfiguration of the linguistic ecology, in which globalized domestic technologies and lifestyles reshape the material and social environments that once sustained traditional lexical practices. As such, the shift from *jalikan* to gas stoves, or from *bungut paon* to standardized countertops, not only alters material practices but also accelerates the erosion of specific lexical items and their associated symbolic and cultural functions within the Balinese language.

Building on this foundation, the present study extends the discussion on eco-lexicons by examining how contemporary sociocultural dynamics, particularly those associated with urbanization and globalization, influence the traditional lexicon of Balinese kitchen utensils. While previous research has largely addressed macro-level factors contributing to regional language decline, domain-specific lexical ecologies embedded in everyday cultural practices have received comparatively limited scholarly attention. This study addresses this gap by analyzing the retention, transformation, and obsolescence of Balinese kitchen utensil lexicon within urban communities in Denpasar. By foregrounding both spatial reconfiguration and generational differences in language use, the research seeks to answer three key questions: (1) What Balinese kitchen utensil lexicon remains in use today? (2) How is the existence and usage of Balinese kitchen utensil lexicon evolving within Denpasar's urban communities? (3) How does domain-specific language shift occur in the Balinese kitchen lexicon from an ecolinguistic perspective?

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transforms linguistic ecology, social interaction, and cultural meaning, accelerating the erosion of specific lexical items and the values they once embodied within Balinese domestic life.

2. Method

This study employed a mixed-methods design, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to investigate the erosion of the Balinese lexicon related to traditional kitchen utensils. The mixed design was chosen to provide both descriptive numerical evidence and interpretive depth. The quantitative component was descriptive, presenting frequency and percentage distributions of respondents' knowledge and use of traditional kitchen terms across age groups, as illustrated in Diagram 1. This allowed generational differences in lexical vitality to be visualized clearly. The qualitative component complemented these findings by exploring participants' lived experiences, symbolic perceptions, and cultural practices associated with the *paon* through open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

Participants were recruited in Denpasar using convenience sampling, stratified by age to capture generational variation in lexical competence: adolescents (12–25 years), adults (26–45 years), and elderly (46–65 years). A total of 320 respondents participated (125 adolescents, 105 adults, 90 elderly). This stratification was based on sociolinguistic reasoning, namely that age influenced language competence and exposure to traditional domestic practices, making it a key variable in assessing lexical retention and erosion.

The Google Form questionnaire link was distributed by the Kepala Lurah of Panjer through community communication channels, ensuring broad access among residents. Respondents completed the questionnaire independently, covering adolescents, adults, and elderly groups. The instrument consisted of closed-ended multiple-choice items to capture quantitative data on lexical recognition and use, and open-ended narrative prompts to elicit qualitative insights into symbolic perceptions and cultural practices. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted online via telephone and Google Meet, lasting approximately 30–45 minutes. These interviews allowed respondents to elaborate on their lived experiences and cultural meanings associated with the kitchen utensil in greater depth.

Prior to full distribution, the questionnaire was piloted with 20 respondents outside the main sample to refine wording and ensure technical functionality of the Google Form. Completed responses were checked for completeness and logical consistency, with incomplete or contradictory entries excluded from analysis. Data validity was strengthened through triangulation of questionnaire results, interview narratives, and secondary documentation. Member checking was conducted with selected participants, who reviewed summaries of their interview responses to confirm interpretive accuracy. Coding reliability was enhanced by involving two independent coders in the thematic analysis, followed by reconciliation of discrepancies through discussion.

Quantitative data from the questionnaires were processed in Google Sheets to calculate frequencies and percentages of lexical recognition, which were presented in diagrams to illustrate generational differences. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically to identify recurring symbolic perceptions and explanatory factors related to lexical use and obsolescence. Secondary sources, including *Isi dan Kelengkapan Rumah Tangga Tradisional di Daerah Bali* (Widia et al., 1984), which documented traditional household structures and utensils, and *Kumpulan Satua (Dongeng Rakyat Bali)* (Suwija et al., 2019), a collection of Balinese folktales that illustrated ecological knowledge and cultural significance, were consulted to contextualize the findings within Balinese domestic traditions.

The data analysis applied Haugen's ecolinguistic parameters—environment, diversity, and interrelation—to interpret patterns of lexical change. The environmental dimension examined how modernization and globalization reshaped domestic practices; the diversity dimension captured generational variation in lexical retention; and the interrelation dimension explored how cultural meanings and ecological knowledge were transmitted or disrupted across generations. This sequential explanatory design (Creswell & Creswell, 2017) allowed quantitative findings to be elaborated through qualitative insights, thereby linking lexical erosion to broader sociocultural and ecological transformations in Balinese

3. Results and Discussion

This section presents and interprets the findings of the questionnaire concerning the knowledge and use of traditional Balinese kitchen terminology across three age groups. The analysis is grounded in an

ecolinguistic perspective, allowing the data to be read not merely as indicators of lexical familiarity, but as evidence of broader sociocultural, semiotic, and ecological transformations affecting the Balinese language in the domestic domain.

To provide contextual grounding, Table 1 presents a categorized lexicon of traditional Balinese kitchenware based on material composition (bamboo, wood, metal, pottery, glass, and stone) and functional grouping, including kitchen utensils, cookware, tableware, kitchen appliances, storage and organization, and kitchen furniture. This categorization reflects the material culture embedded in traditional Balinese culinary practices and serves as an analytical reference for examining patterns of lexical retention and loss across generations.

Table 1. Lexicon of Balinese Traditional Kitchenware

Kitchen Group	Name of Kitchenware
Kitchen Utensils	<i>siut kayu</i> ‘wooden ladle’, <i>siut besi</i> ‘iron ladle’, <i>tiuk</i> ‘knife’, <i>blakas</i> ‘cleaver knife’, <i>kikihan</i> ‘grater’, <i>sinduk kayu</i> , ‘wooden spoon’ <i>sinduk besi</i> ‘iron spoon’
Cookware (pots & pans)	<i>Cublukan</i> ‘pot for water or cooking’, <i>dandang</i> ‘large cooking pot’, <i>payuk besi</i> ‘iron pot’, <i>pangedangan</i> ‘earthenware cooking vessel or food container’, <i>payuk tanah</i> ‘earthenware pot’, <i>kukusan</i> ‘steamer (usually bamboo)’, <i>penggorengan besi</i> ‘iron frying pan’
Tableware (dining items)	<i>ingka</i> ‘serving plate or tray’, <i>sok kasi/nasi</i> , ‘bamboo rice container’ <i>kencéng</i> ‘iron water jar’, <i>caratan</i> ‘clay jug’, <i>lumur</i> ‘glass’
Kitchen Appliances	<i>semprong</i> ‘bamboo pipe for fire ignition’, <i>saang</i> ‘firewood’, <i>talenan</i> ‘wooden chopping board’, <i>penyeluhan</i> ‘scraping tool’, <i>jalikan</i> ‘furnace-like hearth’, <i>lesung</i> ‘mortar for pounding rice’, <i>cobék alu</i> ‘stone mortar and pestle’, <i>bungut paon</i> ‘clay or brick stove’
Storage & organization	<i>genjo</i> ‘water container (often clay)’, <i>jun</i> ‘clay large jar’, <i>gebeh</i> ‘clay vessel for water storage’, <i>lenggatan</i> ‘bamboo rack or shelf’
Kitchen furniture	<i>dampar</i> ‘wooden stool’, <i>taban</i> ‘wood-and-bamboo food platform’

The classification in Table 1 informed the design of the questionnaire, which aimed to capture patterns of recognition and use of traditional kitchen lexicon among respondents from different age groups. The results are summarized in Figure 5, which illustrates generational variation in familiarity with and practical engagement in traditional kitchen practices.

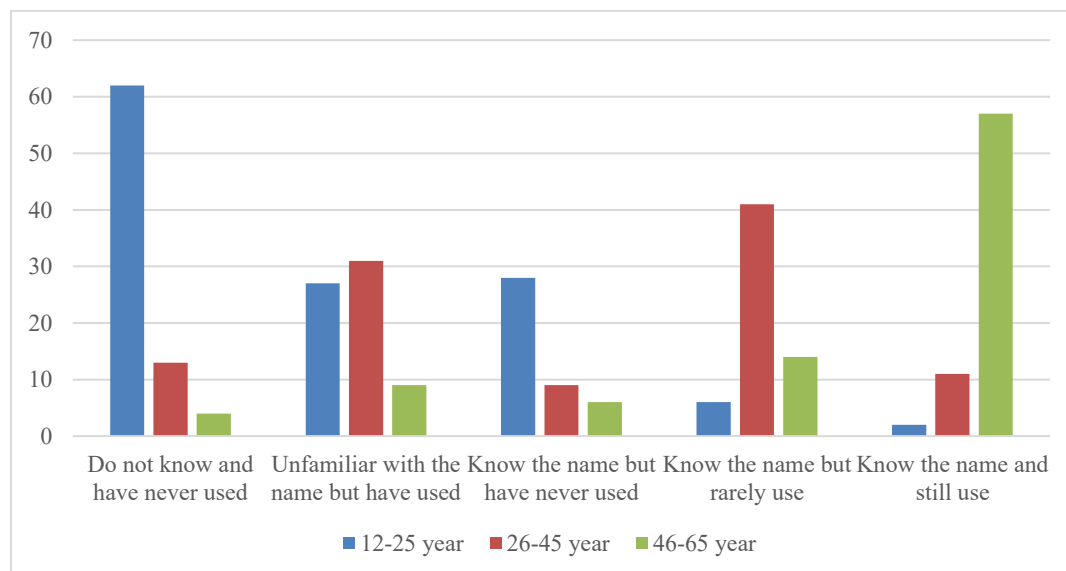


Figure 5. Respondent Knowledge of Traditional Kitchen Terms by Age

Figure 5 reveals a clear generational pattern in the recognition and use of traditional Balinese kitchen terminology. Younger respondents (12–25 years) demonstrate generally low levels of familiarity and minimal direct experience with traditional kitchen utensils. Most participants in this group reported limited knowledge and little to no practical engagement with traditional cookware and appliances, particularly items such as *jalikan* ‘earthen stove’ and storage tools like *sok kasi* or *sok nasi* ‘woven rice container’, which are now rarely encountered in contemporary urban kitchens.

However, these findings must be interpreted with caution due to the potential influence of hidden prestige variables. Recognition of traditional vocabulary does not necessarily correspond to actual practice. Respondents may claim familiarity with certain terms because of their symbolic or cultural prestige, even though they rarely or never use them in daily life. Consequently, the recognition data presented in Figure 4 should be regarded as indicative rather than definitive, and must be complemented by qualitative analysis to capture the realities of lexical use in contemporary practice.

From an ecolinguistic perspective, this pattern indicates a domain-specific language shift, in which lexical erosion occurs not across the Balinese language as a whole, but within the domestic kitchen domain. Rather than reflecting complete linguistic loss, the findings suggest a gradual transition from active lexical use to passive recognition among younger speakers, signaling a weakening of intergenerational transmission within everyday household practices.

In contrast, respondents from the older age group (46–65 years) exhibit substantially higher levels of recognition and continued use of traditional kitchen utensils, particularly those made from bamboo, wood, and coconut shells. This group demonstrates sustained engagement with traditional cooking practices, suggesting that they continue to function as custodians of both material culture and the linguistic knowledge associated with it. The adult group (26–45 years) occupies an intermediate position, showing moderate levels of recognition but limited use, which reflects a transitional stage in which traditional knowledge is acknowledged but no longer routinely practiced.

Beyond their functional roles, traditional kitchen utensils such as *jalikan*, *semprong*, and *bungut paon* historically operated as cultural semiotic resources within the *paon*. These items mediated social interaction, embodied ritual knowledge, and facilitated intergenerational learning through daily practice. Their declining presence in contemporary kitchens therefore signifies not only material replacement, but also the erosion of symbolic meanings encoded in both culinary practices and language. As these tools disappear from everyday use, the lexical items associated with them lose their semiotic grounding, accelerating their marginalization within the Balinese linguistic repertoire.

The observed generational differences also reflect a broader reconfiguration of the linguistic ecology of the Balinese kitchen driven by modernization and globalization. The increasing dominance of standardized kitchen technologies, including gas stoves, electric appliances, and modular kitchen layouts, reflects a prioritization of efficiency, hygiene, and convenience. These globalized domestic practices reshape the material and social environment of the household, displacing the ecological conditions that once sustained traditional utensils and their associated lexicon. Consequently, the domestic space no longer functions as a primary site for the transmission of traditional culinary knowledge and language.

The findings indicate that lexical erosion in the kitchen domain is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but reflects a deeper reconceptualization of cooking culture in Balinese society. Traditional terms such as *bungut paon* or *jalikan* encoded ritual, ecological, and communal meanings, whereas their replacement by “gas stove” or “countertop” signals a shift toward modern values of efficiency, hygiene, and convenience. In this sense, linguistic change parallels cultural change: as the physical form of kitchen utensils evolves, the associated lexicon diminishes, and with it the symbolic values embedded in Balinese cooking traditions. From an ecolinguistic perspective, this demonstrates how material transformation directly reshapes linguistic ecology, while from a cultural linguistics perspective, it reveals how language loss entails a reconfiguration of cultural conceptualisations of domestic life.

3.1 Balinese Kitchen Utensil Lexicon Remaining in Use Today

This subsection examines the shift of the Balinese kitchen lexicon as a domain-specific language shift, following Fishman’s (1991) framework, which emphasizes the weakening of minority languages when their functional domains are replaced by dominant socio-technological systems. The findings indicate that lexical retention is strongly correlated with continued functional use. Items such as *siut kayu* ‘wooden rice-stirring spoon’ and *siut besi* ‘metal rice-stirring spoon’ remain widely recognized and used across age groups, particularly among elderly respondents (46–65 years). Their persistence reflects what

Fishman terms intergenerational functional continuity, where language survives because the associated practices remain embedded in daily routines. Respondents emphasized durability, health considerations, and habitual use since childhood as key reasons for maintaining these utensils, suggesting that emotional attachment and embodied memory play a significant role in lexical preservation.

In contrast, utensils such as *kikihan* ‘traditional grater’ and *blakas* ‘cleaver knife’ exhibit clear signs of domain restriction. Among younger respondents (12–25 years), both recognition and usage are markedly low. These items are largely confined to ceremonial cooking contexts, particularly *mébat* ‘a communal ritual food preparation practice’. As Fishman (1991) argues, when a language variety or lexical set becomes limited to ritual or symbolic functions, it enters a vulnerable stage of shift, no longer supported by everyday communicative necessity.

This domain contraction is further reinforced by perceptions of safety, efficiency, and hygiene. Younger respondents frequently described the *kikihan* as unsafe and impractical compared to electric graters, aligning with broader modernization narratives in domestic technology. Figure 5, which contrasts a traditional *kikihan* with a modern grater, visually reinforces this shift by foregrounding differences in design, material, and perceived risk. From an ecolinguistic perspective (Haugen, 1972), such material transformations alter the linguistic ecosystem, reducing the environmental relevance of traditional lexemes and accelerating lexical attrition.



Figure 6. Comparison between a traditional Balinese *kikihan* (left) and a modern grater (right).
Source: <https://baliamera.com/> (Reezuls, 2021) (left) and <https://shopee.co.id>. (right)

Similarly, the *blakas* is predominantly recognized as a ceremonial tool rather than a functional household object. As illustrated in Figure 6, its use during *mébat* activities remains symbolically significant but socially limited. Importantly, participation in such events is no longer universal, as many adolescents and young adults are not actively involved in *sekaa truna-truni* ‘village youth organization’. This reduced participation disrupts intergenerational transmission, weakening what Fishman identifies as the home–community axis crucial for language maintenance.



Figure 7. Traditional *mébat* activity in a Balinese youth organization (Sekaa Truna Truni)
Source: <https://bali.tribunnews.com/> (Aryanta, 2019)

Overall, the data reveal that the Balinese kitchen lexicon is not uniformly disappearing but undergoing selective retention and functional reassignment. Lexical items associated with everyday cooking practices remain relatively stable, while those tied to labor-intensive, ceremonial, or technologically obsolete activities are increasingly marginalized. This pattern confirms that language shift in the Balinese kitchen domain is driven less by outright language abandonment than by reconfiguration of domains, where modern tools replace traditional practices and, consequently, their associated vocabulary.

From a broader ecolinguistic standpoint, the Balinese kitchen can be understood as a micro-ecology where linguistic vitality depends on the balance between cultural continuity, technological adaptation, and social participation. As traditional utensils gradually disappear from daily domestic practice, their associated lexemes become ecologically endangered, preserved primarily as cultural symbols rather than sustained through routine use. This domain-specific shift highlights the critical role of everyday practices in maintaining linguistic diversity within minority languages.

3.2 Existence and Usage of Balinese Kitchen Utensil Lexicon in Urban Denpasar Communities

This subsection focuses on intergenerational variation in the recognition and use of traditional Balinese kitchen terminology, drawing on quantitative data from the questionnaire and interpreted through ecolinguistic and language shift perspectives. By stratifying respondents into three age groups, namely adolescents (12–25), adults (26–45), and the elderly (46–65), the study demonstrates systematic differences in lexical retention that mirror broader sociocultural and technological transformations within Balinese households. The generational erosion of kitchen vocabulary observed in this study aligns with Aryani's (2019) findings on the decline of fishing terminology, where younger speakers demonstrated limited recognition of traditional lexemes.

Quantitatively, the results demonstrate a clear age-graded pattern of lexical knowledge, as summarized in Figure 5, which presents the percentage of respondents in each age group who recognized and reported using traditional kitchen items. The elderly group consistently shows the highest levels of recognition and active use across nearly all lexical categories, including kitchen utensils, cookware, tableware, appliances, storage, and furniture. This group functions as the primary lexical reservoir, maintaining both the terms and the associated practices through lived experience and habitual use.

In contrast, the adolescent group exhibits the lowest levels of recognition and usage, particularly for lexemes associated with traditional appliances (*jalikan*, *bungut paon*, *semprong*), storage (*genjo*, *jun*, *gebeh*), and furniture (*taban*, *dampar*). Quantitative frequencies indicate that many respondents in this group either selected “do not know” or recognized the object only visually without knowing its Balinese term. This gap signals not merely a decline in usage but a process of lexical decoupling, where objects, if encountered, are no longer linguistically encoded in the heritage language.

The adult group occupies an intermediate position, reflecting a transitional generation. While recognition rates remain relatively high for items still encountered in domestic or ceremonial contexts (e.g., *ingka*, *sok kasi*, *payuk besi*), reported usage is substantially lower than that of the elderly group. This discrepancy between recognition and use suggests a stage of passive lexical competence, where terms are understood but no longer activated in daily interaction. From Fishman's (1991) perspective, this indicates early-stage domain shift, as lexical knowledge survives cognitively but lacks functional reinforcement.

To further illustrate this pattern, Table 2 (lexical retention by age group) categorizes items into three retention levels: high (recognized and used), moderate (recognized but rarely used), and low (neither recognized nor used). Items such as *siut kayu* and *ingka* fall into the high-retention category across all age groups, while tools like *kikihan*, *blakas*, and *lesung* show a steep decline from elderly to adolescent respondents. The quantitative distribution confirms that functional frequency is the strongest predictor of lexical survival, outweighing cultural prestige alone.

Table 2. Lexical Retention by Age Group

Kitchen Domain	Lexical Items (Examples)	Adolescents (12–25)	Adults (26–45)	Elderly (46–65)	Retention Pattern
Kitchen Utensils	<i>siut kayu</i> , <i>siut besi</i>	High recognition, moderate use	High recognition, moderate–high use	High recognition, high use	Stable retention
	<i>kikihan</i> , <i>blakas</i>	Low recognition, rare use	Moderate recognition, rare use	High recognition, limited use (ceremonial)	Ritual-based retention
Cookware	<i>payuk besi</i> , <i>penggorengan besi</i>	Moderate recognition, rare use	High recognition, moderate use	High recognition, high use	Functional retention
	<i>kukusan</i> , <i>dandang</i> , <i>payuk tanah</i>	Very low recognition, no use	Low recognition, rare use	Moderate recognition, limited use	Declining retention
Tableware	<i>ingka</i> , <i>sok kasi/sok nasi</i>	Moderate recognition, rare use	High recognition, moderate use	High recognition, high use	Partial retention
	<i>kencéng</i> , <i>caratan</i>	Low recognition, no use	Moderate recognition, rare use	High recognition, habitual use	Age-bound retention
Kitchen Appliances	<i>talenan</i> , <i>cobék</i>	High recognition, high use (material-shifted)	High recognition, high use	High recognition, high use	Lexical retention, material shift
	<i>jalikan</i> , <i>bungut paon</i> , <i>semprong</i> , <i>lesung</i>	Very low recognition, no use	Low recognition, no use	Moderate recognition, rare use	Severe lexical erosion
Storage & Organization	<i>genjo</i> , <i>jun</i> , <i>gebeh</i>	Very low recognition, no use	Low recognition, no use	Moderate recognition, rare use	Obsolete domain
	<i>lenggatan</i>	Very low recognition, no use	Low recognition, no use	Moderate recognition, rare use	Structural loss

Kitchen Furniture	<i>taban, dampar</i>	Very low recognition, no use	Low recognition, no use	Moderate recognition, rare use	Near-extinct lexicon
Everyday Glassware	<i>lumur</i>	Object used, term unknown	Object used, term rarely used	Object and term used	Lexical replacement (Indonesian)

From an ecolinguistic standpoint, these intergenerational differences reflect changes in the linguistic environment of the home. As modern kitchen appliances, modular storage systems, and minimalist furniture become dominant, the ecological niches that once sustained traditional lexemes disappear. Consequently, younger speakers grow up in environments where the referents, and therefore the corresponding terms, are absent. This pattern substantiates Haugen's (1972) claim that language vitality is contingent upon sustained interaction between speakers and their material as well as social environments.

Importantly, the data also reveal that ceremonial exposure alone is insufficient to ensure lexical transmission. Although adolescents may encounter traditional tools during events such as *mébat* or religious ceremonies, the low frequency and limited participation reduce opportunities for sustained lexical acquisition. Quantitatively, recognition without usage remains high only for a small subset of culturally salient items, while the majority show declining familiarity. This pattern underscores the fragility of ritual-only transmission, which lacks the density required for long-term language maintenance.

Overall, the quantitative evidence confirms that lexical retention in the Balinese kitchen domain follows a generational gradient, with the elderly maintaining active competence, adults demonstrating partial retention, and adolescents experiencing significant lexical loss. Rather than indicating abrupt language abandonment, these patterns point to a gradual restructuring of linguistic competence, shaped by shifting domestic practices, technological adoption, and reduced intergenerational interaction within the kitchen space.

3.3 Domain-Specific Language Shift in the Balinese Kitchen Lexicon

The degradation of the Balinese kitchen utensil lexicon observed in this study cannot be separated from broader processes of globalization and modernization that reshape domestic life in urban Bali. From an ecolinguistic perspective, globalization operates as a restructuring force that simultaneously transforms material environments, social practices, and cultural value systems. As these ecological components shift, the linguistic elements embedded within them, particularly domain-specific vocabulary, are inevitably affected.

In Denpasar, globalization manifests most visibly through the standardization of domestic technologies and lifestyles. The widespread adoption of gas stoves, electric rice cookers, modular kitchen sets, water dispensers, and processed food products reflects the global circulation of domestic ideals centered on efficiency, hygiene, and time-saving. These technologies do not merely replace traditional tools; they redefine the ecological conditions under which language is used. As illustrated in Figure 8, the transition from traditional rice-cooking systems involving *kukusan* and *dandang* to electric rice cookers represents not only a technological substitution but also a contraction of culinary practices that once required a rich and specialized lexicon. When utensils such as *jalikan*, *bungut paon*, *kukusan*, and *lesung* disappear from everyday practice, the ecological niches that once sustained their associated lexicon are progressively dismantled.

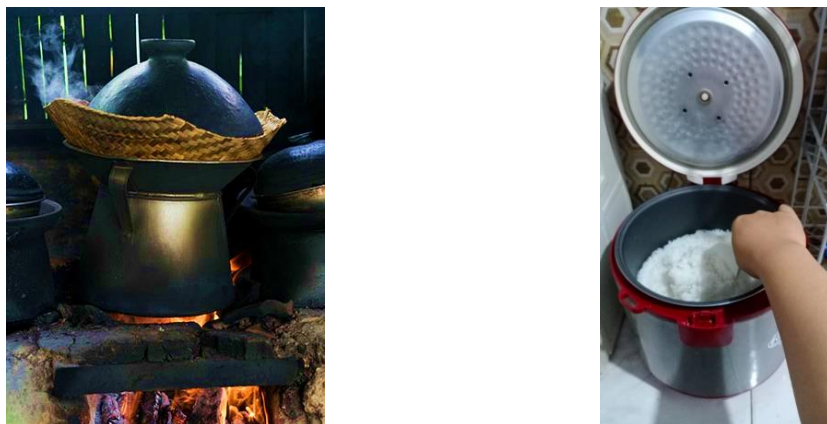


Figure 8. Comparison between a traditional rice cooking pot (left) and a modern rice cooker (right).
Source: <https://wapadiumeubud.com> (Unknown, 2024) (left) and Personal photograph (right)

The restructuring effects of globalization extend beyond cooking practices to domestic infrastructure and resource management. Traditional water storage and distribution practices, which relied on vessels such as *jun* and *gebeh*, have been largely replaced by piped water systems and modern storage tanks supplied by state or commercial providers. This shift is visually captured in Figure 9, which contrasts traditional water-carrying practices with contemporary household water storage. Such infrastructural transformations eliminate routine activities that once involved specific tools and terminologies, thereby accelerating the disappearance of the associated ecological lexicon from daily interaction.



Figure 9. Two teenagers carrying a *jun* on their heads (left) and a water tank at home used for storing water (right). Source: @sejarahbali (Instagram) and personal photograph

Taken together with the spatial transformation of kitchens shown in Figure 4, these visual comparisons demonstrate how globalization reorganizes domestic space and practice at multiple levels. Traditional kitchens characterized by open layouts and multifunctional areas are increasingly replaced by enclosed, compact, and standardized designs. These changes reduce opportunities for communal, process-oriented activities in favor of individualized and automated routines. As a consequence, language use within the kitchen becomes increasingly minimal and functional, leaving little space for the maintenance of traditional lexical forms.

Crucially, globalization introduces a dominant ideology of modernity that reassigns value to domestic practices. Traditional kitchen utensils are frequently reinterpreted as inefficient, unsafe, or

unhygienic, while modern appliances are framed as clean, practical, and superior. This ideological shift is evident in respondents' perceptions of tools such as the *kikihan* and *jalikan*, which younger participants often describe as dangerous or outdated. These evaluations are not neutral assessments of utility but reflect the internalization of global norms that privilege speed, convenience, and risk avoidance. Within this ideological framework, traditional kitchen practices—and the lexicon that accompanies them—are symbolically marginalized.

From an ecolinguistic standpoint, this process illustrates how language degradation emerges as a secondary effect of environmental transformation. The decline of the Balinese kitchen lexicon does not result from deliberate language abandonment but from the gradual erosion of the material and social environments that support its use. As globalized technologies and lifestyles dominate domestic spaces, Balinese terms are increasingly replaced by Indonesian or globally recognizable labels. The lexical shift from *lumur* to *gelas* 'glass', or the disappearance of terms such as *lenggatan* and *bungut paon*, exemplifies how globalization promotes linguistic homogenization at the micro-level of household interaction.

At the same time, globalization does not entirely erase traditional elements but often recontextualizes them. As demonstrated in the findings, traditional kitchen utensils persist in restricted domains such as ceremonial cooking (*mébat*), cultural performances, and tourism-oriented cooking classes. In these contexts, traditional tools and their associated lexicon function primarily as symbolic or representational resources rather than as components of everyday practice. This recontextualization transforms living linguistic resources into curated cultural artifacts, offering visibility but providing limited support for long-term lexical vitality.

The reconfiguration of linguistic ecology observed in this study thus reflects a broader pattern of global influence on local languages. In urban Balinese households, the kitchen is no longer a central site of intergenerational interaction and linguistic transmission but a streamlined space optimized for efficiency. Consequently, the Balinese language loses one of its traditional domains of daily use, accelerating lexical erosion even as the language continues to survive in ritual, ceremonial, or formal contexts. The degradation of the Balinese kitchen utensil lexicon is best understood as an ecological consequence of globalization-driven change. This perspective highlights the need to approach language maintenance not merely as a linguistic issue but as an ecological one encompassing material, social, and ideological environments.

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the degradation of the Balinese kitchen utensil lexicon in urban Denpasar is an ecological consequence of broader processes of globalization and modernization rather than a result of deliberate language abandonment. The findings show that the replacement of traditional kitchen tools and infrastructures by modern technologies systematically removes the domains of practice that once sustained specialized culinary vocabulary. As these material and social environments disappear, the associated lexicon undergoes contraction and loss. From an ecolinguistic perspective, the transformation of domestic space through standardized kitchen layouts, electric appliances, and modern water systems has reduced communal interaction and intergenerational transmission within the kitchen. Consequently, this space no longer functions as a key ecological niche for maintaining Balinese culinary terminology. Intergenerational patterns further confirm this shift, with elderly respondents retaining higher lexical knowledge while younger generations display limited familiarity, reflecting domain-based language shift as described by Fishman. While globalization does not entirely eliminate traditional elements, it recontextualizes them into restricted ceremonial or cultural settings, where traditional utensils and their lexicon function symbolically rather than as part of everyday communication. This study therefore highlights that language maintenance cannot be addressed solely through linguistic intervention but must also consider the material and social environments that support language use. Preserving domain-specific vocabulary requires attention to everyday practices and spaces in which language is habitually embedded.

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Enhancing Japanese Communication Skills through an Industry-Based Roleplay Module Using Communicative Language Teaching Approach

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Abstract - This study investigates the effectiveness of an industry-based role-play module developed using the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach for enhancing Japanese communication skills among tourism vocational students. The research employed a Research and Development (R&D) design integrated with classroom action research. Involving 20 students of the Tour and Travel Business Program at Politeknik Pariwisata Bali who had completed two semesters of basic Japanese Language. Data were collected through speaking performance assessments, observation checklists, peer evaluations, and reflective journals. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to measure improvement across two learning cycles, while qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis. The results indicate a substantial improvement in students' communicative competence, particularly in fluency, pragmatic accuracy (*keigo* usage), and professional etiquette, with overall performance increasing from 65% in Cycle I to 88% in Cycle II. The findings suggest that integrating authentic tourism industry contexts into roleplay-based learning within the CLT framework effectively strengthens students' professional Japanese communication competence.

Keywords: communicative language teaching, experiential learning theory, Japanese teaching module, task-based language teaching, vocational education

1. Introduction

Learning foreign languages in tourism polytechnics is essential, as this competency is required for graduates to enter the global workforce effectively. Bali, one of Indonesia's leading tourist destinations, attracts many international visitors, making foreign-language proficiency a critical skill for tourism professionals who interact extensively with foreign guests. In this context, the ability to communicate in foreign languages is not only a linguistic requirement but also a key component of service quality and professional competence (Basturkmen, 2022; Hyland, 2022). However, foreign language instruction in vocational and polytechnic settings often fails to reflect authentic industry contexts, as it tends to focus more on language structure rather than practical communication. Consequently, there is a need for pedagogical innovation that integrates real-world communication scenarios and equips students with the ability to use language effectively in professional settings (Ellis, 2021; Littlewood, 2022).

In this study, the focus is on Japanese language learning within the Tour and Travel Business study program, in which Japanese courses are allocated up to 4 credits. Students receive instruction over two semesters, with 16 face-to-face meetings per semester. Given this limited instructional time, the expected learning outcome is student's ability to communicate effectively in Japanese within their professional field. Therefore, innovative and efficient learning approaches are required to achieve these outcomes. This research aims to improve students' communication skills by developing and implementing an industry-based roleplay module grounded in the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach and informed by the results of a needs analysis. The needs analysis revealed that students require the ability to perform key communicative functions commonly used in the tourism industry, such as welcoming guests, introducing services, handling reservations, giving directions, and responding to customer requests, all with appropriate levels of politeness, including the use of *keigo* expressions.

These identified needs highlight the importance of not only linguistic accuracy but also pragmatic and intercultural competence in professional communication. Therefore, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes meaningful interaction and the use of language in authentic contexts, is considered an appropriate approach to facilitate the development of these competencies (Littlewood, 2022). By integrating the findings of the needs analysis into role-play-based learning activities, this study ensures that language instruction aligns with real-world workplace communication demands.

Needs Analysis (NA) is a systematic, iterative process for identifying learners' communicative needs within specific institutional and professional contexts. Contemporary needs analysis frameworks emphasize aligning instructional content and tasks with real-world communicative demands rather than relying solely on general learner preferences or subjective data (Basturkmen, 2022; Long, 2015). In vocational education, needs analysis plays a critical role in bridging academic instruction and workplace expectations. Target needs refer to the communicative tasks learners must perform in their future professional roles, including linguistic competence, pragmatic appropriateness, and intercultural awareness (Hyland, 2022). Therefore, the NA in this study was conducted to identify the communicative functions required in tourism service interactions, particularly those involving Japanese-speaking guests. The findings of the needs analysis informed the design of instructional materials structured into industry-based modules.

The results of the needs analysis indicate that students are required to perform specific communicative tasks in real tourism service contexts, such as greeting guests, providing information, and handling service-related interactions using appropriate linguistic and cultural expressions. These findings suggest that language learning should be oriented toward task performance rather than isolated knowledge of language structures. Therefore, an instructional approach that emphasizes the use of language through meaningful and goal-oriented activities is needed. In this regard, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is considered an appropriate pedagogical framework, as it enables learners to develop communicative competence by completing authentic tasks that closely resemble real-world workplace situations.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) emphasizes meaningful tasks that reflect authentic, real-world activities as the core unit of instruction (Ellis, 2021). A task is defined as an activity in which learners use language to achieve a specific communicative outcome, with a focus on meaning rather than form. This approach is particularly suitable for vocational education because it mirrors workplace communication practices. The TBLT framework generally consists of three main stages: Pre-Task, Task Cycle, and Language Focus (Gutiérrez, 2024; Long, 2015). The Pre-Task stage introduces the topic and activates relevant background knowledge. The Task Cycle includes task performance, planning, and reporting activities, encouraging learners to engage in meaningful interaction. The Language Focus stage

allows learners to analyse linguistic features and practice forms that emerged during the task. In this study, role-play activities served as communicative tasks that represented fundamental workplace scenarios in the tourism industry, particularly within the Tour and Travel Business study program.

While Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) provides the structural framework for organizing learning activities through meaningful tasks, it is equally important to ensure that language use within these tasks remains communicative, authentic, and interaction-oriented. In this context, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) serves as the underlying pedagogical principle that guides how language is used during task performance. CLT emphasizes not only task completion but also the quality of interaction, including the appropriateness of expressions, fluency, and the ability to respond effectively in real communication situations. Therefore, integrating CLT principles within TBLT-based roleplay activities ensures that students develop not only task completion skills but also comprehensive communicative competence.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasises meaningful interaction, authentic communication, and the development of communicative competence rather than isolated grammatical mastery. Recent research confirms that contextualised communicative tasks significantly enhance speaking performance and learner engagement (Salam & Luksfinanto, 2024). Communicative competence involves grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. In Japanese tourism communication, this includes the appropriate use of *Keigo* (honorific expressions), polite forms, and culturally appropriate service etiquette. In Japanese professional communication, particularly in tourism and hospitality contexts, *keigo* (honorific language) plays a crucial role in demonstrating politeness, respect, and professionalism. *Keigo* generally consists of two primary forms: *sonkeigo* (respectful language) and *kenjougo* (humble language), both of which are widely used in service interactions to maintain harmonious social relationships and professional etiquette (Cook & Burdelski, 2016).

Sonkeigo is used to show respect to the listener or the person being spoken about, typically the guest or customer. In tourism communication, tour guides use *sonkeigo* to acknowledge guests' higher social status and foster a courteous service atmosphere. Expressions such as *goran kudasai* (please look) and *irasshaimase* (welcome) are commonly used when addressing tourists. In contrast, *kenjougo* is used by the speaker to lower themselves or their in-group, showing humility toward the guest. This form is particularly important in hospitality and tourism services because it reflects modesty, professionalism, and respect toward customers. Expressions such as *moushimasu* (humble form of "to say/name oneself") and *goannai itashimasu* (I will guide you) are frequently used in tourism guiding interactions to maintain polite and service-oriented communication with Japanese guests (Andriyani et al., 2020). In tourism-guiding contexts, the appropriate use of both *sonkeigo* and *kenjougo* is important for maintaining intercultural politeness and professional communication standards. Therefore, the roleplay activities in this study were designed to familiarize students with these forms of *keigo* in authentic tourism service interactions. By integrating CLT principles with task-based roleplay simulations, this study aims to promote not only fluency and accuracy but also pragmatic and professional competence aligned with tourism workplace standards.

The findings of the needs analysis provided the foundation for identifying authentic communicative tasks required in tourism service contexts. These identified tasks were then operationalised into experiential learning activities grounded in Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) (Kolb & Kolb, 2020; Li & Liu, 2023), ensuring that students engaged in concrete workplace simulations rather than abstract language drills. Within this experiential framework, TBLT served as the instructional structure through which role-play activities were organised into pre-task, task-cycle, and language-focus stages, facilitating meaningful interaction and structured reflection.

Simultaneously, CLT principles ensured that language use during roleplay remained authentic, purposeful, and interaction-oriented, emphasizing pragmatic appropriateness and professional etiquette. Therefore, the development of the industry-based roleplay module integrates needs-driven curriculum design, experiential learning principles, and communicative tasks to enhance students' professional competence in Japanese communication.

The integration of Needs Analysis, Task-Based Language Teaching, and Communicative Language Teaching forms the conceptual foundation of this study. Needs Analysis identifies workplace communication demands; TBLT provides the instructional framework through authentic tasks; and CLT ensures that communication remains meaningful, interactive, and contextually appropriate. This integrated framework supports the development of an industry-based role-play module that simulates real tourism service interactions and enhances students' professional Japanese communication skills.

Roleplay allows students to learn through hands-on experience through work simulations. Roleplay, developed through an analysis of language needs in the travel industry, will provide students with experience communicating in line with their field.

2. Method

This research was conducted as Classroom Action Research (CAR), which involves iterative cycles of planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection to improve instructional practice (Mills, 2022; Stringer, 2023). CAR was selected for its collaborative and reflective nature, enabling researchers and participants (students, lecturers, and travel industry guides) to systematically evaluate and refine the industry-based roleplay module (Ferrance, 2021; Herr & Anderson, 2021). Research was conducted in two cycles. The study subjects are 20 students of the Bali Tourism Polytechnic Tour and Travel Business Study Program in two semesters. They learned basic Japanese for two consecutive semesters. Other subjects include Japanese lecturers and travel industry guides. The research procedure includes planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection. Figure 1 shows the Conceptual Framework Diagram in this study.

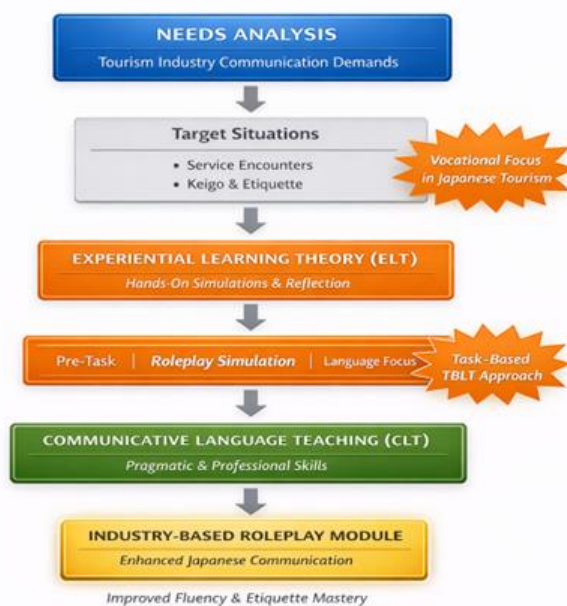


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework for this study. The model begins with a needs analysis to identify authentic communication needs in the tourism industry. These needs inform the design of experiential learning activities grounded in ELT. Instructional implementation follows the TBLT framework, while CLT principles ensure meaningful, contextually appropriate communication. Integrating these components yields an industry-based role-play module designed to improve students' professional communication skills in Japanese.

Communicative Language Teaching is effective in developing students' communicative competence through authentic learning interactions (Salam & Luksfinanto, 2024). In this study, the learning process within the CLT and TBLT-based module was implemented through a sequence of integrated activities. The lecturer first introduced the context by presenting professional video examples and highlighting relevant vocabulary and expressions related to workplace situations. This was followed by an explanation of the task objectives and real-life communication scenarios to ensure students understood the purpose of the activity.

Students then engaged in guided practice using scripts and vocabulary support, while also being introduced to cultural aspects, including appropriate intonation, body language, and communication etiquette. Subsequently, students performed roleplay tasks in pairs or groups without relying on written texts, thereby simulating authentic workplace interactions. The process concluded with reflection and

feedback, where lecturers provided input on language use, communication strategies, and cultural appropriateness, and students documented their learning experiences. To assess the aspects to be evaluated, a rubric for evaluating students' speaking ability and an instrument for observing roleplay activities were prepared.

Data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively to evaluate the effectiveness of roleplay modules in improving students' Japanese communication skills. Planning for the preparation of roleplay modules was completed in the previous semester following an analysis of student needs. Observations are conducted in the field, focusing on the interaction between the tour guide and guests. Based on the observations, a module was prepared as a conversation on the interaction between tour guides and guests in various situations.

Data collection is carried out in two stages. The first stage introduces language-learning needs through a communicative language teaching approach. Data from the results of field observations on the interaction of tour guides and tourists. This data serves as a guide for developing Japanese language learning modules for the travel industry. Then the data is applied to the role-play module. Modules arranged according to learning needs are applied in the classroom; their use is observed, and the process is documented. The application of the learning module model is carried out in two cycles. The first cycle was conducted to observe student's progress in role-playing. The second cycle involves applying modules that have been improved based on observations from the first cycle.

To identify the aspects to be assessed, a rubric was prepared to evaluate student's speaking ability, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Speaking Ability Assessment Rubric (Japanese Communication)

No	Aspects Assessed	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Sufficient (2)	Less (1)
1	Smooth	Very smooth, with no lag	Smooth with little lag	Frequent stalls	Intermittent
2	Pronunciation Clarity	Very accurate and precise pronunciation	Pronunciation is relatively straightforward, with a few mistakes	Some annoying errors	Unclear, lots of errors
3	Language Structure	Sentence structure according to the work context	Minor errors do not interfere with meaning	Recurring errors	The structure is wrong until it is not understood
4	Relevance of the Response	Responsive, professional response	Generally appropriate	Some responses are inappropriate	Confused/d isconnected responses
5	Use of Special Expressions	Using Japanese verb expressions (<i>keigo</i>) appropriately	Using a portion of <i>keigo</i>	Rarely use	Not using at all

The scoring for the speaking ability assessment rubric is as follows; Total score maximum 20; Score ≥ 16 = very competent; Score 11-15 = competent; Score ≤ 10 = need guidance. During the implementation of the roleplay module, observations were conducted using six indicators, as shown in the following table.

Table 2. Roleplay Activity Observation Instruments

No	Observation indicator	Yes	No	Note
1	Students actively and enthusiastically participate in role-play activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

2	Students use vocabulary and expressions appropriate to the work context.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Students can interact without relying on written text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Students demonstrate an understanding of Japanese cultural communication etiquette (keigo, manners)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Students can complete conversations with a logical flow.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	The activity takes place on time, and students participate in at least one simulation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Data analysis was carried out using a scoring system on learner’s communication skills. There are five aspects of assessment, namely 1) fluency, 2) clarity of pronunciation, 3) language structure, 4) relevance of responses, and 5) use of special expressions. Observations were also made of role-play activities using six indicators, as shown in Table 2. Data were analysed using a mixed descriptive and reflective approach appropriate for Classroom Action Research (CAR). Quantitative data were obtained from student’s communication performance scores across two cycles and analyzed using descriptive statistics to calculate percentage improvements and trends in the distribution of performance. Descriptive statistical analysis is commonly employed in classroom-based intervention research to determine instructional effectiveness and observable learning gains (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Mills, 2022).

Qualitative data from classroom observations, peer evaluations, and reflective notes were analyzed thematically to identify patterns in student’s pragmatic development and participation behavior. Thematic analysis enables researchers to interpret recurring themes in classroom interactions and learner responses systematically (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The cyclical nature of data analysis followed the reflective model of Classroom Action Research, where findings from Cycle I informed instructional adjustments implemented in Cycle II. This iterative evaluative process strengthens instructional validity and supports pedagogical refinement (Stringer, 2023). Triangulation was employed by comparing quantitative performance data with qualitative observational findings to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the results. Combining multiple data sources is recommended in action research to ensure methodological rigor and balanced interpretation (Herr & Anderson, 2021).

3. Results and Discussion

The roleplay module was designed around a structured narrative that represents real tourism service interactions, from picking up guests at the airport to accompanying them until departure. The module consists of 10 roleplay scenarios, with vocabulary (*kotoba*) and grammar (*bunpou*) aligned with the learning materials in each lesson. The module was implemented in Cycle I, subsequently revised based on evaluation results, and re-implemented in Cycle II.

Field observations and interviews with professional tour guides informed the development of roleplay tasks. These data identified key communicative situations in tourism services, such as greeting guests, providing information, handling luggage, and politely closing interactions. Based on these findings, roleplay scripts were developed to simulate authentic communication between guides and Japanese-speaking tourists.

Examples of roleplay tasks include airport pick-up interactions, conversations during the journey to the hotel, tour explanations, and farewell interactions when escorting guests back to the airport. These scenarios progressively increase in linguistic complexity, allowing students to develop both basic and advanced communication skills, including the use of polite expressions (*keigo*) and appropriate service etiquette.

The following are examples of roleplay given to students to be done from cycle 1 to cycle 2.

Script 1. Title: "Picking Up at Airport"

G = Guide O = Guest

- G : しつれいですが、にほんのかたですか。
Shitsurei desu ga, Nihon no kata desu ka? (Excuse me, are you Japanese?)
- O : はい、そうです。
Hai, sou desu. (Yes, I am)
- G : たなかさまですか。
Tanaka-sama desu ka? (Are you Ms. Tanaka?)
- O : はい、たなか ゆうこです。
Hai, Tanaka Yuuko desu. (Yes, Tanaka Yuuko)
- G : はじめまして。バリへようこそ。わたしはアンディと申します。
Hajimemashite. Bali e youkoso. Watashi wa Andi to moushimasu.
Welcome to Bali, I am Andi.
カマラツアーのガイドです。どうぞ、よろしくおねがいします。
Kamala tsuaa no gaido desu. Douzo, yoroshiku onegaishimasu.
Kamala tour guide. Nice to meet you.
- O : はじめまして。たなかです。
Hajimemashite. Tanaka desu. (I am Tanaka)
こちらこそ、よろしくおねがいします。
Kochira koso yoroshiku onegaishimasu. (Nice to meet you too)

Script 1 presents the first roleplay given to students. The background of this roleplay is picking up guests at the airport and meeting them for the first time. Students are given this task after completing the first lesson on *jikoshoukai* (introduction). *Sonkeigo* variety is inserted in the word "*nihon no kata*" instead of "*nihon jin*" and *kenjougo* is a form of the word "*to moushimasu*" instead of "*desu*". The expression *Tanaka sama* denotes respect toward a guest or customer. While its communicative function aligns with that of *sonkeigo* by elevating the addressee's status, it is not classified as *sonkeigo* grammatically. Instead, it represents the use of an honorific suffix.

Before roleplaying, the lecturer provides an overview of the topic and highlights key considerations for the task. The cultural background of Japanese guests and the body language that should be of concern are also explained to students. This aims to provide a comprehensive understanding. After the teacher explains the key points, the students watch this role-play video. Each roleplay module is accompanied by a video that aims to provide students with a clearer picture.

Script 2. Title: "On the way to the Hotel"

G = Guide O = Guest

- G : お客様、こちらはバリの地図です。どうぞ ご覧ください。
Okyakusama, Kochira wa Bali no chizu desu. Douzo goran kudasai.
Dear guest, this is the map of Bali. Please have a look
- O : ありがとうございます。
Arigatou gozaimasu.
Thank you
- G : こちらは マリンスポーツのパンフレットです。
Kochira wa Marin supootsu no panfuretto desu.
And this is the brochure of marine sports
- O : どうも。
Doumo.
Thank you
- G : それでは、ホテルにとうちゃくしました。
Soredewa, Hoteru ni touchaku shimashita.
Alright, we arrive at the hotel
このスーツケースは おきやくさまの ですか。
Kono suutsu keesu wa okiyaku-sama no desu ka?
Does this suitcase belong to you, sir/madam?

- O: はい、そうです。
Hai, sou desu.
Yes right.
- G: これもおきやくさまのかばんですか。
Kore mo okyaku-sama no kaban desu ka?
This is also your bag?
- O: はい、それもわたしのかばんです。
Hai, sore mo watashi no kaban desu.
Yes, that bag is also mine.
- G: ベルデスクスタッフがにもつをおはこびします。しょうしょうおまちください。
Beru desuku sutaffu ga nimotsu o ohakobi shimasu. Shoushou omachikudasai.
Bellstaf will carry your luggage. Would you wait a moment?

In script 2, the expression *こちら* (*kochira*) is a more polite alternative to *これ* (*kore*, “this”) and is frequently used in tourism communication to address guests respectfully. Although not a grammatical form of *sonkeigo*, it functions as a courteous demonstrative expression. Similarly, *ごらんください* (*goran kudasai*) is the *sonkeigo* form of *みてください* (*mite kudasai*, “please look”), derived from the verb *見る* (*miru*). By using *ごらんください*, the speaker elevates the listener’s action and shows respect, making it appropriate for professional service encounters. Together, these expressions contribute to a polite and guest-oriented communication style.

The expression *おはこびします* (*ohakobi shimasu*) is derived from the verb *運ぶ* (*hakobu*), meaning “to carry” or “to transport.” It follows the honorific pattern *お + verb stem + します*, which is commonly used as a form of *kenjougo* (humble language). In this sentence, the bell desk staff refers to their own action of carrying the guest’s luggage. By employing *おはこびします*, the speaker humbles their own action while showing respect to the guest. Therefore, *おはこびします* is classified as *kenjougo*, because it lowers the speaker’s side rather than elevating the guest’s action. Script 2 is the second roleplay given to students. The background of the second roleplay is the journey from the airport to the hotel for check-in. Starting with the conversation in the car and continuing through the moment guests arrive at the hotel.

Script 3. Title: “Explanation of one-day tour activities”

G = Guide O = Guest

- G: みなさま、おはよう ございます。
Minasama, Ohayou gozaimasu.
Good morning, ladies and gentlemen
本日はウブドツアーに参加いただきまして、ありがとうございます。
Honjitsu wa Ubud tsuaa ni sanku itadakimashite, arigatou gozaimasu.
Thank you for joining us on our Ubud Tour today
私はガイドのアンディと申します。どうぞよろしくお願ひいたします。
Watashi wa gaido no Andi to moushimasu. Douzo yoroshiku onegai itashimasu.
My name is Andi, and I am your guide. Nice to meet you
本日のツアーの説明をします。
Honjitsu no tsuaa no setsumei o shimasu
I will explain about today’s tour
まず、車でウブド市場に行きます。買い物します。
Mazu kuruma de ubud ichiba ni ikimasu. Kaimono shimasu.
First, we are going to the Ubud Market and shopping
そのあと、モンキーフォレストに行きます。モンキーフォレストにさるがたくさんいます。
Sonoato, Monkey forest ni ikimasu. Monkey forest ni saru ga takusan imasu.
After that, we are going to Monkey Forest. In Monkey Forest, there are a lot of monkeys
昼食は 12 時です。インドネシア料理です。
Chuushoku wa 12ji desu. Indonesia ryouri desu.
The lunch will be at 12.00 with Indonesian food
2 時にテガラランライステラスに行きます。
2ji ni Tegallalang Rice Terrace ni ikimasu.
At 2 o'clock we will go to Tegallalang Rice Terrace
4 時にホテルに帰ります。

Aji ni Hoteru ni kaerimasu.
 At 4 o'clock we're going back to the hotel

In script 3, words 申します (*mōshimasu*) and いたします (*itashimasu*) are classified as *kenjougo* because they are used to humble the speaker's own actions or position to show respect toward the listener. By lowering oneself rather than elevating the other person, these expressions demonstrate politeness and deference, which are the defining characteristics of *kenjougo*. Script 3 is given to students in lesson 6 after learning verbs. Students play the role of a guide who explains the journey to be taken. In this script, polite language (*sonkeigo*) is used at the beginning of the conversation. The words “*sanka itadakimashite*” use a variety of *keigo*. Although this word structure is not taught in depth in class but is introduced to learners in the form of speech.

Script 4. Title: “Drop off guests at the airport to return to Japan”
 G = Guide O = Guest

- O: アンディさん、いろいろお世話になりました。ありがとうございます。
Andi-san iroiro osewa ni narimashita. Arigatou gozaimashita.
 Mr. Andi, thank you for your service,
- G: こちらこそありがとうございます。バリはどうでしたか？
Kochirakoso arigatou gozaimashita. Bali wa dou deshita ka?
 It is a pleasure, you are welcome. What do you think about Bali
- O: とても楽しかったです。
Totemo tanoshikatta desu.
 I have a great time
 バリはうつくしくてすてきな島ですね。
Bali wa utsukushikute sutekina shima desu ne.
 Bali is a very nice and beautiful island.
- G: はい、バリはおもしろいところがたくさんあります。
Hai, Bali wa omoshiroi tokoro ga takusan arimasu.
 Yes, there are a lot of interesting places in Bali
 ぜひまた来てください。
Zehi mata kite kudasai.
 Please come again to visit
- O: はい、また来ます。アンディさん、お元気で。
Hai, mata kimasu. Andi-san ogenki de.
 Yes, sure, I will come back. Take care, Andi.
- G: 日本まで気をつけて。また会いましょう。さようなら。
Nihon made ki o tsukete. Mata aimashou. Sayounara.
 Take good care until you arrive in Japan, till we meet again. Good bye..

In script 4, the expression お元気で (*ogenki de*), the prefix お (o-) is an honorific prefix added to 元気 (*genki*) to make the expression more polite and respectful. The prefix does not change the meaning of the word itself but adds a level of courtesy toward the listener. Script 4 is the last roleplay given to the students. The task is to take the guests to the airport after they finish their vacation in Bali. In this task, the language is more advanced in its structure and vocabulary. Students have completed the last lesson, including learning *doushi* (verbs) and *keiyoushi* (adjectives). Students practice roleplay that has been arranged over 2 semesters. The first semester is defined as cycle 1, and the second semester is cycle 2.

The analysis was carried out in two cycles. The first cycle is conducted during the implementation of the first roleplay module in a single semester. The results of the data analysis show the scores of learners' speaking ability from five aspects that have been determined in cycle one, as follows:

Table 3. Speaking Ability Score Cycle 1

Smooth	Pronunciation clarity	Language structure	Relevance of the response	Use of special expressions
1.7	2.25	2.15	2.15	2

The results of observations on roleplay activities in cycle one can be seen in Table 4:

Table 4. Observation Results of Roleplay Activities Cycle 1 in Percentage

Indicator 1	Indicator 2	Indicator 3	Indicator 4	Indicator 5	Indicator 6
100	50	0	30	45	90

The results in Cycle I indicate that although students demonstrated basic communicative ability, their performance was still limited, particularly in fluency (1.7) and the use of appropriate expressions (2.0). This suggests that students were still in the early stage of communicative development and relied heavily on memorization rather than spontaneous language use. The observation data further support this finding. While student participation was very high (100%), the ability to perform roleplay without relying on written text was extremely low (0%). This indicates that students lacked confidence and had not yet internalized the language needed for authentic interaction. Similarly, the relatively low scores in communication etiquette (30%) and logical conversation flow (45%) suggest that students had difficulty applying language appropriately in professional contexts.

From a pedagogical perspective, these findings highlight the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical communication skills. Although students had learned basic Japanese structures, they were not yet able to apply them effectively in real-world scenarios. This reinforces the importance of integrating task-based and communicative approaches that provide repeated opportunities for meaningful interaction and contextualized language use.

Therefore, the results of Cycle I serve as a baseline, indicating the need for improved instructional strategies, particularly to encourage spontaneous communication, increase exposure to authentic expressions, and strengthen students' pragmatic competence in tourism-related contexts. After the first cycle, the roleplay module was evaluated and adjusted, and speaking skills and roleplay activities were again observed in the second cycle. The results of the data analysis in cycle two are shown as scores and percentages in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5. Speaking Ability Score Cycle 2

Smooth	Pronunciation clarity	Language structure	Relevance of the response	Use of special expressions
3.45	3.45	3.2	3.3	3.25

The results of the observations on role-play activities in cycle two are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Observation Results of Roleplay Activity Cycle 2 in Percentage

Indicator 1	Indicator 2	Indicator 3	Indicator 4	Indicator 5	Indicator 6
100	80	75	85	100	100

The data presented in Tables 5 and 6 indicate a significant improvement in student's performance in Cycle II following revisions to the roleplay module and instructional strategies. The average speaking ability scores increased to 3.2–3.45 across all assessed aspects, placing students in the “competent to very competent” category. Similarly, observations of role-play activities showed substantial progress, particularly in interacting without text (75%), using context-appropriate expressions (80%), and understanding communication etiquette (85%). This improvement suggests that students were able to use Japanese more effectively in professional tourism contexts, not only in terms of linguistic accuracy—such as fluency and pronunciation—but also in terms of pragmatic competence, including the appropriate use of *keigo* and service-oriented communication strategies.

A comparison between Cycle I and Cycle II reveal a notable shift in student's communicative behavior. In Cycle I, students tended to rely heavily on scripted dialogue and showed limited confidence in spontaneous interaction, as reflected in the 0% achievement in text-free communication. In contrast, Cycle II demonstrated increased learner autonomy, with students becoming more capable of engaging in unscripted interactions and responding more appropriately in simulated workplace situations.

From a pedagogical perspective, these findings confirm that integrating industry-based role-play within the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) framework effectively enhances student's communicative competence. The use of authentic, task-based scenarios allows students to practice

language in meaningful contexts, thereby improving not only fluency and accuracy but also discourse and strategic competence (Bachman & Palmer, 2010).

Furthermore, the substantial improvement in communication etiquette—from 30% in Cycle I to 85% in Cycle II—highlights the importance of incorporating cultural and pragmatic elements into language instruction. This finding aligns with the principles of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), where learning occurs through engagement in realistic communicative tasks that reflect workplace demands. Previous studies have also shown that roleplay and experiential learning activities significantly enhance learners' pragmatic competence and intercultural awareness (Nguyen & Boon, 2022; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2021).

In addition, observations showed that students became more confident and actively participated in work communication simulations. This supports Hyland's theory, which suggests that activities grounded in social interaction in an authentic context can strengthen *language performance* and increase learning motivation (Hyland, 2022). The improvement observed between Cycle I and Cycle II indicate not only a quantitative increase in scores but also a qualitative transformation in student's communicative behavior. In Cycle I, students tended to rely heavily on scripted dialogues and demonstrated limited confidence in spontaneous interaction. This is reflected in the low percentage of students able to interact without text (0%) and the limited use of appropriate professional expressions.

The iterative process of practice, feedback, and reflection implemented in this study enabled students to gradually internalize communication strategies and apply them more flexibly. This supports the view that repeated simulation and guided reflection contribute to the development of professional communication behavior and pragmatic appropriateness (Matsumoto & Nakayama, 2024). Overall, the findings demonstrate that industry-based roleplay modules serve as an effective pedagogical innovation in vocational Japanese language learning. By integrating authentic workplace contexts, these modules not only increase student engagement and confidence but also facilitate the holistic development of professional communication skills required in the tourism industry. This study contributes to vocational language education by demonstrating how industry-based roleplay modules can effectively bridge the gap between classroom instruction and real-world communication demands in tourism contexts.

4. Conclusion

This study offers empirical evidence that an industry-based roleplay module based on the principles of CLT and TBLT significantly enhances vocational students' Japanese communicative competence. The marked increase in communication etiquette performance (from 30% to 85%) demonstrates that not only measurable skill development but also a transformation in students' pragmatic awareness and professional interactional behavior.

The results emphasize that successful tourism language education should progress beyond structural proficiency to incorporate linguistic precision, pragmatic suitability, and intercultural awareness. Through iterative simulation, reflection, and feedback cycles, students assimilated workplace communication standards, notably the strategic application of *keigo*, consisting of *sonkeigo* and *kenjougo*, and service-oriented civility essential in Japanese tourism settings.

This study's principal contribution is its systematic integration of needs analysis, experiential learning concepts, and classroom action research into a cohesive, industry-responsive language module. By integrating authentic tourism tasks into structured communicative cycles, the study addresses the ongoing disparity between classroom instruction and the requirements of professional communication in vocational higher education.

These findings possess strategic significance for tourism polytechnics and vocational institutions seeking to enhance graduate employability through industry-relevant language instruction. Simulation-based roleplay modules may serve as a scalable pedagogical model for strengthening workplace-ready communicative competence. Future studies should investigate long-term retention effects, workplace transferability, and cross-institutional applicability to further validate and refine this industry-based communicative framework.

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