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A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF REFUSAL STRATEGIES IN YORÙBÁ CULTURE

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Abstract

This study examines the sociolinguistic analysis of refusal strategies among the native speakers of Yorùbá. Refusal verbal acts portend failing to engage in the actions proposed by the speaker in a discussion, which could be an assistance, advice, gift, attending ceremonies among others. These strategies have both linguistic and cultural colourations and they linger between ancient and modern societies. This simply shows refusal strategies among the Yoruba people have evolved through generations. Thus, some borrowed cultures have been directly incorporated and integrated into the refusal acts through modernisation. Contextually, refusal strategies mediate between high-context culture and low-context culture. The data in this study were drawn from recorded utterances of some Yorùbá language speakers and Yorùbá films. Our analysis is predicated on the Dell Hymes (1972) *Ethnography of Communication*. Findings in this research reveal that the Yorùbá culture permits indirect refusal more than the direct ones. As a result, refusal demands courtesy and mutual respect. It is also noted in the study that direct refusal is a product of a borrowed culture and it is demonstrated that friendship or cordiality and equal or low status can influence the use of direct refusal. The study further establishes that indirect refusal can be used to show home training, courtesy to culture and avoidance of danger. This study contributes to the existing studies on the use of politeness principle on language verbal behaviour.

Keywords: *Refusal strategy, Yoruba culture, politeness theory, high- context culture, low-context culture.*

I INTRODUCTION

Refusal is an act whereby a speaker refuses to engage in an action proposed by an interlocutor (Cheng, Ye & Zhang, 1995). Refusals can be direct or indirect, and they have a direct link with the people's culture, social life and their environments. Culture as a way of the people normally shapes their worldview and influences their reactions to issues in different context. Direct refusal entails conveying refusal message without any form of courtesy. This impolite refusal is directly linked to low-context culture where emphasis is placed solely on the content of the verbal message where the information is conveyed explicitly through words (Tak & Lyuh, 2024). Low-context culture is a linguistic and/or cultural setting where courtesy and politeness are not prioritised, words are used directly the way they occur and how they occur to the users in such settings. In low- context culture, indirect refusal may presuppose deceit and lack of trust, thus, issues are reported exactly the way they occur irrespective of the individuals involved. Falola (2018) asserts that colonial experience transformed African culture to the extent that many African became stranger to the tradition of old, suffering alienation in the process. In Yorùbá settings, low-context culture presupposes modernity and changes in the style of language use by the younger generation who lingers between foreign and indigenous cultures. Obono (2016) notes that in Yorùbá society, individual behaviour is guided by Yorùbá culture be it tangible or intangible, however, the intangible aspect brings out individual a perfect gentleman usually referred to as an *Omolúabí*. Thus, in the Yorùbá culture direct refusal for elderly person is highly prohibited because it is believed that “*Ojú méjì ló ń bímọ̀ igba ojú ló ń wòó*” this literally means that a child is born by one woman but the training of the child is the ultimate duty of the entire community. Thus, every child belongs to the society or community irrespective of the parents but modern culture has erased this notion to a large extent, as a result, the culture of communal living has generally been affected and individualism has been embraced. Thus, direct refusal between a young person and an elder is noticeable in the modern era unlike the ancient period where excuses were not permitted for errands no matter the situation. Moreover, the alien culture which has been directly incorporated into Yoruba settings through western education has reduced respect on the account of advancement in age. In fact, there are cases where an uneducated elderly person works as a subordinate to a younger person, and the younger person addresses him with his name irrespective of the age.

Indirect refusal is a polite way of refusing to engage in an action. This is common in high-context culture where environment and context determine what should be said; thus, unspoken elements are more important than the verbal communication (Tak & Lyuh, 2024). In high-context culture, politeness and courtesy are emphasised based on cultural norms, societal patterning and hierarchical settings. The

high-context culture in Yoruba settings is the ancient culture which has been passed down. In this context, hierarchy is prioritised and courtesy flows based on set rules in the environment. In this context, apart from verbal expressions, courtesies such as prostration and kneeling are also used to show politeness and respect. It must be noted that both direct and indirect refusals are used in responding to offer. However, the culture and environment of the interlocutors will determine their choice of response.

Refusal verbal act is generally an undesired response from an interlocutor and it is capable of damaging the interpersonal relationship and societal peace if not well managed. To avoid social disorder that may likely emanate from an undesired response of refusal, the Yorùbá imbue dynamism in their use of language to prevent communication breakdown and misconceptions. As a consequence, people of different classes, status and prestige are addressed according to their status. Thus, in the day-to-day activities of Yorùbá social interactions, attention is given to high, equal and low status in response to issues.

There are instances or circumstances that demand courtesy irrespective of the person being addressed, one of such instances is refusal of gift, food or assistance from strangers, friends, family members and acquaintances. Refusal verbal acts in the Yorùbá culture are devoid of derogatory remarks in order to prevent grudges, enmity and malice. Thus, the speech act of offer and its refusal are managed with courtesy and mutual respect. According to Tak & Lyuh (2024) refusal requires a considerable degree of culture-specific knowledge and high level of pragmatic competence to maintain interpersonal relationship and social harmony. The import of this statement is that each language sets parameters for its usage within its culture, and the linguistic permissible conventions differ from one language setting to another. In the Yorùbá setting, the general norm is that acceptance and refusal are handled with courteous phrases to ensure peace, harmony and benevolence in the society. Thus, the indirect refusal approach is mostly adopted. However, modernity, cordial relationship and friendship have introduced a slight violation to the idea of indirect refusal approach.

1.1 ROLE RELATIONSHIP AMONG YORÙBÁ PEOPLE

Yorùbá social setting is hierarchical in nature. The setting places a high premium on three things among others in their social and communal relationships. They are high, equal and low status. These three statuses play paramount role in the day -to-day activities or interaction among the Yorùbá people. First, people of the high status are opinion leaders, the elderly, kings or chiefs, wealthy persons, bosses at work, pastors, imams, priests, government representatives and so on. Apart from the elderly that are respected on account of age, all other people that belong to high status are respected based on their positions and attainments in life. Age has nothing to do in conferment of honour on these people (Fadipe 1970). For instance, a younger person that is enthroned as king automatically becomes the father of everybody in the community irrespective of their age. Moreover, a cleric in a congregation irrespective of age will be seen as the spiritual father of their group. In the Yorùbá cultural settings, the tone of discussion with elderly people, kings or chiefs, wealthy persons, bosses at work, pastors, imams, priests, government representatives are always respectful and formal, and the refusal pattern for this set of people is indirect. Moreover, there are ethical codes of discussion and gesture that one needs to exhibit in conversation with people who belong to this category. Secondly, people of equal status are usually age mates, classmates, colleagues of equal rank at work places. The tone of discussion among these calibres of people is normally cordial and it does not show any form respect or formality (Abiodun 1992). As a result, refusal may take indirect or direct approach based on the level of cordiality and closeness between them or because of the embraced foreign culture. The indirect refusal is a good choice for people of equal status who are not friends to avoid malice. However, direct refusal is used for people of equal rank who are friends because of their cordial relationship or modern world view. Finally, people of low status are people that are lower in age, or subordinates at work. The tone of discussion with people of low rank is always direct. The refusal strategy used for this set of people is direct because of their status.

II MATERIALS AND METHOD

2.1 PREVIOUS STUDIES ON REFUSAL STRATEGY

Some scholars have worked on verbal refusal strategy in many languages of the world. The scholars include Beebe, Takahashi & Uliss-Weltz (1990), Allami & Naeimi (2011), Al-Shboul & Huwari (2016), Krulatz & Dixon (2020), and Tak & Lyuh (2024). For instance, Beebe et al. (1990) note that Japanese prefer the indirect refusal strategy in order to foster and maintain cordial relationships in

their society. They explain further that deploying an indirect refusal strategy in American society will lead to a pragmatic failure where the interlocutor will be presumed not to be speaking the truth. A similar situation is reported in Guo (2012); the study emphasizes that Chinese speakers deployed an indirect refusal strategy to soften the effect of the refusal to preserve face and avoid embarrassing the interlocutor. However, the scenario is different among Americans, as they prefer direct refusal. Allami and Naemi (2011) and Hassan et al. (2011) explain that to the Iranian native speakers, the social status of the interlocutor, such as high, equal, and low, is a critical factor, as it determines the refusal strategy to be used. Thus, they prefer to deploy more indirect refusal with high-status interlocutors when they refused. Krulatz and Dixon (2020) report that both Korean and Norwegian employed more indirect refusal strategies than the direct one. They explain further that Korean speaker deployed more indirect refusal than the Norwegians, while the Norwegians used more direct strategies than the Koreans. Tak and Lyuh (2024) examine refusal strategy in two constructed languages, Esperanto and Unish. They claim that the refusal strategies in the two constructed languages are similar to that of natural languages. They note that indirect refusal is used more frequently than the direct one. The study shows that Esperanto interlocutors use more direct strategies than Unish interlocutors, showing the low-context nature of Esperanto culture and the common value shared by its speakers.

Ikotun (2011) examines sociolinguistic criteria guiding invitation to meals among the Yoruba of south-western, Nigeria. He discusses rejection/ acceptance of meals and noted among other things that age, social status, politeness, familiarity, kinship, and love are considered in invitation to meals; and rejection and response to meals. He explains the ethical codes of rejection between young and old people, and claims some verbal rejection utterances have age restrictions, and notes further that some non-linguistic factors can lead to food rejection an instance is the use of left hand or single hand to present food to an elderly person. He also claims that in polygamous settings rejection of meal is caused by instructions/warnings given to children by their mothers not to take food from co-wives to prevent food poisoning. Note that Ikotun's (2011) study dwells on rejection and response to meal offer. This present study has a wider scope beyond this, as it looks at other scenarios of refusal strategy in Yoruba social interactions. Having examined the various refusal strategies in related works, the remaining part of this work is devoted to the examination of refusal strategies among the Yoruba.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Ethnography of communication was advanced by Dell Hymes (1972). The theory lends credence to communicative competence of the native speaker of language in relation to his/her language, that is, the conventional rules guiding the use of linguistic utterance. The communicative competence as stipulated by the theory entails the requisite knowledge which includes not only rules for communication and shared rules for interaction but also the cultural rules and knowledge that are the basis for context and content of communicative events and interaction process (Savile-Troike, 1989). Thus, communicative competence guides the speakers on the understanding of what to say, when to say it, how to say it, and where to say it. This portends that linguistic competence is not enough but the understanding of the socio-cultural norms and ethics of communication within the ambit of culture rules and the culturally shared knowledge as the basis for effective communication process in the society. Saville- Troike (1989:15) states that many of the functions of language are universal but the manner in which communication operates in languages or society differs. The immediate or context of situation is the specific circumstance in which communication occurs in relation to time, place, events and other conditions. The components of situation by Dell Hymes (1972) include: setting/scene, participants, ends, act/sequence, key, instrumentalities, norm and genre. These components determine context of situation and the way utterances are used in conversation.

2.3 METHODOLOGY

The data used in this study were collected from eight (8) informants who are native speakers of Yorùbá from Òsogbo, Ìbàdàn, Òyó, and Ògbómòshò. The selection of eight informants allows for detailed observation and analysis of authentic Yorùbá interactional data while ensuring manageability in transcription, coding, and pragmatic interpretation. This sample size is adequate for identifying recurrent patterns of refusal strategies across different social contexts, such as age, status, familiarity, and communicative setting. The towns selected are representative of the Yoruba people of southwest Nigeria, given their shared language and cultural values and heritage. The informants were purposively selected based on their extensive knowledge of Yoruba language and culture. They were drawn from high, middle and low status groups. The ages of the language helpers range from 40-60 years. The

informants were pre-informed about the project but were recorded unaware. This was done so that the true speech act of the participants was not influenced. After the recording, (the utterances were recorded with my phone recorder) their utterances were replayed to the informant and they approved the use of the content for this research. Home videos where refusal statements are made were also used as data. There were also recorded oral interviews conducted by the researcher where instances and validity of some refusal strategies were confirmed. The recorded utterances from both participants observation, utterances from Home videos and interview were subjected to pragmatic analysis.

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design to examine the pragmatic acts of refusal strategies in Yoruba culture. Eight informants were purposively selected from four Yoruba towns: Òşogbo, Ìbàdàn, Òyó, and Ògbómòşò. Data gathered through participant observation and structured interviews were recorded in audio format. The recordings were transcribed and analysed using ethnography of communication theory to identify and interpret refusal strategies. Ethical approval was obtained, and the informant consent were duly sought.

Two research instruments were deployed in this study, namely observation checklist and interviews. The observation checklist involves the structured recording of the informant speech to capture their systematic use of language. Face to face interviews were also conducted to validate some of the responses and to obtain additional information from the informants

III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the assembled data systematically based on their classification, feature and functions. Moreover, the following are also put into consideration: settings/scene, participants, ends, act/sequence, key, instrumentalities, norm and genre. Refusal speech acts basically indicate ways of denying to participate in the action stated by an interlocutor due to certain circumstances. In the next paragraphs the various refusal strategies among the Yoruba are examined.

3.1 REFUSAL OF INVITATION TO CEREMONIES (SOCIAL EVENT, FUN OR CELEBRATION)

One key factor that causes students to lose focus and engage in off-task behaviors in Yorùbá settings, it is not all ceremonies (marriage, burial-outing, birthday) that one is allowed to attend from the cultural stand point. More so, financial or health challenges may prevent one from attending a party or social event. The example below depicts polite refusal for attending ceremonies.

Excerpt 1

A : Òrẹ̀ mi, jẹ́ ká lọ sí òde àríyá ‘My friend, let us go clubbing’

B: È máa nì sọ máa ba yín ‘You can proceed, I will join you’

In the data above, the response in B literally suggests that something delayed the speaker that prevented him from catching up with other companions to the ceremonies they were invited to, but will join them there later. However, in the typical Yoruba setting, the statement in B is an indirect refusal that can only be deciphered through the shared mutual contextual knowledge of the participants in the context of the discussion. The statement in B, is laced with meaning beyond the surface meaning, it can only be understood by the people who share contextual knowledge of the situation preceding the utterance. This statement is a kind of face-saving approach; it is used to depict a positive public self-image for the speaker and sustain continued interaction with his/her friends (see Levinson 1978 and Leech 1983). The speaker here is indirectly avoiding a negative public image from the peers as a result of the inability to attend the ceremony with them. Thus, the employment of the statement to avoid malice. In the Yoruba setting, friendship is not about age, rank, and status; there could be friends of equal age, rank, and status, while others could be older or have higher status. As a result, using direct refusal may convey affront and lack of mutual respect, if one is addressing a group of people. The Yoruba prefer the indirect approach such that explanations can be provided afterwards so that the friendship and cordiality among participants would not be severed or disrupted. The excerpt reflects a high context cultural setting in which refusal is conveyed indirectly and politely, prioritizing interpersonal relationship and social context over direct expression. Using Dell Hymes’ SPEAKING model (1972), the communicative situation may be summarised as follows:

Setting/Scene: An informal social setting in which a friend invites another to a ceremony or social outing.

Participants: Friends who share mutual social and cultural understanding.

Ends: The inviter desires the participation and companionship of friends at the event.

Act Sequence: The invitation is presented as a polite request, while the response functions as an indirect refusal.

Key: The tone is casual and perfunctory due to the shared contextual knowledge between participants.

Instrumentalities: Communication occurs through spoken oral interaction.

Norms: Indirect refusal is employed as a face-saving strategy to sustain friendship and social harmony.

However, there are instances where direct refusal may be used. This violates the general principle but certain social factors are the determinants of this response. See the examples below:

Excerpt 2

- A (i): Òjó ní ẹ̀ ọ̀kú ìyá rẹ̀ lọ́la ‘Òjó will be burying his mum tomorrow’
 A (ii): Ẹ́ o máa tẹ́lẹ̀ wa lọ ? ‘Will you follow us’ ?
 A (iii) Ẹ́ ẹ́ máa tẹ́lẹ̀ wa lọ ? ‘Will you follow us’?
 B: Rára o, mi ò lọ ‘No, I am not going’

Note that the use of o ‘you sg’ and ẹ́ ‘you pl’ as shown in A(ii) & A(iii)) play significant roles in Yoruba social interactions. O ‘you sg’ is used when a younger person or age mates are addressing each other while ẹ́ ‘you pl’ is used when the addressee is older or have superior status. The excerpt above is a communication between two friends who are of the same age and status or an older individual who is superior. This is emphasised by the use of o ‘you sg’ and ẹ́ ‘you pl’. The invitation statement in A(ii) clearly shows that the addressee and the addressed are of the same age or equal status. However, the invitation statement in A(iii) depicts that the person being addressed is older in age. Note that, the direct refusal observed in the conversation in B above is triggered by equal age and rank for A(ii) while is because of advanced age and superiority for A(iii). Moreover, the cordial relationship between people of the same age, rank and status can convert direct refusal to mere joke without any grave consequence of portraying the person involved in a bad light. It must be noted that jokes among friends is another way of making severe cases trivial by turning it to humour. However, the direct refusal to someone who is lower in age and prestige is triggered by superiority or advancement in age. The situation here portrays a low context culture in which refusal is expressed directly and this response is influenced by factors such as increased age and equal social status. Using Dell Hymes’ SPEAKING model (1972), the communicative situation may be summarised as follows:

Setting/Scene: An informal social setting in which individuals are invited to attend a burial ceremony.

Participants: Friends or acquaintances of equal status, or individuals in a hierarchical age relationship.

Ends: The inviter seeks the participation of others in the social event.

Act Sequence: The invitation is presented politely, followed by a direct refusal.

Key: The tone of the interaction is casual and perfunctory because of the shared understanding between participants.

Instrumentalities: The interaction occurs through spoken oral communication.

Norms: Direct refusal is considered acceptable because of equal social status, intimacy, or superiority in age and rank.

3.2 REFUSAL OF INVITATION TO MEAL

There is a cultural obligation among the Yoruba that demands that anyone who meets a Yoruba person on a meal/or when they are about to start eating should be invited to join the meal. According to Ikotun (2011:21) it is customary in Yorùbá community to invite people while eating and failure to do so is a violation of an important social etiquette in the area of human relation or a violation of the formal rules of correct or polite behaviour in the Yorùbá society. Thus, the ancient Yorùbá people in their meal arrangements normally make food in excess in case strangers or visitors arrive during meals. The excerpt below depicts a typical invitation to meal and polite refusal in the Yorùbá settings.

Excerpt 3-1

- A: Olú, mo tí se ọ́unjẹ tan ‘Olú, I am through with cooking’
 B(i): Ẹ́ jẹ́ kó ẹ́ diẹ ‘Give me some times’
 A: Ẹ́ o ò ní jẹun ní ‘Wont you eat’

- B(ii): Mo fẹ jẹ ká parí ọrọ yìi ni 'I want us to be through with this discussion'
- B(iii): Màmá, ẹ má sẹ iyonu, mo gba 'Mummy, don't bother yourself, I just
 ìpè kan bá yí, received a call now
- B(iv): Maa ma jẹun lójó móràn 'I will eat when next I visited'

Excerpt 3-2

- A: O bá mi ire 'You meet me well'
- B (i): Á gba ibi ire 'The food will take the right course'
- B (ii): Ọmọ á bá ẹ jẹ 'Children will eat with you'
- B(iii): E/ O sẹun 'Thank you'
- B(iv): Mo ti jẹun kí n tó máa bò 'I had eaten before I came to your house'
- B (iv) Mo ti yó 'I am filled'

Excerpt 3-1 for instance, is a typical scenario of a groom who visited the mother-in-law's home for a purposeful discussion. He was invited to a meal but used the statement in B(i) as delay tactics. In the Yorùbá culture, refusal of food in the in-law's home is a sign of disrespect and lack of trust. Thus, to avoid this situation, he emphasised the importance of the discussion before them, and subsequently used the urgent call received that needed prompt attention as an excuse to indirectly refuse the meal he had been invited to earlier. As a thorough-bred Yorùbá son, he takes into consideration the energy used while cooking by informing the mother -in-law that he would eat when he visits them another time. This statement is used as an assurance of goodwill and strategy to sustain continued cordiality between them. In the circumstance above, direct refusal will have a grave consequence and it may disrupt the peace and cordiality between the two parties. Thus, the indirect refusal is preferred. It must be noted that if parties in the marriage are divorced, direct refusal has no effect because the relationship had been severed already. Using Dell Hymes' SPEAKING model (1972), the communicative situation may be summarised as follows:

Setting/Scene: An invitation to a meal within an in-law's family setting.

Participants: The addresser and addressee are in-laws engaged in social interaction.

Ends: The host desires the in-law to partake in the meal as a sign of acceptance and cordiality.

Act Sequence: The invitation is expressed politely, while the refusal is communicated indirectly through excuses, delays, and assurances.

Key: The tone of the interaction is cordial and perfunctory because the participants share cultural and contextual knowledge.

Instrumentalities: Spoken oral communication is employed.

Norms: Indirect refusal is used to respect cultural expectations, preserve interpersonal harmony, and prevent suspicion or hostility.

The invitation in excerpt 3-2, may come from any Yorùbá person who understands the culture, as cultural norms make it obligatory to invite others to eat as a way of showing honour. It is typical among the Yoruba to invite anybody who encounters them while eating to come and dine with them. However, the person invited may decide to eat or refuse politely to avoid ill-will. Thus, in this instance, the polite phrases such as B (i), (ii) and (iii) are used to refuse the meal offer. Note that, in the Yorùbá culture age and class (high, low and equal) are taken into consideration in response to issues. B (i) will be a flawless response among contemporaries but sometimes an elderly person may use the phrase too. B(ii), is the more appropriate phrase used by an elderly person invited to meal by a younger person. B(iii) response can be used for an elderly person or a superior who has invited someone to meal.

From the two excerpts, it is discovered that Yorùbá verbal behaviour adequately captures the politeness definition of Lakoff (1990). The typical Yorùbá setting abhors confrontation, conflict and ill-will. Thus, any behaviour from the host or the stranger that can lead to conflict are avoided as much as possible.

The indirect refusal, as used in the excerpt above, can give room for further explanation. In Yoruba culture, saying thank you to gift, offer or assistance is very important, as it shows appreciation and

respect for the individual's good will. Thus, phrases or words like *Ẹ sẹ́* 'thank you' *Ẹ sẹ gan-an* 'thank you very much' and *Ẹ sẹ gan-an ni mo dúpẹ́* 'thank you very much I really appreciate' are used to appreciate people for their kindness. For instance, having said 'thank you', just as in the examples 2B (i), (ii) and (iii), one can extrapolate that he has just eaten or my wife is preparing a meal at home when I was coming to your house. These statements will further strengthen the refusal because, the Yorùbá believe that you cannot eat when the belly is full 'a kii jẹun lékè ayo'. Moreover, in the Yorùbá culture, telling one's wife that he had eating outside is frowned at, so, my wife is cooking when I was coming is an ideal strategy for refusing invitation to meal. However, B(iv) which is direct refusal can be a response to friends of the same age or status. This response is premised on friendship and cordial relationship that exist between them. In other words, one cannot use the response for a stranger or acquaintance that one does not share cordial relationship with. Age and status may trigger direct refusal among the Yorùbá people. Inviting an elderly person to meal is a way of fulfilling the cultural norm. The elder may not condescend to eat such food. So, directly refusing such invitation to meal may not constitute any problem. The situations cited here are reflection of a high context culture, as they show respect for kind gestures regardless of age, status and class. Such goodwill must be acknowledged, and indirectly refusal is used to avoid acrimony or suspicion. Using Dell Hymes' SPEAKING model (1972), the communicative situation may be summarised as follows:

Setting/Scene: An informal setting in which either a younger or older person is invited to partake in a meal.

Participants: The addresser and addressee may be younger or elderly individuals interacting within different relational contexts.

Ends: The host intends for the invitee to participate in the meal as a sign of hospitality and communal solidarity.

Act Sequence: The invitation is expressed politely, while the response may involve either indirect or direct refusal depending on age and status relations.

Key: The tone of the interaction is cordial and perfunctory because of the shared sociocultural understanding between participants.

Instrumentalities: Spoken oral communication is employed.

Norms: Indirect refusal is commonly used by younger persons to show respect and avoid offence, whereas direct refusal may be acceptable for elderly persons or among close equals because of age, familiarity, or social status.

3.3 REFUSAL OF ERRANDS

In Yorùbá culture, respect for elderly people, irrespective of the tribe and kin, is sacrosanct, honour and respect are given to elders whether known or unknown. It is common in the Yoruba setting for elders to send younger ones on errands. However, there are cases where a younger person may indirectly refuse errands from an elderly person. It must emphasise that this type of refusal is not native to Yorùbá culture, it is ushered into the culture through modernity and influence of foreign culture. However, despite the influence of this new culture, Yorùbá settings still retain the use of courteous words in addressing issues to prevent affront or disrespect. However, there are instances where one can refuse an errand with concrete reasons. For instance: sickness, infirmity and lack of strength. The data below portray indirect refusal of errands from an elderly person:

Excerpt 4

A: *Ọmọ mi, bá mi gbé ẹru yìi délé* 'My child, help me carry this load home'

B: *Ẹma binu Iya, ara mi o ya* 'Don't be annoyed ma, I am not feeling fine'

The scenario in the excerpt above depicts where an elderly person has a load to carry from one place to another but could not proceed with it due to weakness or fatigue. In cases like this, help may be sought from any younger person that is available as shown in the statement in A. From the response of B, the younger person has concrete reason to directly refuse the errand, but the response in B depicts the act of a thorough bred Yorùbá person who has respect for elders and tradition. The indirect refusal is deployed by starting with a plea to demonstrate empathy with the elderly person before telling the elderly person the inability due to sickness to assist the elderly woman. Note that the refusal is not stated promptly but after an excuse has been established and the statement is made with polite words and courtesy. In this case, the elderly would realise that the refusal is not deliberate. Thus, a word of prayer for quick recovery may be offered despite the fact that assistance has been politely refused. However,

direct refusal of errands for an elderly person in the Yoruba culture is frowned at, as it is considered to depict lack of home training or courtesy for culture. This is simply a high culture situation in which refusal must be indirect in order to avoid portraying the younger person as someone who lacks proper home training. Using Dell Hymes' SPEAKING model (1972), the communicative situation may be summarised as follows:

Setting/Scene: An informal setting in which an elderly person requests assistance from a younger individual.

Participants: The addresser is an elderly person, while the addressee is a younger person.

Ends: The elder seeks assistance in carrying a load home.

Act Sequence: The interaction begins with a polite request, followed by an indirect refusal supported with an explanation.

Key: The tone of the conversation is respectful and perfunctory because the purpose of the interaction is clearly understood by both participants.

Instrumentalities: Spoken oral communication is employed.

Norms: Indirect refusal is used as a face-saving strategy and as a means of upholding Yorùbá cultural values of respect, courtesy, and deference toward elders.

3.4 REFUSAL IN THE MARKET

In the market square, sellers normally eulogise, cajole and even play with customers to persuade them to buy goods from them. Thus, words like *ọnkú* 'uncle', *bòdà*, 'brother' *màamá* 'mummy' *dadi* 'daddy' are used for young and old based on their ages and outlook to plead for patronage. However, in the market, not every offer for sale can be accepted. Thus, refusal will set in to dismiss the sellers of what is not needed. The examples below depict refusal from buyer to seller.

Excerpt 5-1

- A: *Ọkọ mi, ẹ bámi rajà* 'My husband, buy goods from me'
 B: *Ajé á wá màamá, ẹ ẹ tà* 'Luck will locate you mama, you will sell'

Excerpt 5-2

- A: *Ẹlẹja yín tidé o* 'Your fish monger has come'
 A: *Ẹ reja ẹ sebẹ o* 'Buy fish and prepare your meal'
 A: *Iya Ojo, ẹ ẹ reja ?* 'Iya Ojo, are you not purchasing fish?'
 B(i) *Tomato ni mo fe ra* It is tomatoes I want to buy
 B(ii) *Ẹ ẹ, ponmo ni mo fe ra* Thank you, it is 'ponmo' I want to buy
 B(iii): *Ajé á wá màamá, ẹ ẹ tà* 'Luck will locate you mama, you will sell'
 B(iv): *Mo ti ra lánà* 'I purchased yesterday'
 B(v): *Mi ò rà lonii* 'I am not buying today'
 B(vi) *Mi o ra, o maa ta* 'I am not buying, you will sell'

In excerpt 5-1 the response in B, is a typical indirect refusal from a potential buyer in the market environment or where goods are sold. The immediate response *Ajé á wá* 'you will make good sales' sends a signal to the seller of the unwillingness of the buyer to purchase from him through an indirect means. In the Yoruba setting, the prayer *ẹ ẹ tà* 'you will sell' is offered to suppress the bad mood that such refusal may generate and also assure the seller that the person that will make a purchase will come. Using Dell Hymes' SPEAKING model (1972), the communicative situation may be summarised as follows:

Setting/Scene: A marketplace where sellers persuade buyers to purchase goods.

Participants: The addresser and addressee are sellers and potential buyers.

Ends: The sellers seek patronage and successful sales from buyers.

Act Sequence: The interaction begins with persuasive advertising and invitation to buy, followed by indirect or mitigated refusal from the buyer.

Key: The tone of the conversation is persuasive and painstaking because sellers actively promote their goods to attract customers.

Instrumentalities: Spoken oral communication is employed.

Norms: Indirect refusal and softened direct refusal are used to avoid hurting the seller's feelings or damaging interpersonal harmony.

Excerpt 5-2, depicts the interaction between a fish hawker and buyers. This instance is distinct from the market scene; it is the seller that is moving around to advertise products. Both direct and indirect refusal may be used as responses to the seller. A hawker that is unknown to the buyer deserves some respect and dignity because Yoruba abhors injuring people's ego. As such, the responses in 5-2 B (i & ii) are polite ways of telling the hawkers that what is being offered for sale is not needed by the buyer at that point in time indicating the buyer prefers to buy other things instead. Moreover, the response in 5-2 B(iii) is a general way of polite refusal in the market and outside it. It entails praying for the seller to meet luck elsewhere since the present buyer is not willing to buy what is advertised. However, the responses in 5-2 B (iv, v & vi) are used for a known hawker who has enjoyed patronage from the buyer over a period of time and have developed a cordial relationship with each other. The direct responses exhibited in 5-2 B (iv, v & vi) may be used without causing malice or showing indifference to the seller. The situations in the excerpts reflect both high and low context cultures, a seller who respectfully address a buyer to buy goods from them in the market a courteous response; therefore, indirect refusal is used to reciprocate the gesture. However, in street hawking, factors such as age and level of familiarity determine whether a direct or indirect refusal is more appropriate. Using Dell Hymes' SPEAKING model (1972), the communicative situation may be summarised as follows:

Setting/Scene: A street-hawking environment where hawkers move around advertising goods to known and unknown individuals.

Participants: The addresser and addressee consist of hawkers and potential buyers.

Ends: The hawker seeks to persuade buyers to purchase the advertised goods.

Act Sequence: The interaction begins with persuasive advertising and solicitation, followed by either indirect or direct refusal from the buyer depending on the degree of familiarity.

Key: The tone of the interaction is persuasive and painstaking because the hawker attempts to convince potential buyers to patronise the goods.

Instrumentalities: Spoken oral communication is employed.

Norms: Indirect refusal is commonly used when the hawker is unfamiliar to the buyer in order to maintain politeness and respect, whereas direct refusal may occur where the hawker and buyer share familiarity and cordial relations.

3.5 REFUSAL OF ASSISTANCE

In Yoruba settings, not all gestures are permitted. Some gestures may be refused if the person offering it is a total stranger and there is no need for such assistance. Assistance may also be refused from friends and families if such will be used against the receiver in the future. Thus, refusal of assistance can be for safety purposes, to protect one's integrity, to show decency or showcase home training. See the examples below:

Excerpt 6

A: Jẹ kí ń gba owó yẹn fún ẹ 'Let me collect the money for you'

B: (Ẹ) má ẹ iyonu 'Don't bother'

The example in excerpt 6 (A & B) depicts the relationship between two people who are friends or share a cordial relationship with each other. The response in 6 (B) might come as a joke to tell a friend not to bother to assist. However, in a transaction situation where buying or trading is taking place, collecting money on behalf of somebody else may cause confusion in reconciling the transaction. Thus, the indirect refusal is a purposeful answer to the person who is willing to help where the help is not necessary. This response can also be used for an elderly person not to bother. Using Dell Hymes' SPEAKING model (1972), the communicative situation may be summarised as follows:

Setting/Scene: A business or transactional setting where one friend intends to assist another.

Participants: The addresser and addressee are friends or acquaintances.

Ends: The helper intends to assist, while the receiver considers the help unnecessary.

Act Sequence: The interaction begins with an offer of assistance, followed by an indirect refusal expressed politely and humorously.

Key: The tone of the interaction is perfunctory and light-hearted because of the shared understanding between participants.

Instrumentalities: Spoken oral communication is employed.

Norms: Indirect refusal is used as a polite and joking strategy to decline unnecessary assistance without causing offence.

Excerpt 7

A: (È) jẹ kín báa yín/ẹ wa mótò yìi ‘Let me assist you to drive your car’

B: Èyin lẹ ti n rànmi lówó láti ojò yìi ‘You have been assisting me for a long time’

C: È má ẹ iyọnu lónií ‘Don’t bother today’

D: Á máa di gbogbo igbà ‘It will become too often’

The excerpt in 7 (A, B, C & D) shows a typical example of someone who has been rendering help to someone all the time to the extent that the help has become an embarrassment. Thus, the answers in 7 (C & D) are an indirect refusal of the help. This subtle refusal is a way of saying thank you. Using Dell Hymes’ SPEAKING model (1972), the communicative situation may be summarised as follows:

Setting/Scene: An informal setting in which assistance is repeatedly offered between acquaintances.

Participants: The addresser and addressee are acquaintances or cordial associates.

Ends: One participant intends to continue offering assistance to another.

Act Sequence: The interaction begins with an offer of help, followed by appreciation and indirect refusal.

Key: The tone of the interaction is polite, careful, and considerate because of the existing relationship between both parties.

Instrumentalities: Spoken oral communication is employed.

Norms: Indirect refusal is used to prevent the helper from feeling slighted or unappreciated.

Excerpt 8

A: Gba owó yìi kí o fi ra bọ̀lù ‘Take this money to buy ball’

B: Ìyá mi máa nà mí ‘My mother will beat me’

In excerpt 8 (A & B), the elder person sometimes may want to show a gesture to children on the street without knowing them. A thoroughbred child will use the indirect refusal in 3(B) to tactically refuse the gift to show home training and contentment. This refusal may also go for other acts or gestures too. The situations in the excerpts reflect both high and low context cultures. Thus, social status such as high, equal, low as well level of cordial relationship determines whether a direct or indirect refusal is appropriate. Using Dell Hymes’ SPEAKING model (1972), the communicative situation may be summarised as follows:

Setting/Scene: An informal setting in which an elderly person offers assistance or a gift to a younger individual.

Participants: The addresser is an elderly person, while the addressee is a younger person or child.

Ends: The elder intends to extend kindness or assistance to the younger individual.

Act Sequence: The interaction begins with a friendly offer or gesture, followed by an indirect refusal from the younger person.

Key: The tone of the interaction is cordial and perfunctory.

Instrumentalities: Spoken oral communication is employed.

Norms: Indirect refusal is used to show respect for the elder, appreciate the gesture, and demonstrate proper upbringing and cultural values.

3.6 REFUSAL OF ADVICE

Advice can be positive or negative, and it can have either good or bad effects on the life of the person being advised. The Yorùbá understand that not all advice is necessary, and some may even have

negative consequence. When Yorùbá notice that advice from an individual is unnecessary or could bring harm, they usually refuse it in a stylish and polite way, without insulting the person who offered it. See the examples below:

Expert 9

A: Mo fẹ́ kí o lọ kí àwọn ẹbí yín ‘I want you to go and greet your extended family’

A: Léyìn ìgbà tí bàbá rẹ̀ ti kú ‘After the demise of your father’

B(i): E ṣé mo ti gbọ́ ‘Thank you very much’

B(ii): Maa ma ronú si ‘I will be think about it’

The excerpt above depicts indirect refusal of a piece of advice from a friend or an elderly person who admonishes one to do something. The response in (B(i)) is a typical way of reciprocating the time and the energy of the adviser. A typical Yorùbá would thank the adviser with appreciation for the advice. After this, the response in B(ii) follows. The response has two readings: it could be a tactical response to dismiss the adviser, or it could also mean that the advisee would give the advice a second thought. This excerpt depicts a high context culture in which advice given may or may not be well received by the advisee, but they are expected to show appreciation and respect social norms by expressing refusal indirectly. It must be noted that advice is often given to younger individuals by older members of the society. Using Dell Hymes’ SPEAKING model (1972), the communicative situation may be summarised as follows:

Setting/Scene: An informal setting where advice is offered to a younger person.

Participants: The interaction involves an elderly or experienced adviser and a younger recipient.

Ends: The adviser intends to guide the younger person toward appropriate action regarding a personal or family issue.

Act Sequence: The interaction begins with advice or admonition, followed by appreciation and indirect refusal or non-committal acceptance.

Key: The tone of the interaction is respectful and thoughtful, reflecting shared cultural expectations and sensitivity to age hierarchy.

Instrumentalities: Spoken oral communication is employed.

Norms: Indirect refusal is used to maintain respect for the elder, preserve social harmony, and avoid overt disagreement or confrontation.

3.7 SOCIOLINGUISTIC OVERVIEW OF REFUSAL STRATEGY IN YORÙBÁ CULTURE

Culture, as a way of life of a group of people, includes their acquired behaviour, attitudes, and material things. It plays a significant role in their communication behaviour and norm of the society because it functions on the subconscious level, serving as an unseen influence that shapes thoughts (Hall, 1959). The concept of high-context and low-context cultures, has significant influence in determining how people behave and communicate. The Yorùbá culture lies in-between the high and low cultures enumerated in respect of refusal strategies. However, emphasis is also placed on high, equal and low status in response to offers. Although, the collective culture in Yoruba settings prioritises group harmony and social cohesion, refusal is characterised by indirect communication. It must also be noted that the choice of refusal a strategy is highly dependent on context, setting, situation and the relationship between interlocutors. In recent times, modernity and cordiality have introduced individualistic culture into some aspects of refusal verbal act among the Yorùbá. In certain contexts - especially among people of equal rank and those of lower social status - direct refusal strategies are increasingly developed. The development reflects a shift toward low-context communication, where information is conveyed explicitly through words rather than through situation or cultural cues (Hofstede, 1980). It must be noted settings/scene, participants, ends, acts/sequence, key, instrumentalities and norms play vital roles in the high- and low- context communication of refusals.

IV CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have examined the refusal strategy among the Yorùbá. It was observed that the general norms among the Yorùbá people is the indirect refusal verbal act where polite phrases are used to refuse a verbal act from an interlocutor. However, the study also shows that high, low or equal status

plays a role in refusal strategy because they determine the direction of the refusal. It is also demonstrated that direct refusal is either a product of borrowed culture, cordiality or low and equal status syndrome.

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FROM LITERAL MEANING TO EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIONS: A SEMANTIC CHANGE OF EMOTIONAL SLANGS IN TIKTOK COMMENTS

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Abstract

This study examines the meaning changes and emotional functions of slang expressions related to emotion in TikTok comments from 2024 to 2025. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, five TikTok comments were analyzed using Ullmann's semantic change theory and Martin and White's Evaluation Theory. The results show that slang undergoes systematic semantic processes, such as amelioration, pejoration, and widening, which transform literal meanings into emotional expressions. These emotional meanings function in the domains of Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation, enabling users to express personal feelings, evaluate behavior, and convey admiration. This study concludes that meaning change in slang expression is a socially driven process that strengthens emotional expression and interpersonal communication in digital discourse.

Keywords: *digital communication, emotion-related slang, meaning change, TikTok comments*

I INTRODUCTION

Language is inherently dynamic, adapting continuously to technological, social, and cultural changes. The dynamic nature of language can be seen in the digital environment. The rapid growth of the internet as a means of communication has significantly changed the way people interact and communicate in their daily lives (Al-kadi & Ahmed, 2018). Androutsopoulos (2016), in the Handbook of Language and Digital Communication, states that digital communication changes linguistic practices by introducing new forms of interaction and accelerating the spread of meaning in everyday language use. In line with this view, Herring (2015) explains that computer-mediated communication gives rise to new patterns of language use shaped by social interaction and online discourse practices.

In the digital era, social media has become one of the most powerful drivers of linguistic practices worldwide. Platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Reddit function not only as channels of communication but also as catalysts of linguistic innovation (Hartina & Rivia, 2024). The speed of adaptation in digital communication allows language changes to occur more quickly than in traditional face-to-face interactions, enabling new meanings and usage patterns to spread to a wide audience in a short period of time. In this context, Firmansyah (2018) argues that language change and development are influenced by environmental factors, particularly technological advancements that shape communication patterns within society. These language changes that continue to develop from generation to generation create a distinctive slang language that is often used by generation Z or gen Z (Gemintang et al., 2025).

Slang is considered as informal interaction and is socially, culturally, and geographically restricted, functioning as a marker of subcultural identity and reflecting creativity, and playfulness in communication (Alawiyah et al., 2021). In online conversations, the use of slang further reflects the phenomenon of ongoing linguistic innovation, caused by the unique communication environment on the internet. Crystal (2011) states that the internet functions as a new linguistic medium that changes the way language is used and accelerates the process of language change. The characteristics of online interaction encourage creativity, informality, and experimentation with linguistic forms, allowing speakers to build identities and express emotions in flexible ways. Dealing with this context, slang emerges as a natural and systematic component of digital communication, rather than as a deviation from linguistic norms. Fitri (2025) explains that, slang becomes a form of linguistic performance that reflects broader social dynamics, including identity construction, power relations, and cultural trends. Similarly, Saputra et al. (2023) states that The use of slang can also be used to show oneself as a member of a community group that is different from other community groups. In digital communication, these social and interactional functions also play a role in the emergence of new meanings in slang expressions. Hutapea (2025) explains that the word “ghost”, which originally referred to a supernatural spirit, has developed a new meaning describing the act of suddenly cutting off communication with someone, particularly in romantic or social contexts. Likewise, The word Feed generally means

"memberi makan". but if this word is used in the context of social media, it has another meaning. A feed is a central section of your home page that displays an ever-updated collection of items (Bahri et al., 2023). This meaning change illustrates how slang expressions are used to convey emotions and opinions in digital communication, including TikTok comments. This development highlights how slang expressions acquire new meanings and function as slang related to emotion in digital communication, which becomes the main focus of this study.

Despite the abundance of research on meaning change and slang in social media, little attention has been paid to the systematic integration of semantic change classification and its emotional function in digital communication, such as TikTok comments. Based on this gap, this study examines how slang expressions develop new meanings and how these meanings function emotionally in digital communication. This study explores the types of meaning change in slang expressions used in TikTok comments, the process through which their meanings shift from literal interpretations into emotionally expressive forms, and the emotional functions that emerge from these new meanings in online interaction.

Research on meaning change has explored shifts in meaning in slang and particularly slang related to emotion, but no one has systematically analyzed the integration of types of semantic change and the mechanisms of change based on Ullmann's (1962) theory and their emotional functions based on Martin and White's (2005) theory in TikTok comments. This study aims to fill the gap in existing research on meaning change.

Several empirical studies show evidence that English vocabulary undergoes systematic meaning changes across various social media platforms. For instance, Jahan and Irfan (2021), who analyzed semantic changes on Facebook and Twitter, found that everyday English words such as post, follow, and friend have undergone semantic expansion, shifting from their original meanings in the offline world to new meanings specific to the digital realm. Qizi (2025) further shows that on social networking sites, words such as stream, viral, and tag have developed new meanings related to technological practices, reflecting how repeated digital usage reshapes lexical semantics. Similarly, as Gulzodabegim (2026) explains, the term "word cloud" has shifted in meaning from simply referring to a cloud of water vapor in the sky to an internet-based storage and computing service, while "hashtag" has shifted from simply being a symbol (#) to a tool for categorizing topics and trends on social media. Accordingly, Fawzy (2025) shows that on Instagram and YouTube, expressions such as subscribe and share no longer function as general verbs, but carry specific communicative meanings in digital interactions. Ovalia and Astuti (2025) reinforce these findings by indicating that English words in digital communication often acquire new semantic values as users negotiate meaning in rapidly evolving communication environments. Collectively, these studies prove that meaning changes in digital media are systematic, widespread, and driven by the communicative context of online platforms.

More focused research investigates meaning changes in slang words, explaining that slang serves as a productive place for systematic meaning development. Chinedu (2025) reveals that youth slang undergoes semantic change primarily through amelioration, as seen in the expression "Bad," which has changed from "poor quality" to "cool, impressive," reflecting a positive social assessment. Similarly, Dahlia and Siti Waroh (2025) states that the word "dope" has undergone a semantic shift through a process of amelioration, evolving from its original meaning "drugs" or "fool" to positive connotations such as "cool," "impressive," or "amazing". In a TikTok-based study, Marpaung (2025) identifies various types of semantic changes in slang, including amelioration (FOMO), pejoration (SUS from "suspicious" to 'untrustworthy'), and metaphorical shifts (vibe check from "mood checking" to "social assessment of environments or people"). As stated by, Rahman et al. (2022) reported that British internet slang on social media platforms shows similar patterns of broadening and narrowing, for example in terms such as rubbish (from "broken stones" to "unwanted things") and crap (from 'dirt' to "something useless"). According to Sitohang (2025), the word "healing" has also undergone a shift in meaning, moving from its original definition of "recovery from physical or emotional injury" to a broader meaning associated with traveling or relaxing to relieve stress, as seen in social media usage. These mutually supportive findings are in line with Ullmann's (1962) classification of semantic change, namely amelioration, pejoration, narrowing, and broadening, which shows that meaning change in slang follows a systematic and theory-based process, rather than random lexical innovation.

Recent studies increasingly highlight emotional expression and the emotional function of meaning changes in slang in digital communication. Gemintang et al. (2025) show that TikTok users employ slang containing emotional expressions such as slay, simp and salty to express admiration, criticizing or judging behaviour and expressing annoyance or irritation. Adhiyana and Djuharie (2025), in their

analysis of YouTube comments, found that expressions such as “devoured,” “rn,” and “y’all” function as emotional appreciation and affectation that convey strong admiration, showing emotional urgency and increase opinion. In addition, according to Siregar (2025), The word “crazy” on social media is now used as an emotional expression in a positive sense to convey admiration and excitement. These findings show that meaning changes in slang expressions not only alter lexical meaning but also direct words toward affective and evaluative functions in digital communication.

Building on these empirical findings, Ullmann's (1962) classification of semantic change explains meaning changes through four major types, including amelioration, pejoration, widening, and narrowing. Behind these changes, Ullmann also explains that new meanings often emerge through metaphorical association, a mechanism whereby a word evolves into a new meaning due to perceived similarities between its original meaning and its new meaning. Through this process, slang expressions in TikTok comments systematically develop meanings that differ from their original literal meanings. From a cognitive perspective, Koch (1999) states that new meanings emerge in response to communicative needs such as expressiveness, emotional emphasis, and social evaluation in the functions that dominate online interaction users. In line with this context, Burrige (2006) show that emotional attitudes, social values, and affective motivations strongly influence the direction of meaning change, especially in the use of informal and expressive language. In digital discourse, the interpretation of slang expressions is not limited to lexical meaning alone, but is also shaped by contextual and interpersonal functions in communication. This perspective reflects a pragmatic dimension of meaning, particularly through Dasher's (2001) concept of subjectivization, which explains how linguistic expressions gradually develop more speaker-oriented, evaluative, and emotionally expressive meanings through repeated interaction. This process of subjectivization is particularly evident in TikTok comments, where users adapt existing words to express emotions.

To understand how newly developed meanings function emotionally in discourse, this study adopts Martin and White (2005) Appraisal Theory, which classifies expressive meanings into three domains: Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation. This framework provides an analytical basis for analyzing the emotional function of slang expressions in digital communication.

In this study, slang is understood as informal and non-standard words that emerge in specific social groups and communication contexts, particularly among young communities and online interactions, and their meanings often differ from standard dictionary definitions. The words discussed in previous studies (e.g., slay, simp, SUS, FOMO, and vibe check) are categorized as slang because they display innovative meanings that depend on context, functioning as markers of group identity, emotional expression, and social evaluation in digital interactions.

II MATERIALS AND METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach. Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell., 2014). Its purpose is to analyze the meaning changes of slang expressions and their emotional functions in TikTok comments. A qualitative approach was chosen because this study focuses on interpreting meaning, identifying types of meaning changes, and explaining the emotional function of a word in natural digital communication, rather than on measuring numerical variables.

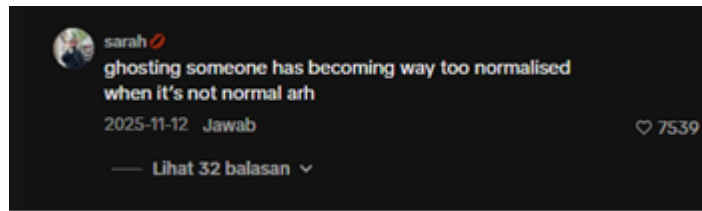
The data in this study was collected from publicly accessible English-language TikTok comments posted between 2024 and 2025. Data was collected from TikTok's public search results through keyword-based exploration of evaluative expressions commonly found in digital interactions. The focus of this data collection was not on specific users, accounts, or algorithmic recommendation systems, but rather on publicly accessible comment sections where slang related to emotions is used naturally within the context of interaction.

Purposive sampling was employed in this study. In this context, purposive sampling refers to the deliberate selection of data based on predefined linguistic criteria relevant to the research focus: shifts in meaning within emotion-related slang and its emotional functions in TikTok comments. Data were selected based on the following criteria: (1) comments containing emotion-related slang, (2) expressions indicating a shift in meaning from their literal definitions, (3) comments reflecting emotional or evaluative functions such as admiration, criticism, frustration, disappointment, or social judgment, and (4) comments with sufficient contextual clarity for interpretation. Ambiguous comments or those with unclear context were excluded.

In the initial stage, approximately 52 comments were collected from public TikTok posts using keyword-based searches. Selected lexical items (e.g., “slay,” “salty,” “ghosting,” “mid,” and “insane”)

were used as entry points to identify slang related to emotions in TikTok discourse, as these words frequently appear in evaluative and emotional interactions within digital communication. The dataset was then filtered through the application of selection criteria, resulting in five representative comments selected for in-depth qualitative analysis.

The selected TikTok comments were documented as screenshots, preserving the original context of the interaction and linguistic usage within the TikTok comments section.



Picture 1. TikTok Comment Screenshot

Data analysis was conducted in several steps. First, slang expressions related to emotion were identified from selected TikTok comments. Second, the literal meanings of these words were determined based on definitions from the Cambridge Dictionary. Third, new meaning refers to the contextually interpreted meaning of slang words in TikTok comments, and supported by slang meanings in the Cambridge dictionary. The term “new meaning” is adopted from a previous study by Siregar (2025). Next, each word was classified based on the type of meaning change using Ullmann's (1962) framework. Then, the emotional function of each slang expression was analyzed using the categories of Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation from Appraisal Theory by Martin and White (2005). The operational interpretation of these categories is based on previous studies that have applied the same framework, as discussed further in the Discussion section, which reveal consistent patterns in the use of the three domains of Evaluation to express evaluative and emotional meaning in discourse. In this study, the term of “emotional function” constructed as an operational category based on this framework to describe evaluative meanings expressed in slang usage.

Ullmann (1962) classifies meaning change into several categories, including widening, narrowing, amelioration, and pejoration. Widening refers to a process in which a word develops a broader or more general meaning over time, while narrowing occurs when a word acquires a more specific or restricted meaning. Amelioration describes a shift toward a more positive evaluative meaning, whereas pejoration refers to a shift toward a more negative or degraded meaning. These categories were used in this study to identify changes between the literal and contextual meanings of slang expressions found in TikTok comments.

Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory was used to analyze the emotional and evaluative functions of slang expressions in TikTok comments. The theory consists of three main domains: Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation. Affect refers to language used to express personal feelings and emotional states. Judgment concerns the evaluation of people's behavior, morality, or character, while Appreciation relates to the evaluation of things, events, or situations. These categories were applied to interpret how slang expressions function as carriers of emotional and evaluative meaning in digital communication.

Finally, the results were interpreted to explain how meaning changes contribute to emotional expression in TikTok communication. In presenting the data, each expression is marked with code (3-1), (3-2), and so forth. The existence of the code is useful for showing the emotional expressions that appear in TikTok comments.

III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 FINDINGS

An analysis of five TikTok comments from 2024–2025 shows that slang expressions related to emotion undergo systematic meaning changes and function primarily as a means of expressing emotion. Table 3 below shows the types of meaning changes.

Table 1. Types of Meaning Change

Slang word	Literal meaning	New Meaning	Types of meaning
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			change
Slay	To kill someone violently	To be extremely good or nice	Amelioration
Ghosting	The activity of writing books, articles, etc. for another person to publish under their own name	A way of ending a relationship with someone suddenly by stopping all communication with them	Widening
Salty	Tasting of salt	Annoyed or upset	Pejoration
Mid	In the middle of something	Not very good or attractive	Pejoration
Insane	Extremely unreasonable, or mentally ill	Extremely good or impressive	Amelioration

From the table classifying meaning changes in Table 3, this study further explains how the emotional functions contained in the slang words above are based on Appraisal Theory by Martin and White (2005), as follows:

Table 2. Appraisal Analysis of Slang Expressions

Slang Word	New Meaning	Appraisal Domain	Emotional Function (Appraisal-Based Interpretation)
Slay	To be extremely good or nice	Appreciation	Showing admiration
Ghosting	A way of ending a relationship with someone suddenly by stopping all communication with them	Affect	Expressing disappointment
Salty	Annoyed or upset	Affect	Expressing annoyance
Mid	Not very good or attractive	Judgment	Expressing negative evaluation or criticism
Insane	Extremely good or impressive	Appreciation	Showing amazement

3.2 DISCUSSION

Findings show that slang expressions in TikTok comments has a systematic emotional function that can be grouped into three domains of assessment: Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation. Each domain shows how meaning changes allow words to shift from their original literal meanings to emotional expressions that serve as interpersonal goals in digital communication.

3.2.1 AFFECT: EXPRESSING PERSONAL FEELINGS

Slang words that represent the Affection Domain are slang words such as ghosting and salty, as shown in the following example of their use in a TikTok comment:

- (3-1) Ghosting someone has becoming way too normalised when it's not normal arh.
- (3-2) Don't be salty!

In comment (3–1), “Ghosting someone has become too normalised when it’s not normal,” the speaker expresses emotional discomfort and frustration at the experience of suddenly losing communication in a relationship. The phrase “too normalized” shows that “ghosting” functions not only as a description of an action but also as an expression of the speaker’s personal emotional response. Semantically, the term has undergone widening, from its original meaning as a professional writing activity to interpersonal behavior in relationships through metaphorical associations, linking the absence of visible authorship in ghostwriting to the absence of communicative presence in social interactions. This slang expression functions to express disappointment and emotional pain.

Similarly, in comment (3–2), the expression “salty” appears in the sentence “Don’t be salty!” directed at someone perceived as reacting negatively in minor disagreements or socially tense situations. In this context, the speaker uses “salty” to evaluate and discourage responses characterized by irritation, defensiveness, or excessive sensitivity. Rather than expressing a general emotional state, the term specifically targets reactions to unfavorable situations, indicating that its use depends on the context and typically limited to mild conflict or perceived overreaction. Here, “salty” no longer denotes the physical taste of salt but has undergone pejoration, shifting from a neutral sensory meaning to a negative emotional meaning through metaphorical association, where physical sensations are mapped onto emotional attitudes, both of which indicate discomfort. Through this meaning change, “salty” functions as an explicit marker of affect, enabling speakers to convey emotional annoyance in digital communication.

These findings indicate that slang expression involves meaning change, consistent with previous studies by Rahman et al. (2022) and Marpaung (2025). The main types identified are semantic widening and pejoration. For example, “crap” originally meant “dirty,” but now refers to something useless. Similarly, “sus,” derived from “suspicious,” is used to describe someone as untrustworthy. Furthermore, the emotional function of slang expression for conveying personal feelings in the affect domain is in accordance with research by Gemintang et al. (2025), whose research shows findings in the affect domain for the word “salty,” whose emotional function is to express annoyance.

3.2.2 JUDGMENT: SOCIAL AND MORAL EVALUATION

The Judgment domain is represented by the slang word “mid”. In comment (3–1), the speaker encourages others to stop labeling themselves and others by saying, “you are not mid... you are just you.” The term “mid” is used in online discourse to assess a person’s appearance or value as mediocre or unattractive. Literally meaning “middle,” it originally referred to a neutral spatial position between two extremes. Both meanings are linked by the idea of inconspicuousness, i.e., something in the middle is neither high nor low, just as something called “mid” is evaluated as neither impressive nor extraordinary. This similarity in perception allows the meaning to shift from a spatial description to a social evaluation through metaphorical association. As a result, this change represents pejoration, where a neutral term develops a negative meaning. This expression is used to express negative evaluation or criticism.

(3-3) stop labeling yourself and other people your not mid or chopped your just you

Through this meaning change, the word becomes a tool for criticizing behavior and moral character, allowing the speaker to evaluate others based on social and interpersonal standards. This type of meaning change in pejorative meaning is in line with research by Marpaung (2025), which shows a shift in meaning that has become more negative. Furthermore, regarding the emotional function of the word “toxic,” these findings support research by Gemintang et al. (2025), as shown in the word “simp” in domain of judgment, which functions to express social disapproval.

3.2.3 APPRECIATION: POSITIVE EVALUATION AND ADMIRATION

The Award Domain is embodied by the words “slay” and “insane.”

(3-4) Ow yes gurl IM so slay and Im diva.

(3-5) They don’t know how insanely cool Iam.

In comment (3–4), “Ow yes gurl IM so slay and Im diva,” in the TikTok comment interaction, the speaker uses the word ‘slay’ to positively evaluate their own appearance or performance, describing themselves as impressive and exemplary. Originally meaning “to kill ruthlessly,” the word “slay” is now used in online interactions to convey praise and excellence. This meaning change reflects amelioration and is driven by metaphorical associations, where the intensity and power associated with physical domination are conceptually transferred to the realm of social success and emotional excellence. because

both have great power, both in killing cruelly and in being very impressive, therefore the word “slay” is chosen so that the speaker appears very impressive like a diva. Through this mapping, the word acquires a very positive evaluative meaning and functions as an expression of admiration in interactions.

Similarly, in comment (3–5), “They don't know how insanely cool I am,” the word “insane,” which originally refers to irrationality or mental disorder, but in the TikTok comment, the word “insane” is used to interpret something that is very impressive or extraordinary. The context of the sentence above shows that the speaker wants to show that he is very extraordinary and cool by combining the words ‘insane’ and “cool.” This change also represents amelioration, driven by metaphorical associations, where the concept of extreme mental states is mapped to expressions of extreme excellence and high positive evaluation, both meanings having similarities that indicate the same extreme point. Through this meaning change, both expressions operate in the realm of Appreciation, with these emotional expressions serving to convey admiration, approval, and positive evaluation in digital communication.

Findings on this type of meaning change complement research by Chinedu (2025), for example on the word “Bad,” which has changed from “poor quality” to “cool, impressive.” Regarding the emotional function of the slang words above, this agrees with research by Adhiyana and Djuharie (2025) and Gemintang et al. (2025), such as the words “slay” and “devoured” in the domain of appreciation, which both function to express admiration.

Overall, this discussion shows that meaning change is not merely a lexical phenomenon, but a functional process that equips speakers with emotional expressive tools. Through types of meaning change such as amelioration, pejoration, and widening, along with the metaphorical association mechanism, slang words evolve from literal meanings into powerful emotional expressions that fulfil interpersonal functions in Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation in TikTok discourse interactions.

IV CONCLUSION

The study concludes that slang expressions related to emotion in TikTok comments undergoes systematic meaning changes and plays an important role in expressing emotions in digital communication. These findings confirm that slang words undergo predictable semantic processes, such as amelioration, pejoration, and widening, which allow them to shift from literal meanings to emotionally expressive forms. However, in this study, no instances of narrowing were observed, indicating a limitation in capturing all types of meaning change. In addition, the metaphorical association mechanism was found to facilitate the development of new meanings, allowing words to acquire expressive and evaluative nuances. Using Evaluation Theory, this study also reveals that the emotional meaning of slang functions in three domains: Affect (expressing personal feelings), Judgment (evaluating behavior), and Appreciation (expressing admiration). These results indicate that meaning changes in slang are not random, but are shaped by the emotional, social, and interpersonal needs of users in digital communication. Therefore, meaning changes serve as an important linguistic mechanism that strengthens emotional expression and social connections in TikTok discourse.

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REDUCING ENGLISH-SPEAKING ANXIETY IN ESP CONTEXTS THROUGH FLIPPED LEARNING EVIDENCE FROM INFORMATICS ENGINEERING STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study examines how flipped learning can help reduce English-speaking anxiety among Informatics Engineering students. In many technical programs, students often struggle to communicate in English due to limited proficiency, low confidence, and anxiety, which can limit their participation in class. However, previous studies have mostly focused on general English contexts, with limited research examining speaking anxiety in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), especially in technical fields such as Informatics Engineering. This study addresses this gap by focusing on both the psychological and learning effects of flipped learning in an ESP context. This study used a mixed-methods approach, combining a quasi-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design with a post-intervention survey and classroom observations. The participants were 25 second-year students at Universitas Duta Bangsa Surakarta. A 10-item speaking anxiety questionnaire and a 7-item perception survey were used. The results showed a significant decrease in speaking anxiety (pretest $M = 3.86$; posttest $M = 3.40$; $t(24) = -5.27$, $p < .01$). Students also reported increased confidence and better preparation. The findings suggest that flipped learning can help reduce speaking anxiety and support English communication in ESP contexts.

Keywords: *flipped learning, speaking anxiety, ESP, informatics engineering, higher education*

I INTRODUCTION

Informatics Engineering students face discipline-specific communication demands that extend beyond general English proficiency. In academic and professional contexts, they are expected to explain algorithms, describe system processes, present IT project outcomes, and collaborate using technical English (Daiu et al., 2025; Garcia & Cruz, 2024). These tasks require not only foundational language competence but also the ability to articulate complex and abstract technical concepts with clarity and precision. Given that English is widely used in programming resources, technical documentation, and global collaboration, effective English communication constitutes a critical competency for Informatics Engineering students (Iyappan et al., 2025).

In this context, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) plays an important role in supporting students' communication needs. Unlike General English, ESP focuses on the specific language, vocabulary, and discourse practices required in particular fields, including technical communication in Informatics Engineering (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Thaksanan, 2023). For Informatics Engineering students, ESP learning is designed to align with real academic and professional tasks, such as understanding technical documents, explaining coding concepts, and delivering project presentations. Through this approach, students can develop English skills that are directly relevant to their discipline and future careers (Dou et al., 2023; Shalash, 2024).

Informatics Engineering students at Universitas Duta Bangsa Surakarta face specific challenges shaped by their learning environment. The program is conducted in a non-English-medium instruction (non-EMI) context, where English is taught as a subject rather than used in daily instruction. As a result, many students have limited experience in spoken English, as prior learning tends to emphasize reading and grammar. In addition, students are required to combine basic language skills with technical vocabulary and communication practices related to computer science. This makes learning more demanding, as students must not only understand English but also use it to explain algorithms, coding concepts, and IT project documentation. This gap between students' language proficiency and disciplinary demands often increases speaking anxiety and reduces their participation in classroom activities.

Even though English is important, many Informatics Engineering students still struggle to improve their speaking skills. Many of them start university with limited English ability. Thus, it is hard for them to join technical discussions or take part in academic activities. Lecturers often notice that students lack sufficient basic English to understand and use language relevant to their field. Because of this, students

may feel unsure and avoid speaking when they are asked to do so. Previous studies show that engineering students often feel high speaking anxiety because they lack practice, have limited vocabulary, and have low confidence (Kakepoto et al., 2022). Similarly, Alfiani et al. (2022) explain that speaking anxiety is a serious problem that affects communication and can make students avoid speaking in English.

Language anxiety is known as an important factor that can be an obstacle for students to speak well. Horwitz et al. (1986) explained that foreign language anxiety is a combination of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses that happen during the process of learning a language. They also stated that even students who are good in other subjects can still face psychological difficulties when they have to speak in a foreign language. Supporting this idea, Young (1990) stated that speaking is the most stressful skill because it directly affects students' confidence, self-esteem, and participation in class. Ibrahim and Amin (2021) also found several main causes of speaking anxiety among EFL learners, such as fear of making mistakes, worry about being judged negatively, and feeling nervous when speaking in front of others.

The gap between students' English proficiency and the demands of their discipline often increases speaking anxiety. Students may worry about being misunderstood, making errors when explaining technical ideas, or failing to communicate clearly in academic or professional contexts. This anxiety can reduce participation, lower confidence, and slow down overall progress in English learning.

Instead of using only traditional teaching methods, lecturers need strategies that give students more time to understand and practice the language before speaking in class. In this situation, flipped learning has become more important, especially in courses that need active participation. In a flipped classroom, students learn new material before class, usually through short videos or guided readings. This allows class time to be used for more interactive activities. As a result, students come to class with basic understanding, so it is easier for them to join discussions, group work, and speaking activities.

Previous studies show that flipped learning can improve not only students' understanding but also motivation, classroom interaction, and higher-level thinking skills (Baig & Yadegaridehkordi, 2023; Strelan et al., 2020; Zhou, 2023). In language learning contexts, providing students with time to study vocabulary and grammar before class may also reduce speaking anxiety because students feel more prepared to participate in classroom activities (Kernagaran & Abdullah, 2022).

Recent studies also show that flipped learning can be effectively integrated with technology. Cai (2024) found that intelligent speech recognition tools can support speaking practice in flipped classrooms, while Sa et al. (2022) introduced a flipped learning model supported by big data analytics to monitor student participation and classroom activities. These findings suggest that flipped learning is flexible and suitable for technology-related fields such as Informatics Engineering.

Flipped learning may also support students' psychological readiness in language learning. Zhang (2022) found that this method can reduce stress and increase motivation. For students in technical fields, flipped learning provides more time to understand specific vocabulary and concepts before classroom interaction, which may help reduce anxiety during speaking activities. In addition, activities such as discussions, presentations, and collaborative tasks may help students improve confidence and fluency in communication.

Despite the growing use of flipped learning in language education, its application in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), particularly in technical fields such as Informatics Engineering, remains underexplored. Previous studies have mainly focused on general English or non-technical contexts and have not sufficiently addressed speaking anxiety among students who need to communicate technical content in English (Kernagaran & Abdullah, 2022; Zhang, 2022). Although ESP scholars have emphasized the importance of aligning language learning with professional needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998), there is still limited empirical evidence on how flipped learning can support both language performance and emotional readiness in technical ESP contexts.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the effect of flipped learning on English-speaking anxiety among Informatics Engineering students. Specifically, the study investigates whether flipped learning can reduce students' speaking anxiety and improve their confidence in using English for technical communication. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research question: The extent of how flipped learning reduce English-speaking anxiety among Informatics Engineering students in an ESP context.

II MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study used a quasi-experimental one-group pretest–post-test design within a mixed-methods approach, followed by a survey. This design allowed the researcher to compare students' speaking anxiety before and after the flipped classroom activities. It also collects their opinions about the learning process. This combination is often used in classroom research to get both numerical results and students' personal views (Creswell, 2014; Cohen et al., 2018). Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) also explain that combining quantitative and qualitative data can provide a more complete understanding of classroom experiences and learning processes.

The pretest–post-test part helps to directly compare students' speaking anxiety levels before and after using flipped learning, so it can show clear improvement or decline. At the same time, the descriptive survey gives more detailed information about students' attitudes, confidence, and experiences. This provides a more complete understanding of how flipped learning affects both emotional and thinking aspects in language learning.

However, because the study used a one-group pretest–post-test design without a control group, the findings should be interpreted carefully, as causal relationships cannot be fully established.

This study involved 25 second-year students from the Informatics Engineering program at Universitas Duta Bangsa Surakarta. The participants were chosen using convenience sampling, because it was the most practical method for this classroom research, especially since access and availability are important factors (Mackey & Gass, 2016). All students had already completed a General English course before the study and had at least a basic level of English, which was needed so they could take part in speaking activities. The group included 17 male and 8 female students, aged between 18 and 21 years old. In addition, this number of participants is considered suitable for a paired-samples t-test, which is commonly used in small-scale educational research (Creswell, 2014).

Three instruments were used to collect the data. The main instrument was a speaking anxiety questionnaire adapted from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al., 1986) and modified to reflect the Indonesian ESP context of Informatics Engineering students. Several questionnaire items were adapted to reflect situations commonly experienced by Informatics Engineering students, such as discussing technical topics and communicating IT-related content in English, based on previous studies on speaking anxiety among engineering students (Kakepoto et al., 2022), while maintaining the core constructs of foreign language anxiety. The adaptation also considered the participants' non-English-medium instruction learning environment and classroom communication practices. To improve contextual relevance and clarity, the adapted items were reviewed by two ESP lecturers familiar with Indonesian higher education settings.

Although the concept of foreign language anxiety may be influenced by cultural and educational contexts, this study did not assume that the original instrument could be directly applied without modification. Therefore, the questionnaire items were adjusted to better match the participants' English proficiency levels, classroom experiences, and communication needs in the Informatics Engineering program. The final questionnaire comprised 10 Likert-scale items covering fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, and linguistic insecurity. Example statements included "I feel nervous when I have to speak English in class" and "I feel anxious when explaining technical topics in English." Students responded using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The second instrument was a post-intervention survey used to understand students' opinions about the flipped learning model. It focused on their confidence, participation, and overall learning experience after the implementation. The survey had seven closed-ended questions using a five-point Likert scale and was adapted from previous studies on flipped classrooms (Lo & Hew, 2017; Kernagaran & Abdullah, 2022). The questions were adjusted to fit the Informatics Engineering context, with examples such as "The flipped classroom helped me feel more prepared to speak in class" and "I found learning through videos and pre-class materials useful."

The third instrument was a classroom observation sheet. It was used to record students' participation, their willingness to take part in speaking activities, and visible signs of anxiety, such as hesitation or avoidance. These observations supported the questionnaire and survey data and provided additional information on how students reacted to the flipped classroom activities in real-world situations.

The procedure of this study was divided into three main stages. The first stage was the pretest, in which all students completed a speaking anxiety questionnaire to measure their initial level of anxiety when speaking English. This stage provided baseline data for comparing changes after the intervention.

The second stage was the flipped learning intervention. Before each class session, students studied the core materials independently through short videos and IT-related readings. The materials were designed to familiarize students with technical vocabulary and lesson content before classroom activities. During face-to-face sessions, students participated in active speaking tasks, discussions, and classroom interactions. The intervention was conducted over two weeks across four 100-minute sessions. This model was selected because previous studies have shown that flipped learning can increase student participation and improve speaking performance in language learning contexts (Strelan et al., 2020; Kernagaran & Abdullah, 2022).

The final stage was the post-test. After the intervention, students completed the speaking anxiety questionnaire again to measure changes in their anxiety levels. In addition, students completed a post-intervention survey to report their perceptions of the flipped learning experience, while classroom observation notes were used to support the findings. The use of questionnaires, surveys, and classroom observations supported data triangulation and helped strengthen the credibility of the findings.

The researchers used two approaches to analyze the data: quantitative (numbers) and qualitative (descriptions). To understand the numbers, we looked at the average scores. A paired-samples t-test was used to show if the change in student anxiety was real or just by chance. Before this test, we checked the data to ensure it followed a normal distribution. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and a paired-samples t-test following commonly used procedures in educational research (Cohen et al., 2018; Field, 2018).

The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. This process involved identifying patterns and recurring themes related to students' confidence, motivation, and challenges in speaking English. The coding process followed Dörnyei's (2007) framework for applied linguistics research, which focuses on both how often themes appear and how deep the information is. By combining these approaches, the results not only show statistical data but also represent students' real experiences.

Ethical principles were also carefully followed in this study. Participation was voluntary, and students were allowed to leave the study at any time without any consequences. All data were kept confidential, and the results were reported in general terms only to ensure that participants remained anonymous and their identities were protected.

III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 EFFECT OF FLIPPED LEARNING ON SPEAKING ANXIETY

The pretest results showed that most Informatics Engineering students had moderate-to-high levels of English-speaking anxiety before the intervention, with a mean score of 3.86 (SD = 0.28) on a 5-point Likert scale. After the flipped learning intervention, the post-test mean decreased to 3.40 (SD = 0.25), indicating a reduction in students' speaking anxiety.

Table 1. The Mean, Standard Deviation, and Number of Participants: Pretest and Posttest

Test	Mean	SD	N
Pretest	3.86	0.28	25
Posttest	3.40	0.25	25

A paired-samples t-test indicated that the decrease in speaking anxiety after the intervention was significant, $t(24) = -5.27$, $p < .01$, with a large effect size (Cohen's $d = 1.05$). The extent of the difference suggests a substantial practical effect. Overall, the results showed lower levels of speaking anxiety after the flipped learning intervention.

Table 2. Pretest and Posttest Speaking Anxiety (N = 25)

No	Item	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Change	Interpretation
1	I feel uneasy when asked to speak English during class activities.	4.20	3.50	-0.70	Decreased anxiety

2	I am concerned about making errors when I speak in English.	3.80	3.30	-0.50	Decreased anxiety
3	Talking about technical topics in English makes me feel anxious.	4.00	3.60	-0.40	Decreased anxiety
4	I feel awkward speaking English in front of my classmates.	3.50	3.00	-0.50	Decreased anxiety
5	I often hold back from speaking English because I am afraid of making mistakes.	3.70	3.40	-0.30	Slight decrease
6	I am afraid whenever the lecturer calls on me to answer in English.	4.10	3.60	-0.50	Decreased anxiety
7	Compared to reading or writing, I lack confidence when speaking English.	3.90	3.50	-0.40	Decreased anxiety
8	I am worried that others will judge my English grammar or pronunciation.	3.90	3.50	-0.40	Decreased anxiety
9	I feel more at ease speaking English in informal conversations than in the classroom.	3.60	3.20	-0.40	Decreased anxiety
10	Even when I understand the material, I still feel stressed about speaking English in class.	3.80	3.40	-0.40	Decreased anxiety
—	Overall Mean	3.86	3.40	-0.46	Moderate improvement

Note. Items adapted and contextualized from Horwitz et al. (1986) and Kakepoto et al. (2022).

Table 2 presents the descriptive results of the speaking anxiety questionnaire. The overall mean score decreased from 3.86 in the pretest to 3.40 in the posttest, demonstrating lower levels of speaking anxiety after the flipped learning intervention. All 10 items showed decreases, with mean changes ranging from -0.30 to -0.70.

The largest decrease was observed in Item 1 (“I feel uneasy when asked to speak English during class activities”), which declined by 0.70 points. Similarly, Items 2 (“I am concerned about making errors when I speak in English”) and 6 (“I am afraid whenever the lecturer calls on me to answer in English”) each decreased by 0.50 points. Items 3, 7, 8, 9, and 10 also showed decreases of 0.40 points each.

Generally, the results showed lower levels of pressure during speaking activities, particularly when students participated in formal classroom tasks and explained technical concepts in English. Smaller decreases were observed in items related to pronunciation, grammar, and fear of making mistakes.

The smallest decrease was found in Item 5 (“I often hold back from speaking English because I am afraid of making mistakes”), which decreased by 0.30 points. Compared to the other items, this result showed a more limited change in avoidance-related anxiety.

3.2 STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF FLIPPED LEARNING

While the pretest–post-test results demonstrated a reduction in students’ speaking anxiety, it was also important to explore how they perceived the flipped learning model itself. Students’ perceptions of the flipped learning approach are illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3. Students’ Perceptions of Flipped Learning (Posttest Survey, N = 25)

No	Statement	Agree /Strongly Agree	Mean (1–5)	Interpretation
1	The flipped classroom helped me feel more prepared to speak during lessons.	72%	3.90	Positive
2	Watching videos or reviewing materials before class improved my understanding of technical vocabulary.	68%	3.85	Positive
3	I felt more confident participating in class discussions and speaking activities.	76%	4.00	Positive
4	The flipped classroom approach lowered my anxiety about using English.	60%	3.60	Moderately Positive
5	Doing pre-class tasks made the classroom sessions more meaningful and effective.	80%	4.10	Positive
6	I prefer this method over the traditional lecture-based approach.	64%	3.70	Positive
7	The flipped classroom increased my motivation and active involvement in learning.	72%	3.95	Positive

Note. Items adapted and contextualized from Lo and Hew (2017) and Kernagaran and Abdullah (2022).

The survey results indicated generally positive perceptions of the flipped learning model. More than 70% of the students reported that the pre-class videos and readings helped them prepare for speaking activities. In addition, approximately two-thirds of the students reported higher confidence during group activities, while 60% reported lower levels of anxiety when making mistakes. The students' written responses also reflected similar patterns. Several students stated that reviewing vocabulary before class helped them participate more comfortably in classroom discussions. Other responses indicated that students felt more prepared during speaking activities because they had already studied the material before class sessions.

The survey data also provided qualitative insights into students' experiences with flipped learning. Several students noted that preparing with videos before class helped them manage their anxiety:

"I can study the vocabulary first before class, so I was not so nervous when speaking."

"Watching the video first gave me more time to know the topic and practice by myself."

"Before, I felt shy. Now I can speak more."

"I can prepare first, so I am not confused in class."

"When I reviewed the videos before class, I had time to write down new words and practice pronunciation, so I felt more confident."

"I can answer better after I prepare."

These comments were consistent with the quantitative findings and reflected students' perceptions of pre-class preparation and classroom speaking activities during the intervention.

3.3 INTERPRETATION OF ANXIETY REDUCTION

The results showed that students felt less anxious when speaking in class after the flipped learning intervention. Many students did not seem as nervous when asked to speak, suggesting they felt more confident during speaking tasks.

This matches what researchers like Horwitz et al. (1986) found, that speaking anxiety usually comes from a fear of making mistakes. It also backs up the idea from Kernagaran and Abdullah (2022) that preparing before class may reduce classroom pressure. The reduction in anxiety may be associated with increased preparation time and repeated exposure to technical vocabulary before classroom

interaction. This preparation may reduce cognitive pressure during speaking tasks and improve students' perceived readiness to participate. When students can go over the videos and readings at their own speed, they feel more prepared to participate in classroom discussions.

In addition, the way the class is set up matters. By combining home study with active classroom practice, students appeared less concerned about making mistakes. In the end, flipped learning is not just about learning the facts; it is about helping students manage the stress of speaking with others.

However, the results need to be understood carefully. This study did not use a control group, so it is hard to know how much of the improvement was due to the flipped learning model. Also, the intervention was quite short, so the long-term effects remain unclear. Future studies with a better-controlled design and a longer time period are needed to give clearer results.

3.4 INTERPRETATION OF STUDENT PERCEPTIONS

The findings are consistent with earlier studies showing that flipped classrooms support more interactive and student-centered learning (Strelan et al., 2020). Similar results were found by Zhou (2023), who explains that this method can increase participation and help students feel more confident during classroom activities. Other studies also highlight its psychological benefits, especially in reducing stress and increasing motivation (Zhang, 2022).

For Informatics Engineering students, this is very important. Their anxiety is not only caused by limited English skills, but also by the difficulty of explaining technical ideas in English. Giving students time to study at home before class indeed takes the pressure off. They can develop a better understanding of the basic material. Then, once they are in class, things like group talks and guided practice give them a chance to actually use what they have learned. It makes the transition from "learning" to "doing" feel much more natural. This combination of preparation and classroom interaction creates a more comfortable learning environment. Students feel more prepared and more willing to participate. Over time, this learning process may support lower speaking anxiety and greater confidence in communication.

3.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR ESP / INFORMATICS STUDENTS

The findings suggest that flipped learning can help reduce speaking anxiety among Informatics Engineering students. By combining independent study before class with practice during class, this method gives students more time to understand both the language and the content before they are asked to speak. This makes it easier for them to handle public speaking tasks and explain technical ideas in English.

Similar results have been reported in previous studies. Flipped learning helps students become more independent and develop higher-level thinking skills (Baig & Yadegaridehkordi, 2023). In practice, this method gives students a more active role in their learning and creates more opportunities for meaningful classroom communication.

For lecturers, the role also changes. They do not spend most of the time explaining grammar. Instead, they guide and support students in using English in real and practical situations related to their field. This is especially important in informatics, where students need to explain technical ideas clearly in both academic and professional settings.

IV CONCLUSION

Overall, this study shows that the flipped classroom approach helped Informatics Engineering students feel less anxious when speaking English. After the intervention, students appeared more comfortable participating in classroom discussions and presenting technical topics in English. Based on the survey responses, having access to videos and readings before class helped students feel more prepared to participate in speaking activities. The findings suggest that combining pre-class preparation with classroom speaking practice may support students' confidence and psychological readiness during English communication activities.

This study also contributes to ESP and flipped learning research by providing evidence from a technical learning context, especially among Informatics Engineering students who need to explain technical content in English. In ESP settings, students often face challenges not only in using English but also in explaining technical concepts clearly. The findings indicate that giving students time to study materials before class may help them feel more ready to participate in speaking activities and communicate technical ideas more confidently.

However, these findings need to be interpreted carefully. The study involved a small number of students from a single context, and the intervention was conducted over a short period. In addition, the study partly relied on self-reported data, so the responses may not fully represent students' actual speaking performance. Future research can examine this method with larger, more diverse student groups over a longer period. Using performance-based assessments may also provide a clearer understanding of how flipped learning relates to speaking skills and anxiety in ESP classrooms.

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ANALYSING STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS THROUGH SOLO TAXONOMY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

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Abstract

The quality of education in Indonesia still faces many challenges. It is based on the results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) showed that students' competencies in reading literacy, numeracy, and science are still below the average for OECD countries. Students still struggle to apply basic concepts and solve problems that require higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). Therefore, the study aims to analyze students' level of critical thinking skills through SOLO Taxonomy in English language teaching in SDIT Rabbi Radhiyya 02 in Rejang Lebong at fifth grade. This study used a descriptive study design with a mixed-methods orientation. The data were collected through triangulation by involving performance tasks, observations, and interviews, and were analysed using both manual coding (Excel) and NVivo. This study's findings showed that most students in SDIT Rabbi Radhiyya 02 Rejang Lebong at fifth grade still struggle to reach higher cognitive levels. Specifically, 60% of the 18 students were at the multi-structural level (LOTS), and 40% of the 12 students succeeded in reaching the high-order thinking skill, which was at the Relational level. This study aims to make a contribution to English teachers, curriculum developers, and school administrators about students' critical thinking skills level through SOLO Taxonomy in English language teaching. The findings may help educators design instructional activities that guide learners toward the highest level of critical thinking in the Extended Abstract level, where students can create, produce, generalize, and apply ideas across new contexts.

Keywords: *Critical thinking, SOLO taxonomy, English Language Teaching, Descriptive study*

I INTRODUCTION

Indonesia continues to face substantial challenges in enhancing the quality of its education system, particularly in developing students' literacy, numeracy and scientific competencies. Data from Ministry of Education and International assessment indicate persistent gaps that require immediate attention. One of the most widely recognized international assessments, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) reveals that Indonesian students consistently perform below the average of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries (Ismawati, 2023; Nugrahanto et al, 2019). According to OECD (2023), Indonesia's average scores in PISA 2022 declined compared to the 2018 cycle, with reading scores decreasing from 371 to 359, Mathematics from 379 to 366, and science from 396 to 383. This result suggested that many Indonesian students continue to experience difficulties in applying fundamental concepts and solving problems that demanded critical and analytical thinking skills. Furthermore, the PISA findings indicated that a considerable proportion of Indonesian students remain at the lower proficiency levels.

Most of students achieved only levels 1-3 of the PISA proficiency scale, which are generally associated with lower-order thinking skills (LOTS), such as recalling information and performing routines procedures. In contrast, students in many developed countries are more likely to attain levels 4-6, which require higher-order thinking skills (HOTS), including critical analyses, evaluation, and complex problem-solving (Yuliati & Lestari, 2018). Therefore, there is a growing need to implement effective teaching and learning strategies that support the development of higher-order thinking skills and improve students' academic performance (Masfufah & Afriansyah, 2021; Yusmar & Fadilah, 2023). Furthermore, the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) frequently reports that there are many differences in the quality of education in Indonesia between regions, both urban and rural areas, and between schools in central cities and remote areas. These gaps are not only in physical facilities but also in teacher quality, the availability of learning resources, and student academic achievement. This situation creates a worrying gap between future competency demands and the current education system's ability.

One of the factors that influenced the quality of education in Indonesia is the quality of the teachers. There are four competencies that the teacher must possess consist of professional competency, social competency, emotional competency and pedagogical competency (Konig et al, 2021; Blömeke, 2022). Pedagogical competency is a crucial skill that not only differentiates teachers from other

professions but also greatly influences students' level of success in their learning journey (Rahmawati et al, 2025). In addition, according to Indonesian Government Regulation No. 74 of 2008 concerning teachers, pedagogical competence is defined as the teacher's ability to manage the learning process effectively for students. These special competencies differentiate teachers from other professions, as highlighted by various studies (Ansori et al., 2021; Amini et al., 2022; Alwi & Mumtahana, 2023; Warman et al., 2022) . This reflects the teacher's ability to organize learning material in a way that makes it easy for students to understand (H et al., 2022; Ribosa & Duran, 2022; Sulasmi, 2022). Moreover, nowadays the government is concerned to improve the teacher's competency through PPG programme easily by piloting programme. So, the teacher who still young or experienced teachers that have dedication for a long time in a school, they have the same chance to follow the programme without waiting in line as long as they are registered in DAPODIK.

The achievement of optimal learning outcomes is closely associated with teachers' professional competence, as competent teachers are able to effectively manage classrooms and create positive learning environments that support students' academic development. To achieve the intended learning objectives, teacher must possess strong pedagogical skills that enable them to plan, implement, and evaluate learning activities effectively (Syata et al, 2024). In this regard, teachers are encouraged to continuously enhance their instructional competence and professional commitment to meet the demands of contemporary education. One of the essential aspects of pedagogical competence is the ability to manage and adapt learning activities, particularly when students have not yet achieved the expected learning outcomes (Alwi & Mumtahana, 2023).

As part of effective instructional practice, teachers need to develop students' thinking skills through meaningful learning experiences. Thinking skills are generally categorized into Lower-Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) and Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) (Shah et al, 2024). While LOTS focus on basic cognitive processes such as remembering and understanding, HOTS involve more complex processes, including analysing, evaluating, and creating. Both levels of thinking are essential in English language learning, as students require foundational knowledge before engaging in critical and creative thinking tasks. Therefore, maintaining LOTS and HOTS is crucial for promoting language proficiency while simultaneously developing students' critical and innovative thinking abilities (Finansu, 2025). In particular, the integration of HOTS into reading comprehension instruction is important because it enhances students' capacity to analyse, interpret, and critically evaluate texts (Maryamah et al, 2024). Furthermore, incorporating HOTS into classrooms activities can foster creativity and problem-solving skills, making it an essential component of the learning process for fostering students' critical and creative thinking skills.

This study aims to investigate the levels of students' critical thinking skills in English language Teaching among fifth-grade students of SDIT Rabbi Radhiyya 02 Rejang Lebong. The participants consist of one intact class and students' critical thinking skills are analysed using SOLO (Structured of the Observed Learning Outcome) Taxonomy. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions "What are the levels of students' critical thinking skills in English language teaching based on SOLO taxonomy?" The classification of the SOLO taxonomy levels used in this study is presented below:

Table 1. Verbs of SOLO taxonomy (J. Biggs & Tang, 2011)

No.	Level	Verbs
1.	Uni-structural	Memorizing, identifying, recognizing, counting, defining, drawing, finding, labelling, matching, mentioning, citing, remembering, reading, sequencing, telling, writing, imitating
2.	Multi-structural	Classify, explain, list, report, discuss, illustrate, select, tell, count, sort, outline, separate
3.	Relasional	Apply, integrate, analyse, explain, predict, conclude, summarize (summarize), review, argue, transfer, plan, characterize, compare, contrast, differentiate, organize, argue, make a case, compile, review and rewrite, check, translate,

		paraphrase, solve problems
4.	Extended abstract	Theorize, hypothesize, generalize, reflect, produce, create, compose, discover, initiate, prove with basic principles, create original cases, solve with basic principles

Studies that examine students' critical thinking levels remain relatively limited, particularly in the context of English Language Teaching. Although critical thinking has become an essential component of modern curricula, few researchers have analyzed it, particularly through the use of the SOLO Taxonomy." by using SOLO taxonomy. Therefore, this study aims to find out this gap by investigating students' critical thinking levels in ELT through the SOLO framework to provide insights for teachers, curriculum developers, and educational stakeholders.

II MATERIALS AND METHOD

2.1 SUBJECT AND SETTING

This study is a descriptive study design with a mixed-methods orientation to explore the levels of students' critical thinking as categorized by the SOLO Taxonomy in an English Language Teaching (ELT) context. According to (Creswell, 2007) a mixed methods research design is a procedure for collecting, analysing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study or a series of studies to understand a research problem. The mixed-methods approach integrates quantitative scoring of students' work and qualitative analysis of their reasoning and reflection.

The participants consisted of all students enrolled in one fifth-grade English class at SDIT Rabbi Radhiyya 02 Rejang Lebong. The total of students were 30 students. Because the population of interest was limited to a single intact classroom. This study employed total population sampling, in which all members of the population were included in this study. The use of 30 participants is considered adequate for descriptive educational research, as it allows the researcher to identify patterns and variation in students' critical thinking levels within the target group while providing sufficient data for descriptive statistical analyses (Cohen et al, 2018). Furthermore, the entire class eliminates sampling bias within the selected group and ensures that the findings accurately represented the characteristics of the student in the classroom.

2.2 INSTRUMENT

The instruments of this study consist of (1) a SOLO-based task battery which is a set of graded ELT tasks (short-response, explanation, comparative analysis, problem-solving tasks, and a creation task) with clear instructions and time allocations. (2) SOLO scoring rubrics are 5-level rubric adapted to the specific language tasks that list observable criteria for each SOLO level, adapted from (J. B. Biggs et al., 2014) e.g., Unistructural: identifies one relevant idea; multi-structural: lists several relevant ideas; Relational: integrates ideas; Extended Abstract: generalizes or applies conceptually to a new context. (3) Observation checklist that capture evidence of questioning and peer interaction (4) Semi-structured interview guide to get the explanations, reasoning strategies, and perception of task difficulty (Creswell, 2007).

The selection of this instrument was grounded in both theoretical and empirical considerations. The SOLO-based task battery was chosen because the SOLO Taxonomy provided a well-established framework for assessing the quality and complexity of students' thinking, ranging from simple recall to abstract reasoning (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Previous studies had demonstrated that SOLO-based assessment tasks effectively identify different levels of students' cognitive development and critical thinking skills across various educational context (Biggs & Collis, 1982; Irfasyuarna et al, 2022). The SOLO scoring rubric was employed to ensure consistency and transparency in classifying students' responses according to taxonomy levels. In addition, classroom observation and semi-structured interviews were incorporated to provide complementary qualitative evidence of students' reasoning processes and learning behaviours. The use of multiple instruments is recommended in mix method research because it strengthens the credibility of findings through data triangulation (Creswell, 2007; Creswell & Plano, 2018). Therefore, the selected instruments are considered appropriate for this study as the enable a comprehensive examination of students' critical thinking skills from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives.

1.	Student 1	1	2	3	4	10	2.5	Relational
2.	Student 2	1	2	3	4	10	2.5	Relational
3.	Student 3	1	2	3	4	10	2.5	Relational
4.	Student 4	1	2	3	3	9	2.25	Multi-structural
5.	Student 5	1	2	3	3	9	2.25	Multi-structural
6.	Student 6	1	2	3	3	9	2.25	Multi-structural
7.	Student 7	1	2	3	3	9	2.25	Multi-structural
8.	Student 8	1	2	3	3	9	2.25	Multi-structural
9.	Student 9	0	2	3	3	8	2	Multi-structural
10.	Student 10	1	2	3	3	9	2.25	Multi-structural
11.	Student 11	1	2	3	3	9	2.25	Multi-structural
12.	Student 12	1	2	3	3	9	2.25	Multi-structural
13.	Student 13	1	2	3	3	9	2.25	Multi-structural
14.	Student 14	1	2	3	3	9	2.25	Multi-structural
15.	Student 15	1	2	3	3	9	2.25	Multi-structural
16.	Student 16	1	2	3	3	9	2.25	Multi-structural
17.	Student 17	1	2	3	3	9	2.25	Multi-structural
18.	Student 18	1	2	3	3	9	2.25	Multi-structural
19.	Student 19	1	2	3	3	9	2.25	Multi-structural
20.	Student 20	1	2	3	3	9	2.25	Multi-structural
21.	Student 21	1	2	3	3	9	2.25	Multi-structural
22.	Student 22	1	2	3	4	10	2.5	Relational
23.	Student 23	1	2	3	4	10	2.5	Relational
24.	Student 24	1	2	3	4	10	2.5	Relational
25.	Student 25	1	2	3	4	10	2.5	Relational
26.	Student 26	1	2	3	4	10	2.5	Relational
27.	Student 27	1	2	4	4	11	2.75	Relational
28.	Student 28	1	2	3	4	10	2.5	Relational
29.	Student 29	1	2	3	4	10	2.5	Relational
30.	Student 30	1	2	4	4	11	2.75	Relational

A total of 30 students participated in the assessment; their performance was divided into two categories, as displayed in Table 2 below;

Table 3. The Average of Students' Scores based on SOLO Level: adapted from the SOLO Taxonomy framework presented by Biggs & Collis (1982) and Biggs & Tangs (2011)

Average Score Range	SOLO Level	Number of Students	Percentage of 30	Status
2.5 - 2.75	Relational	12	40%	HOTS
2.0 – 2.25	Multi-Structural	18	60%	LOTS
	Total	30	100%	

Based on the table above, there were 18 students, with 60 % achieving the multi-structural level. It meant that the majority of students were able to identify and mention several relevant ideas, but were not yet able to connect and integrate the ideas. In this result, the critical thinking was present but still developing. Meanwhile, for 12 students reached the Relational level with 40 %. These students could explain the relationship between ideas and connect the concepts. They were able to apply and relate different pieces of information across the tasks. Furthermore, the Relational level showed high-order thinking with represented by 12 students, and the multi-structural level showed low-order thinking with represented by 18 students. It meant that most students were still developing their ability to integrate and connect ideas, but most of the group was already showing strong critical thinking skills.

This result was related to classroom observation that most students participated actively in the learning process. The researcher noted that several students demonstrated Relational level thinking and supported the finding that 40 % of the students were able to integrate more ideas coherently. The English teacher used guiding questions and collaborative activities, although most students were still developing the ability to connect and extend their ideas. To complete the data analyses, the researcher chose three random students for semi-structured interviews to know about how the students' critical thinking was integrated with the written tasks below;

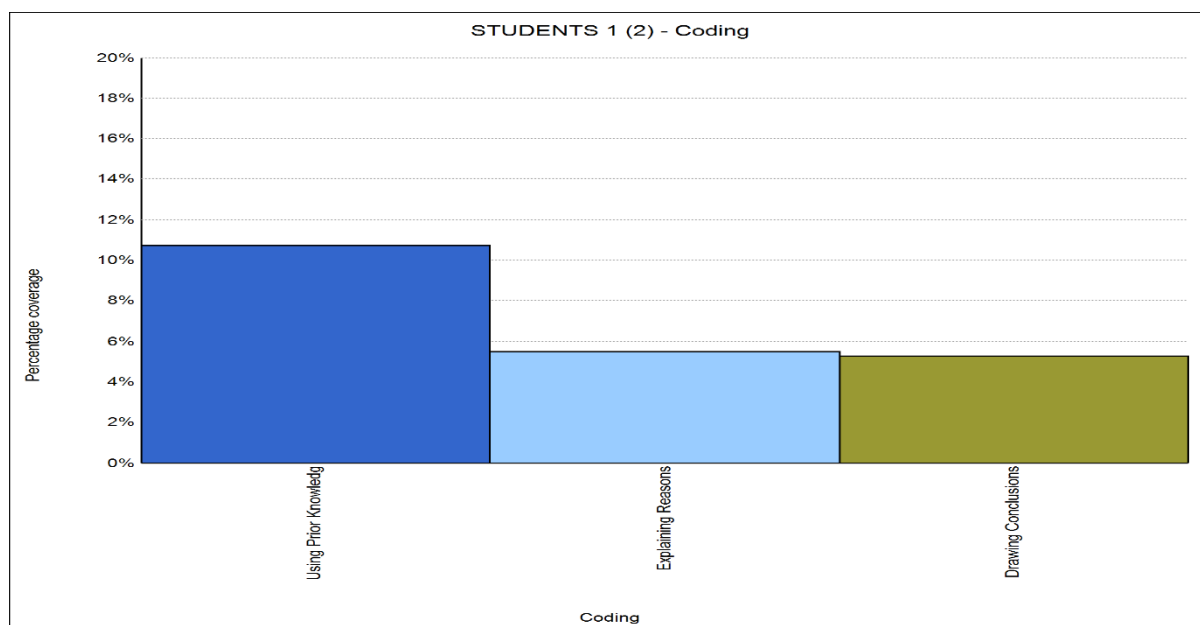


Figure 1. Bar Chart of Student 1

Based on the bar chart by NVivo visualization above that the result showed the percentage of coverage of Student 1 was approximately 10.7 % for “Using prior knowledge”, it demonstrated that Student 1 applied pre-existing knowledge. Meanwhile, the code of “explaining reason” and “Drawing conclusion” was approximately 5.2% - 5.5%. Both were strong indicators for higher-order thinking skill (HOTS) as the central in achieving the relational-based SOLO level.

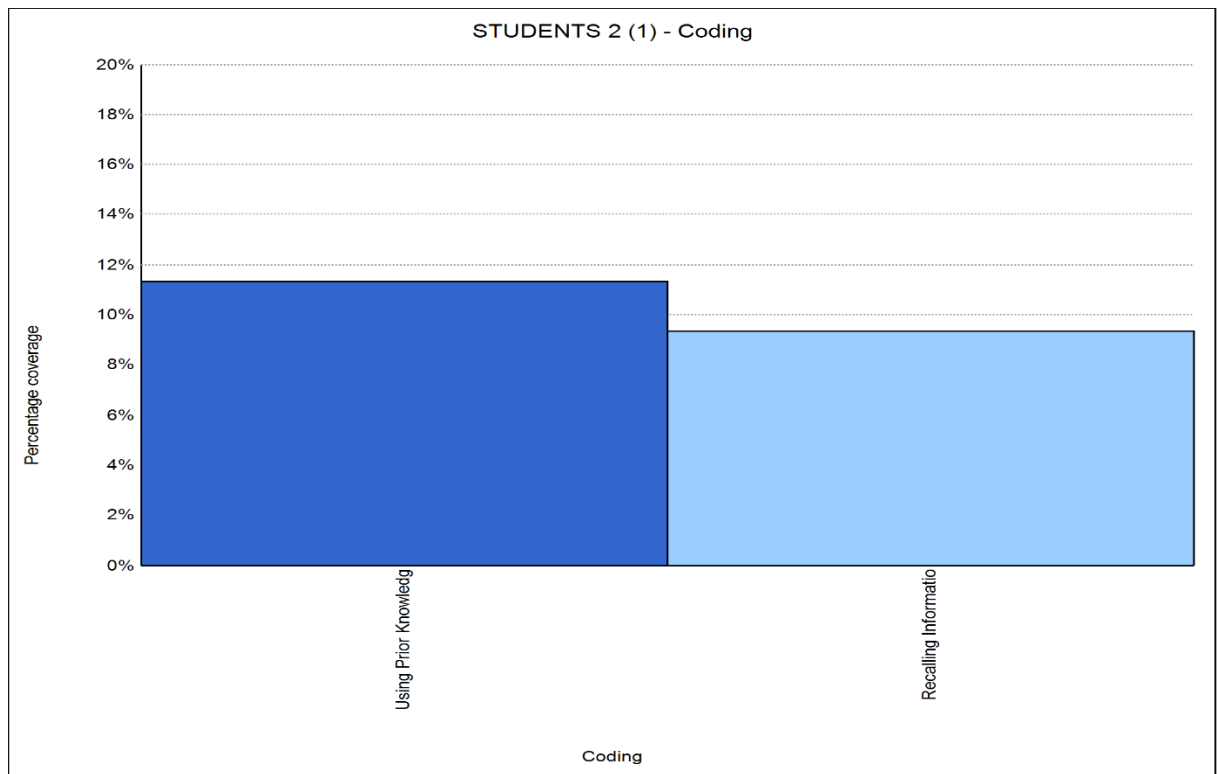


Figure 2. Bar chart of Student 2

In contrast, Student 2 could be categorized at the multi-structural level, because Student 2 was dominantly coded in “Using prior knowledge” with 11.3% and “Recalling information” with 9.3%. The student 2 lacked in the critical step of connecting and drawing a conclusion, which was relating quality of the higher Relational level.

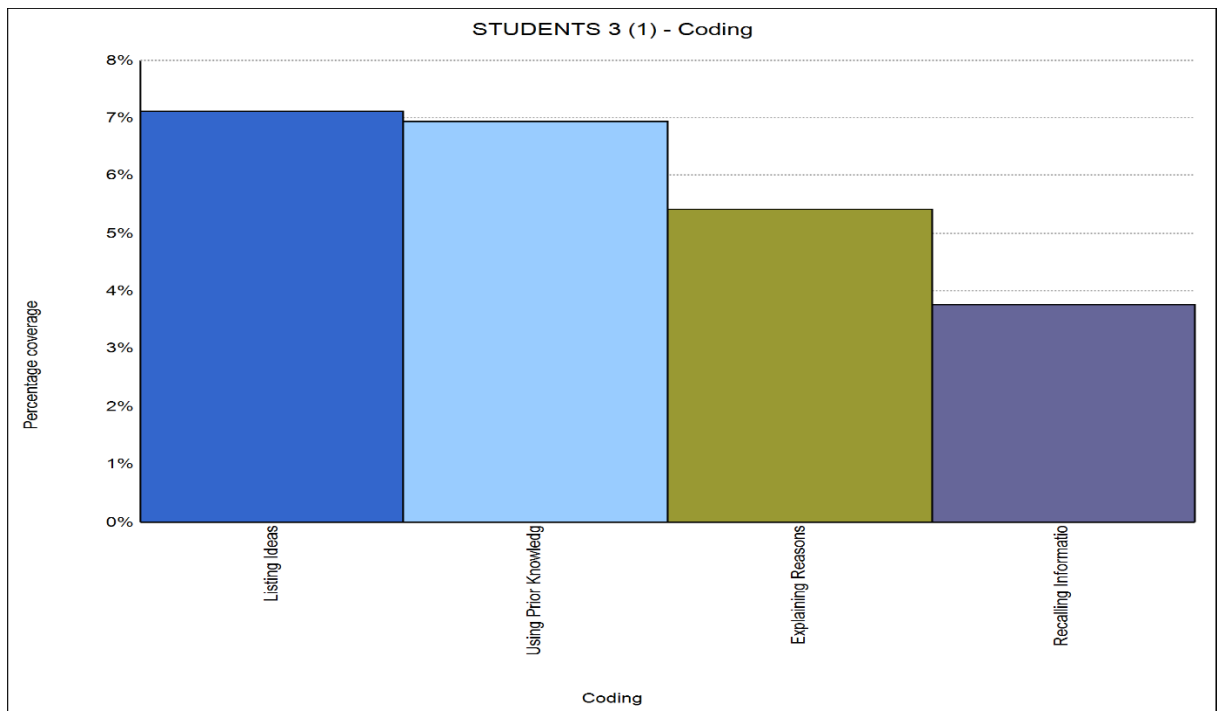


Figure 3. Bar chart of student 3

Based on the bar chart above, Student 3 has achieved Relational level with the coverage of “Listing of ideas” around 7.12%, “Using prior knowledge” 6.9%, “Explaining reason” 5.4%, and “Recalling information” 3.8%. The presence of the Explaining Reasons code (5.4%) is the determining factor that differentiates it from the multi-structural level because Student 3 was able to add the

justification needed to reach the Relational level, even though his thinking process started from gathering facts.

3.2 DISCUSSION

The finding of this study above showed that most students in SDIT Rabbi Radhiyya 02 at fifth grade still struggle to reach higher cognitive levels, often mastering only Lower-Order Thinking Skills (LOTS). It could be seen from the quantitative results that have been summarized in Table 2. It was revealed that the majority of students reached 60% or 18 students included in the multi-structural level, while a significant minority 40%, or 12 students reached the Relational level. However, the achievement of 40% in the Relational level is a clear indication of Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). Furthermore, the qualitative analysis through case studies provides critical validation of these quantitative scores, explaining why students were categorized at specific SOLO levels, such as Student 2, who scored at the multi-structural level. The bar chart for Student 2 showed that it was almost entirely covered by Using Prior Knowledge, with 11.3% and Recalling Information, 9.3%. In contrast, the students at the Relational level, which demands the ability to integrate ideas and connect concepts, displayed clear evidence of analytical processing. For example, Student 1 who showed their cognitive activity dominated by Using Prior Knowledge 10.7%, which is the basis for the analysis, but crucially supported by codes for Explaining Reasons 5.5% and Drawing Conclusions 5.2%. These two codes for justification and synthesis are strong indicators of HOTS. Similarly, Student 3, also at the Relational level, demonstrated a process starting with Listing Ideas 7.1 % and Using Prior Knowledge 6.9% but was decisively differentiated from the multi-structural group by the presence of Explaining Reasons 5.4%. It is aligned with the theory of J. Biggs & Tang, (2011) that in Relational level the students use two or more pieces of information each directly related to an integrated understanding of the information in the stem.

In summary, the triangulation of quantitative scores and qualitative thematic coding successfully explains the critical thinking development observed. While the majority of students require continued support to consistently move beyond listing ideas, the significant 40% achievement in the Relational level was evidenced by their ability to explain and conclude, suggesting that the ELT approach implemented under the Curriculum Merdeka is effective in cultivating the critical thinking dimension required for the national Graduate Profile. The observed active participation and use of guiding questions in the classroom further support the potential for sustained growth toward higher-order thinking.

IV CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this descriptive mixed-methods study successfully analysed the level of students' Critical Thinking Skills in English Language Teaching (ELT) using the SOLO Taxonomy. The findings showed that the majority on English students with 60% (18 students) and the majority of the students were concluded that based on the findings of table and figure above which there were 60% of 18 students were in the multi-structural level (LOTS), they could explain and identify some of the relevant ideas, but they could not connect and integrate the ideas into new situations.

However, 40% of the 12 students succeeded in reaching the high-order thinking skill; they were at the Relational level. These students could explain the connection between ideas, connect concepts, and integrate various information in a written task, for the Relational level was represented by Student 1 and Student 2 in a semi-structured interview. They tended to "Explaining reasons" and "Drawing Conclusion". In this study, "Explaining Reasons" refers to students' ability to justify their answer by providing logical explanations, supporting evidence, or cause-and-effect relationship. "Drawing Conclusions" refers to students' ability to synthesize information from multiple ideas and arrive at a coherent inference or judgment.

In the multi-structural level, it was represented by Teacher 2, that dominated by "Use prior knowledge" and "Recalling information". "Use prior knowledge" refers to the activation of previously learned facts, experiences, or concepts when responding to a task. Meanwhile, "Recalling information" refers to the retrieval of explicit information from memory without further analyses or interpretation, but lacked the important steps of connecting and drawing conclusions. The achievement of 40% at the Relational level showed that the ELT approach implemented in the Independent Curriculum is effective in fostering the critical thinking dimensions required for the national Graduate Profile. However, this study has limitations due to the small sample size (one class contains 30 students) from one school. Therefore, it is recommended to conduct the same studies in broader populations and school contexts to

increase the generalizability of the results and design pedagogical interventions oriented towards developing the highest critical thinking skills, namely the Extended Abstract level (creating, theorizing, and generalizing concepts).

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TRANSLATION STRATEGY ANALYSIS OF KAKAWIN ARJUNA WIWAHA (PUPUH I.6)

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Abstract

Ancient manuscripts are handwritten documents created in the past to record events and phenomena that occurred during those times. Translation is understood as the process of rendering a source-language text into a target-language text so that the message in the source text can be understood by readers of the target text. This study aims to analyze the translation techniques applied by Djapa (2013) in translating the content of Kakawin Arjuna Wiwaha manuscript through excerpts of *pupuh* contained in an article titled “Tantra dalam Kakawin Arjuna Wiwaha (Kajian Filosofi)” (2025). This study focused on analyzing the translation techniques used in *pupuh* I.6 and employs the 18 translation techniques identified by Molina and Albir (2002) as a theoretical framework throughout the analysis. Qualitative and descriptive methods were used in this study. Djapa (2013), in general, applied 6 translation techniques, including linguistic compression, pure borrowing, generalization, linguistic amplification, modulation, and amplification, to translate Kakawin Arjuna Wiwaha manuscript from Old Javanese into Indonesian.

Keywords: *Ancient manuscripts, Arjuna Wiwaha, Kakawin, Molina-Albir, Translation techniques*

I INTRODUCTION

Ancient manuscripts are handwritten textual documents that record various events and phenomena that occurred in the past at the time the manuscripts were written. Ancient manuscripts generally take the form of literary texts and use the language commonly spoken by the people during the period when the manuscripts were created. Ancient manuscripts may contain historical records regarding the development of a civilization, evolving religious teachings, laws related to the system of government, traditional knowledge such as medicine, advice, and various stories containing moral values that are certainly very important to preserve (Jannah et al., 2024: 50). Ancient manuscripts in Javanese society are generally divided into six types: *Babad*, historical texts intended to legitimize royal authority; *Serat* or *Piwulang*, literary works in the form of poetry intended to teach etiquette, morals, ethics, philosophy, and worldviews; *Kakawin*, literary texts in the form of epic tales intended to provide moral and spiritual-religious education and to reveal aesthetic values related to religious schools of thought and traditions; *Primbon*, texts intended to provide guidelines regarding calculations such as divination and astrology; *Kitab*, a religious text intended to teach religious schools of thought along with their philosophies of life; and *Candra Sengkala*, a chronogram intended to provide records regarding the calendar.

Kakawin Arjuna Wiwaha is an ancient epic literary work composed by Mpu Kanwa around 1028-1035 CE (Divayana et al., 2026: 915-916). The message contained in Kakawin Arjuna Wiwaha is conveyed poetically and is divided into 36 sections (*pupuh*), 354 stanzas, and 24 *wirama* (metrum). Kakawin Arjuna Wiwaha recounts Arjuna's spiritual journey as well as the test of his resolve administered by the Dewa Indra (God Indra) while Arjuna was performing ascetic practices and austerities on Mount Indrakila. This served as a trial for Arjuna to control his worldly desires before he received the magical weapon bestowed by the gods from heaven to save them from the threat of a giant.

Translation is the process of conveying the message and information contained in a source-language text into a target-language text by adapting the linguistic and cultural elements of the target language so that the message and information in the source text can be understood by the readers of the target text. Translators must first understand the intended meaning of the source text (the original text) so that they can convey their understanding of the source text into the target languages (Hidayah & Nu'man, 2025: 29). Translation certainly requires strategies, as the translator's means of understanding and navigating the linguistic and cultural differences between the source and target languages, as well as techniques serving as a systematic foundation that translators can apply to translate texts from the source language into the target language. The translation process has been enriched by various theories developed by linguists to serve as a theoretical foundation when translating from the source language into the target language. Molina and Albir (2002) are two linguists who introduced 18 translation

techniques based on a comparative method between the source-language text and the target-language text.

Several previous studies relevant to the topic of this research include an article titled “Tinjauan Semantik Naskah Nazm Waraqat Karya Shaikh Syarif Al-Din Yahya Al-Imriti Koleksi Surau Simaung, Sumatra Barat” by Sari et al., (2025), which traces the translation history of Kitab Nazm Waraqāt by Shaikh Syarīf al-Dīn Yahya al-‘Imrītī in the year 890 Hijri, specifically focusing on its semantic aspects, as well as the article titled “Terjemahan Syair Bahasa Aceh ‘Munajat Perempuan Sufi Aceh Pocut di Beutong’ dalam Bahasa Indonesia: Analisis Strategi Penerjemahan” by Fadhillah (2020), which examines the translation of the poetic text *Munajat Perempuan Sufi Pocut di Beutong* from Acehnese language into Indonesian.

Unlike previous studies, this research aims to analyze the translation techniques employed by I Wayan Djapa in translating Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha manuscript from Old Javanese (the original language of the manuscript or source language/SL) into Indonesian as the target language (TL). I Wayan Djapa’s translation was published in a book of the same title, “Kakawin Arjuna Wiwaha”, in 2013 by the Graduate Program at Universitas Hindu Indonesia. Djapa’s translation of Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha manuscript is also included in an article titled “Tantra dalam Kakawin Arjuna Wiwaha (Kajian Filosofi)” (2025) in the form of *pupuh* excerpts and one of these excerpts will serve as the primary data for this study. The 18 translation techniques outlined by Lucia Molina and Amparo Hurtado Albir (2002) will serve as the theoretical foundation for analyzing I Wayan Djapa’s translation of Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha manuscript.

II METHOD

Qualitative research is the primary method used in this study, supplemented by descriptive analysis to interpret the research findings. In linguistic research, qualitative research is a holistic procedure that focuses on society and social behavior as its subjects and aims to generate descriptive data in the form of words, whether verbal or textual, to understand language use practices and linguistic phenomena within society (Nasrullah, 2025: 20). Descriptive is a fundamental characteristic of qualitative research. It emphasizes the use of an inductive approach and presents research findings based on data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation, expressed in sentences that form paragraphs. Qualitative research is divided into eight types, including ethnography, case studies, document analysis, naturalistic observation, phenomenology, historical studies, grounded theory, and biography (Sulistiyo, 2019: 3-5). Based on the data sources and data analysis process, this study can be categorized as qualitative research using a document analysis approach.

Our literal translation of Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha manuscript is presented here as a comparison to the translation by I Wayan Djapa, while also providing information on the true meaning of each stanza in Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha manuscript (its original meaning) as background knowledge before analyzing the translation techniques applied by I Wayan Djapa to render these stanzas while adapting them to the intended context within the narrative of Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha. The process of translating Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha manuscript literally was assisted by AI-based software, ChatGPT, to provide a rough list of Old Javanese vocabulary (raw data) along with their Indonesian translations. We combined these into complete sentences as the literal translation of each stanza in the manuscript, for example, the word “tumahā” has its literal translations as “padahal”; “sementara itu”; “justu”.

Not all sections (*pupuh*) of Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha manuscript were included as material in this study, because the manuscript consists of a very large number of sections (*pupuh*), making it impractical to analyze the translation techniques for all of them in this study. The excerpts from Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha, specifically *pupuh* I.6, which we obtained from an article titled “Tantra dalam Kakawin Arjuna Wiwaha (Kajian Filosofi)” (2025) represent a small portion of the entire Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha manuscript. We compared the translations of these sections, specifically a literal translation and I Wayan Djapa’s translation, to understand the translation techniques applied by I Wayan Djapa based on the 18 translation techniques introduced by Molina and Albir.

III RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Molina and Albir (2002) are among the linguists who introduced translation techniques as part of a translator’s strategy for translating a source-language text (ST) so that the message contained in that text can be well understood by the target audience in the form of a target-language text (TT). Molina and Albir classified translation techniques into 18 categories, including: adaptation, amplification,

borrowing, calque, compensation, description, discursive creation, conventional equivalents, generalization, linguistic amplification, linguistic compression, literal translation, modulation, particularization, reduction, substitution, transposition, and variation (Amelia et al., 2023: 63-65). *Pupuh* I.6 in Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha manuscript fall under a broader theme concerning sexuality and spiritual transformation in Tantric teachings. The passage in *pupuh* I.6 describes the process by which the character Arjuna faces various trials sent by *Hyang Indra* to test Arjuna's resolve. The passage in *pupuh* I.6 carries philosophical significance, grounded in Tantric teachings that worldly energies — including human desire and sexuality — are not to be rejected, but rather must be tested, refined, and transformed into a higher spiritual power (Udayana et al., 2025: 64-65).

In his book “Kakawin Arjuna Wiwaha” (2013), I Wayan Djapa attempts to translate the Old Javanese used in each stanza of this *pupuh* into Indonesian sentences so that the message conveyed in excerpts from *pupuh* I.6 can also be understood by readers with a background in modern Indonesian. Udayana et al., included I Wayan Djapa's translation in an article titled “Tantra dalam Kakawin Arjuna Wiwaha (Kajian Filosofi)” which was published in the *Pramana Journal* in 2025. Excerpts from *pupuh* I.6 of Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha manuscript can be found in Table 1. The analysis of the translation techniques applied by I Wayan Djapa to translate *pupuh* I.6, along with a comparison to the literal translations of each verse, is further elaborated in the explanatory paragraphs accompanying Table 1.

3.1 ORIGINAL TEXT AND TRANSLATED TEXT OF KAKAWIN ARJUNA WIWĀHA PUPUH I.6

The data collected from the movie *Moana* (2016) resulted in 132 utterances delivered by the main character, Moana. These utterances were classified based on Searle's (1979) taxonomy of illocutionary acts. The analysis identified four types of speech acts: assertive, directive, commissive, and expressive. No declarative speech acts were found in the dataset.

The classification process focused on the form and function of each utterance in context, without analyzing the responses from other characters. The speech acts were categorized by observing Moana's dialogues and supported by visual cues from the scenes.

Table 1. Excerpt from the Original Text of Pupuh I.6 and Its Translation (Udayana et al., 2025: 64)

Source Text	Translated Text
<i>“Yāngdé sangśaya ri Hyang Indra tumahā Sang Pārtha tan dhāraka, hétunyan pagawé ta bañcana panoné citta Sang Phalguna, yan hīnā mara tan harēp, harēp amétmétāśrayā lén sira, yapwan tan kawēnang binañcana maran manggēh palinggih nira.”</i>	“Hal itulah yang menimbulkan kecurigaan Sang Hyang Indra, mengira Sang Arjuna tidak tetap teguh. Itulah alasannya beliau lalu mengirimkan godaan, sebagai sarana untuk melihat hati sang Arjuna. Kalau tergoda para dewa tidak akan memerlukannya lagi, akan berusaha mencari bantuan lain dari beliau, kalau tak dapat digoda, agar ditetapkan kedudukannya (sebagai sekutu).”

In the first stanza of Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha *pupuh* I.6 (*Yāngdé sangśaya ri Hyang Indra tumahā Sang Pārtha tan dhāraka*), the word “*yāngdé*” literally means “yang”; “adapun yang”, it functions as a sentence marker, meaning “as for the one that.” The word “*sangśaya*” literally means “kebimbangan” or “keraguan”. The word “*ri*” literally means “di”; “kepada”; “terhadap” functioning as a preposition. The phrase “*Hyang Indra*” literally means “Dewa Indra” with the word “*Hyang*” means “Dewa” and “*Indra*” being the name of the god of thunder, the god of weather, the god of rain, and the god of storms in Hinduism. The word “*tumahā*” literally means “padahal”; “sementara itu”; “justru” functioning as a marker of contrast. The phrase “*Sang Pārtha*” refers to the figure of Arjuna (*Sang Arjuna*), with the word “*Sang*” functioning as an article and “*Pārtha*” being one of Arjuna's titles in Mahabharata narrative, based on Arjuna's maternal lineage, where “*Prthā*” is the birth name (or original name) of Dewi Kunti, so the word “*Pārtha*” fully means “Putra dari Prthā” or “Anak laki-laki dari Dewi Kunti” (Hartanto & Widodo, 2023: 33). The word “*tan*” literally means “tidak”. Last, the word “*dhāraka*” literally means “menahan”; “bertahan”; “gentar”; “mundur”; “kehilangan keteguhan” referring to a verb.

The first stanza of Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha pupuh I.6 when translated literally, yields roughly the following sentence: “yang masih ragu terhadap Hyang Indra, sementara itu Sang Pārtha tidaklah gentar”. I Wayan Djapa (2013), however, translated that first stanza as “Hal itulah yang menimbulkan kecurigaan Sang Hyang Indra, mengira Sang Arjuna tidak tetap teguh”. Djapa condensed the message by emphasizing Hyang Indra’s suspicion regarding Arjuna’s steadfastness and Arjuna’s fearlessness in facing the trials that Hyang Indra will impose to test his resolve. Djapa retains the term “Hyang Indra” by translating it as “Sang Hyang Indra” rather than replacing it with a more general term such as “Dewa Indra” and adds the word “Sang” as a mark of respect for Dewa Indra. Djapa chose to translate the phrase “Sang Pārtha” as “Sang Arjuna”, where “Pārtha” is one of the names for Arjuna, but Djapa used a more common term by translating it as “Arjuna” to minimize public confusion in understanding the character “Pārtha” while also minimizing the need for further explanation to describe that character. Based on Molina and Albir’s 18 translation techniques, the translation of the first stanza in the excerpt from Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha pupuh I.6 demonstrates the application of linguistic compression (the reduction of linguistic elements in the target language without altering the original meaning of the source language), pure borrowing (the direct transfer of words from the source language into the target language), and generalization (the use of a more general term in the target language).

In the second stanza of Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha pupuh I.6 (Hétunyan pagawé ta bañcana panoné citta Sang Phalguna), the word “hétunyan” literally means “penyebabnya”; “sebabnya”, which refers to a noun and derives from the Sanskrit root “hétu” + suffix “-nya(n)”. The word “pagawé” literally means “perbuatan”; “tindakan”; “upaya”; “pekerjaan”. The word “ta” literally means “maka”; “adapun” referring to a conjunctive particle. The word “bañcana” literally means “tipu daya”; “muslihat”; “kelicikan”; “siasat” and is derived from the Sanskrit word “vañcana”. The word “panoné” literally means “matanya”; “penglihatannya”, derived from the root word “panon” + the possessive suffix “-é”. The word “citta” literally means “pikiran”; “hati”; “kesadaran”; “batin”. Last, the phrase “Sang Phalguna” which refers to the figure of Arjuna (Sang Arjuna), with the word “Sang” serving as an article and “Phalguna” as another name for Arjuna, who was born on the slopes of Himalayas (Himawan) at a time when Uttara Phalguna stars (Nakshatra Uttara Phalguna) was shining brightly (Hartanto & Widodo, 2023: 30).

The second stanza in the excerpt from Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha pupuh I.6 if translated literally, would yield roughly the following sentence: “Itu terjadi sebabnya tipu daya yang mengelabui penglihatan Sang Phalguna”. Djapa, however, translated that second stanza as “Itulah alasannya beliau lalu mengirimkan godaan, sebagai sarana untuk melihat hati sang Arjuna”. Djapa clarified the message by including the word “beliau” which refers to Hyang Indra as the one who sent the trial to Arjuna in the form of a temptation or deception to test the sincerity of Arjuna’s heart. The term “Sang Phalguna”, which is another name for Arjuna, is translated using a more general term “Sang Arjuna”. Based on Molina and Albir’s 18 translation techniques, the translation of the second stanza in the excerpt from Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha pupuh I.6 demonstrates the application of linguistic amplification (adding linguistic elements in the target language to make the sentence sound more natural) and generalization.

In the third stanza of Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha pupuh I.6 (Yan hīnā mara tan harēp, harēp amétmétāśrayā lén sira), the word “yan” literally means “jika”; “apabila”, functioning as a subordinating conjunction expressing a condition. The word “hīnā” literally means “hina”; “miskin”; “lemah”; “berkedudukan rendah” referring to a person’s physical, economic, or social status. The word “mara” literally means “datang”. The word “tan” literally means “tidak”. The word “harēp” literally means “berharap”; “menghendaki” or anything related to placing one’s hope in something or someone. The word “amétmétāśrayā” literally means “mencari perlindungan”; “mencari sandaran” derived from the combination of the word “amét-amét” means “mencari” or to strive to obtain something, and the word “āśraya” means “perlindungan”; “tempat bersandar”; “pelindung”. The word “lén” literally means “kepada yang lain”; “orang lain”. Last, the word “sira” literally means “ia”; “dia”; “beliau”.

The third stanza of Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha pupuh I.6 when translated literally, yields roughly the following sentence: “Apabila seorang yang datang dengan kondisi lemah atau berkedudukan rendah, jangan menggantungkan harapan kepadanya, namun carilah pertolongan kepada yang lain”. Djapa, however, translates this third stanza as “Kalau tergoda para dewa tidak akan memerlukannya lagi, akan berusaha mencari bantuan lain dari beliau”. Djapa condensed the message by emphasizing the gods’ decision to no longer stand by Arjuna if they find wavering in his heart; in other words, if Arjuna proves to be weak-hearted and fails to pass Hyang Indra’s test, the gods (including Hyang Indra) will no longer ally themselves with Arjuna. Based on Molina and Albir’s 18 translation techniques, the translation of

the third stanza in the excerpt from Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha pupuh I.6 demonstrates the application of linguistic compression.

In the fourth and final stanza of the excerpt from Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha pupuh I.6 translated by I Wayan Djapa (Yapwan tan kawēnang binañcana maran manggēh palinggih nira), the word “yapwan” literally means “apabila”; “jika”. The word “tan” literally means “tidak”. The word “kawēnang” literally means “dapat”; “mampu”; “diperbolehkan”; “sanggup”. The word “binañcana” literally means “diganggu”; “diusik”; “dicampuri”; “dicela”; “dihalangi”; “dilanda malapetaka”. The word “maran” literally means “sehingga”; “sampai kepada”; “menyebabkan”. The word “manggēh” literally means “mencapai”; “memperoleh”; “mendapatkan”. The word “palinggih” literally means “kedudukan”; “singgasana”; “jabatan”; “tempat bersemayam”. Last, the word “nira” literally means “dia”; “beliau” referring to the third-person pronoun used to express respect.

The fourth stanza in the excerpt from Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha pupuh I.6 when translated literally, would yield roughly the following sentence: “Jika tidak ada yang mampu mengusiknya, niscaya dia akan mencapai singgasananya”. Djapa, however, translated this final stanza as “Kalau tak dapat digoda, agar ditetapkan kedudukannya (sebagai sekutu)”. Djapa rephrased the message from a different perspective, focusing more specifically on Arjuna as the main character by replacing the phrase “mencapai singgasananya” with “ditetapkan kedudukannya”. Djapa further clarified the establishment of Arjuna’s status as an ally of the gods by adding a phrase in parentheses. Arjuna’s status as an ally of the gods is a lofty throne granted to him if he can pass the trial set by Hyang Indra with an unwavering heart. Based on Molina and Albir’s 18 translation techniques, the translation of the fourth stanza in the excerpt from Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha pupuh I.6 demonstrates the application of modulation (a shift in perspective in the source text) and amplification (the addition of implied information in the target text).

IV CONCLUSION

Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha is an epic text composed by *Mpu Kanwa* that contains a narrative centred on heroism, spiritual symbolism, and Arjuna’s inner transformation into a protagonist worthy of receiving assistance from the gods in heaven, in the form of weapons, to defeat his enemies. Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha consists of 36 sections called “pupuh”, each of which conveys a distinct message by recounting Arjuna’s story through varying verses and rhythms. I Wayan Djapa (2013) sought to translate the content of Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha manuscript from Old Javanese into modern Indonesian to make it easier for public to understand the messages conveyed in the manuscript. Excerpt from *pupuh* I.6, which have been translated by I Wayan Djapa, is included in an article by Udayana et al. (2025) that explores the overarching themes of sexuality and spiritual transformation in Tantric teachings.

Based on the framework of 18 translation techniques introduced by Molina and Albir (2002), I Wayan Djapa’s translation of Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha manuscript, specifically in *pupuh* I.6, employs 6 of 18 translation techniques proposed. The linguistic compression technique was applied to translate 2 stanzas; the borrowing technique was applied to translate 1 stanza (pure borrowing); the generalization technique was applied to translate 2 stanzas; the linguistic amplification technique was applied to translate 1 stanza; the modulation technique was applied to translate 1 stanza, and the amplification technique was applied to translate 1 stanza.

The materials discussed in this study focused solely on an analysis of the translation techniques used in Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha text, specifically in excerpt from *pupuh* I.6, and is limited to the translation by I Wayan Djapa (2013) as published in the article by Udayana et al., and compares it with a literal translation of each stanza. This study certainly opens up vast opportunities for future research on this topic, as the translation of Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha manuscript is not limited solely to I Wayan Djapa’s translation.

Various *pupuh* in Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha manuscript have also been translated by many linguists and professional translators into a variety of languages, not limited to the Old Javanese – Indonesian language pair and not limited to *pupuh* I.6. The theories used as the scientific foundation for analyzing the translations of Kakawin Arjuna Wiwāha manuscript in this study are limited to the 18 translation techniques introduced by Molina and Albir (2002), although there are many other theories discussing translation strategies and techniques beyond those of Molina and Albir, such as Peter Newmark’s 8 translation methods (1988), Peter Newmark’s 11 translation strategies (1981), and J.C. Catford’s 2 translation strategies (1965), which researchers can apply as a scientific foundation for their future research.

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A MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF BBC NEWS: INFLECTIONAL AND DERIVATIONAL MORPHEMES IN “US INFLATION STABLE AHEAD OF IRAN SHOCK”

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the use of inflectional and derivational morphemes in the BBC News article titled “US Inflation Stable Ahead of Iran Shock.” A descriptive qualitative method was employed to analyze primary data obtained from the selected article, while relevant linguistic books and previous studies on morphology were used as supporting secondary sources. The analysis revealed that 24 inflectional morpheme tokens and 10 derivational morpheme tokens were identified in the selected data. The inflectional morphemes included plural, progressive, past tense, comparative and superlative, possessive, and third-person singular forms, which express grammatical information related to number, tense, degree, possession, and agreement. Derivational morphemes included verb-to-noun, verb-to-adjective, noun-to-adjective, and adjective-to-adverb formations, contributing to changes in lexical meaning and, in some cases, word class. The findings provide a focused description of how inflectional and derivational morphemes operate within the selected news text. However, the findings are limited to the analyzed article and are not intended to represent the morphological characteristics of BBC News or news reporting in general.

Keywords: *morphology; inflectional morphemes; derivational morphemes; word formation; BBC News article*

I INTRODUCTION

In a media environment where news is rapidly disseminated globally and accessed by readers from diverse linguistic backgrounds, international outlets like BBC News relied on a tightly controlled written register to ensure clarity and precision. This register prioritizes informational density, explicit grammatical marking, and lexical accuracy, enabling complex political and economic developments to be communicated effectively without sacrificing comprehensibility. As a distinct genre of text, news reportage is systematically analyzed in corpus-based studies that highlight the linguistic patterns unique to this form of communication, including its formal style and structured approach to presenting factual relations (Biber et al., 1999; Crystal, 2003).

From a linguistic perspective, word formation is studied within the field of morphology, which examines how words are structured and how their internal components contribute to meaning. Words are not formed arbitrarily; rather, they follow systematic patterns involving smaller units known as morphemes (Yule, 2010). Morphological analysis enables a deeper understanding of how meaning is constructed and conveyed in written discourse. Morphemes, the smallest meaningful units of language, serve as the building blocks of words and allow speakers and writers to generate various word forms from a limited number of bases (Chomsky, 1965). Morphology, therefore, plays a crucial role in understanding language structure and use (Bauer, 2003; Booij, 2005).

Morphemes can be classified into two types: inflectional and derivational (Yule, 2010; Aronoff, 1976). These two types serve different grammatical and lexical functions. Inflectional morphemes express grammatical information, including past tense and plurality, without changing the word class. In contrast, derivational morphemes are used to form new words, often altering both the meaning and grammatical category (Fromkin et al., 2014; Lieber, 2021). These distinctions have been widely accepted in morphological theory and are essential for analyzing written discourse (Katamba, 1993; Haspelmath, 2010).

Classical studies of English word formation consistently emphasize that morphological operations are rule-governed and systematic. Foundational works by Marchand (1969), Matthews (1991), and Dressler (1987) established the distinction between processes that encode grammatical information and those that generate new lexemes, a distinction that remains central to morphological theory. More recent theoretical treatments by Booij (2005) and Spencer (2021) further frame morphology as a principled

interface between form and meaning, while Bybee (1985) and Carstairs-McCarthy (2002) demonstrate how morphemes systematically organize both lexical and grammatical information across languages.

These theoretical foundations converge on a fundamental distinction: inflectional morphemes signal grammatical categories such as tense, number, and agreement without altering the word class of the base, whereas derivational morphemes form new lexical items that may change both the meaning and grammatical category of the base form (Yule, 2010; Aronoff, 1976; Lieber, 2021). This distinction is not merely taxonomic but has practical consequences for how written registers, including news language, deploy morphological resources to achieve grammatical precision and lexical variety (Quirk et al., 1985; Leech, 2006).

Additionally, several studies have highlighted the role of derivational and inflectional morphemes in written discourse. Simaremare et al. (2021) found that derivational affixes contribute to the creation of new meanings and grammatical categories in written texts. Similarly, Rahmadewi et al. (2023) examined derivational morphemes in BBC-related media discourse and showed their contribution to the formation of more specific lexical items. In contrast to these studies focusing mainly on derivational morphology, Goni et al. (2022) examined both inflectional and derivational morphemes in written discourse, including social media texts. Biber et al. (1999), from a broader register perspective, emphasized the role of grammatical structures in organizing information and maintaining clarity in written and spoken discourse. Together, these studies indicate that morphological processes contribute to both lexical formation and grammatical organization across different forms of written discourse.

Register studies by Biber and Conrad (2009) and Biber and Gray (2010) demonstrate that written genres such as news and academic prose are characterized by high informational density, elaboration, and structural complexity. These register characteristics highlight the importance of examining linguistic choices at different levels of language, including morphology, to understand how formal written English achieves precision and coherence in professional contexts.

However, the studies reviewed above have examined morphological processes across different types of written texts, including student writing, social media, and BBC-related media discourse. The BBC-related study by Rahmadewi et al. (2023), for example, focuses on derivational morphemes, while Goni et al. (2022) examines both inflectional and derivational morphemes in social media captions. These studies provide useful descriptions of morphological forms, but the present study takes a more focused approach by examining both inflectional and derivational morphemes together within one authentic BBC News article and interpreting their use in the immediate context of the text. The selection of a single article is therefore intended to allow a closer examination of the morphological forms and their contextual functions rather than to represent BBC News or economic news as a whole. The article “US Inflation Stable Ahead of Iran Shock” was selected because it contains a range of inflectional and derivational forms within a contemporary news text, making it suitable for a focused morphological analysis. Based on this focus, the present study applies the morphological frameworks proposed by Yule (2010) and Fromkin et al. (2014) to identify, classify, and interpret the use of inflectional and derivational morphemes in the selected news text.

II METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method because it is appropriate for analyzing linguistic data based on words rather than numerical measurements. Qualitative research involves interpreting and describing language phenomena to uncover patterns and meanings in context (Creswell, 2014). In line with qualitative research principles, the researcher served as a data collection instrument; nevertheless, objective procedures were emphasized to ensure replicability and minimize bias (Moleong, 2017).

The data for this study consisted of primary data and supporting secondary sources. The primary data were drawn from a BBC News article titled “US Inflation Stable Ahead of Iran Shock,” dated 11th March 2026 in the available records. The article was selected because it presents a contemporary economic news event involving inflation, consumer prices, food and housing costs, and the Federal Reserve, providing a range of words and contexts relevant to the analysis of inflectional and derivational morphemes. Secondary sources were obtained from relevant books and previous studies on morphology, particularly those discussing inflectional and derivational morphemes (Aronoff & Fudeman, 2011; Booij, 2005; Carstairs-McCarthy, 2002). These sources provided the theoretical basis for identifying, classifying, and interpreting the morphological forms found in the primary data. Thus, the primary data provided the linguistic forms and contexts for analysis, while the secondary sources provided the theoretical concepts and criteria for interpreting those forms.

Data were collected through document analysis (Bowen, 2009) by closely reading the selected news article and identifying words containing inflectional and derivational morphemes. The identified words were then classified and analyzed based on the morphological frameworks of Yule (2010) and Fromkin et al. (2014). The analysis examined the base forms, affixation processes, and functions of the identified morphemes to determine their inflectional or derivational status (Carstairs-McCarthy, 2002). The results were subsequently interpreted to identify morphological patterns within the context of the selected news text, with reference to classical and contemporary morphological studies (Marchand, 1969; Matthews, 1991; Spencer, 2021).

III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 RESULTS

The analysis revealed that both inflectional and derivational morphemes were present in the BBC News article “US Inflation Stable Ahead of Iran Shock.” Inflectional morphemes appeared more frequently (24 tokens) than derivational morphemes (10 tokens), indicating their greater presence in the selected data. Inflectional morphemes identified in the data include plural forms (-s), progressive forms (-ing), past tense forms (-ed), comparative and superlative forms (-er, -est), possessive forms (’s), and third-person singular forms (-s). Meanwhile, derivational morphemes include several word-formation processes that contribute to changes in lexical meaning and, in some cases, grammatical category.

3.1.1 INFLECTIONAL MORPHEMES

To provide the textual context for the inflectional forms analyzed in this study, several excerpts from the selected BBC News article are presented below:

“Consumer prices rose 2.4% over the 12 months to February, the same pace as the prior month, as rising food and housing costs were offset by falling prices for other items, such as used cars.

The figures reflect prices gathered in the weeks leading up to the start of the US-Israel war in Iran, which has triggered a sharp rise in oil prices that is starting to feed into other areas.

Analysts say the situation could push the inflation rate back above 3% in the coming months, raising uncertainty about whether the US central bank will cut interest rates anytime soon.

The Federal Reserve raised borrowing costs sharply in 2022, aiming to slow the economy and ease the pressures that had sent prices soaring.

While the inflation rate has dropped back, it has remained above the Fed's 2% target since 2021.

Wednesday's report offers "some reassurance" that inflation prices had not been moving in the wrong direction, said Seema Shah, chief global strategist at Principal Asset Management, warning that it would nonetheless be seen as "something of a historical artefact".

With oil prices up roughly \$30 in recent weeks - and potentially heading toward triple digits - investors are far more focused on how the conflict feeds into inflation over the months ahead," she said.

The average cost of a gallon of car fuel in the US jumped past \$3.50 (£2.61) on Tuesday to the highest level since 2024.

The Fed typically hesitates to respond to price spikes caused by changes in energy prices, which are known for being bumpy, but she said the persistent overshoot might make that "harder to do this time”."

Table 1. Inflectional Morphology and Categorization

No	Meaning	Wordlist	Formation	Transformation
1	Plural	price	price + s	-s suffix
		content	content + s	-s suffix
		month	month + s	-s suffix
		analyst	analyst + s	-s suffix
		cost	cost + s	-s suffix

		investor	investor + s	-s suffix
		week	week + s	-s suffix
		area	area + s	-s suffix
2	Progressive	rise	rise + ing	-ing suffix
		fall	fall + ing	-ing suffix
		move	move + ing	-ing suffix
		head	head + ing	-ing suffix
		start	start + ing	-ing suffix
3	Past tense	gather	gather + ed	-ed suffix
		trigger	trigger + ed	-ed suffix
		drop	drop + ed	-ed suffix
		remain	remain + ed	-ed suffix
		jump	jump + ed	-ed suffix
		raise	raise + ed	-ed suffix
4	Comparative / Superlative	hard	hard + er	-er suffix
		high	high + est	-est suffix
5	Possessive	fed	fed + 's	's suffix
6	Third person	have	has	Suppletion /
		offer	offer + s	-s suffix

3.1.1.1 Plural Forms

The plural forms presented in Table 1 occur in the selected BBC News article in expressions referring to more than one entity, period, or economic item. The forms prices, months, analysts, costs, investors, weeks, and areas are formed by attaching the inflectional suffix -s to their respective noun bases. For example, the article uses plural nouns in statements concerning consumer prices, the coming months, and rising oil prices. In these forms, the suffix provides grammatical information about number without changing the grammatical category of the base, as the resulting forms remain nouns. Thus, in the context of the selected article, plural marking contributes to the representation of multiple entities and economic developments discussed in the news report.

3.1.1.2 Progressive Forms

The progressive forms identified in Table 1 include rising, falling, moving, heading, leading, and starting. These forms occur in the selected article in contexts describing processes and developments related to inflation, prices, and the conflict in Iran. For instance, the article refers to rising food and housing costs, falling prices, and oil prices that are starting to feed into other areas. Morphologically, these forms are created by attaching the inflectional suffix -ing to verb bases. The suffix provides grammatical information associated with an ongoing or developing process while the grammatical

category of the base remains verbal. Within the selected article, these forms help describe economic changes as processes that are continuing or developing during the period under discussion.

3.1.1.3 *Past Tense Forms*

The past tense forms found in the data include gathered, triggered, dropped, remained, jumped, and raised. These forms occur in sentences describing events and economic developments that had already taken place. For example, the article states that the figures reflect prices gathered in the weeks before the conflict and that the war triggered a sharp rise in oil prices. The suffix -ed marks past tense without changing the grammatical category of the verb. In the selected article, these forms contribute to the chronological presentation of events by distinguishing completed actions and previous economic developments from conditions described in the present.

3.1.1.4 *Comparative and Superlative Forms*

The comparative and superlative forms identified in Table 1 are harder and highest. The form harder is produced by attaching the inflectional suffix -er to the adjective hard, while highest is formed from high through the addition of -est. In the article, harder occurs in the expression describing a situation that might make a particular response more difficult, whereas highest is used to indicate the greatest price level within the stated period. These suffixes express degrees of comparison without changing the grammatical category of the base forms, which remain adjectives.

3.1.1.5 *Possessive Forms*

The possessive form identified in the data is Fed's. This form occurs in the article in reference to the Federal Reserve's economic target. The possessive marker 's is attached to the noun Fed to indicate a grammatical relationship between the institution and the following noun. The addition of the possessive marker does not change the grammatical category of the base word. In this context, the possessive form provides a compact grammatical construction for expressing the institutional relationship described in the sentence.

3.1.1.6 *Third-Person Forms*

The third-person singular forms identified in the selected article include offers and has. The form offers is produced through the regular addition of the suffix -s to the verb offer, whereas has is an irregular form corresponding to the verb have. Both forms occur in present-tense clauses and express agreement with third-person singular subjects. In the selected article, these forms contribute to the grammatical organization of statements describing present information, conditions, and actions.

3.1.2 **DERIVATIONAL MORPHEMES**

To provide the textual context for the derivational forms analyzed in this study, several excerpts from the selected BBC News article are presented below:

"Inflation in the US was stable in February, ahead of the shock to energy prices triggered by the US and Israel war in Iran.

Consumer prices rose 2.4% over the 12 months to February, the same pace as the prior month, as rising food and housing costs were offset by falling prices for other items, such as used cars.

Analysts say the situation could push the inflation rate back above 3% in the coming months, raising uncertainty about whether the US central bank will cut interest rates anytime soon.

Wednesday's report offers "some reassurance" that inflation prices had not been moving in the wrong direction, said Seema Shah, chief global strategist at Principal Asset Management, warning that it would nonetheless be seen as "something of a historical artefact".

With oil prices up roughly \$30 in recent weeks - and potentially heading toward triple digits - investors are far more focused on how the conflict feeds into inflation over the months ahead," she said.

The Fed typically hesitates to respond to price spikes caused by changes in energy prices, which are known for being bumpy, but she said the persistent overshoot might make that "harder to do this time".

Table 2. Derivational Morphology and Categorization

No	Word-Class Change	Word list	Formation	Transformation	Meaning
1	Verb to Noun	inflate	inflate + ion	inflation	process / state
		situate	situate + ion	situation	condition / state
2	Verb to Noun (Agent)	consume	consume + er	consumer	person who does action
3	Verb to Adjective	persist	persist + ent	persistent	having quality
4	Noun to Adjective	history	history + ical	historical	relating to
		bump	bump + y	bumpy	having quality
5	Adjective to Adverb	rough	rough + ly	-s suffix	in a manner
		typical	typical + ly	-s suffix	in a manner
		potential	potential + ly	potentially	in a manner
		sharp	sharp + ly	sharply	in a manner

3.1.2.1 Verb-to-Noun Forms

The verb-to-noun forms identified in Table 2 include inflation and situation. These forms occur in the selected article in relation to economic conditions and events being discussed. The form inflation is derived from the verb inflate through the addition of the suffix -ion, while situation is formed from situate with the same suffix. Through this derivational process, the grammatical category changes from verb to noun. In the selected article, these forms are used to refer to economic processes and conditions as nouns within the news report.

3.1.2.2 Verb-to-Noun Agent Forms

The form consumer represents a verb-to-noun agent formation. It is derived from the verb consume through the addition of the suffix -er. The resulting form refers to a person associated with the action expressed by the base verb. In the selected article, consumer occurs in the expression consumer prices. The derivational process changes the grammatical category of the base from verb to noun while producing a more specific lexical item.

3.1.2.3 Verb-to-Adjective Forms

The form persistent is derived from the verb persist through the addition of the suffix -ent. This derivational process changes the grammatical category of the base from verb to adjective. In the selected article, persistent occurs in the phrase persistent overshoot, describing the continuing quality of the economic condition being discussed. The derived form therefore adds descriptive lexical meaning to the noun it modifies.

3.1.2.4 Noun-to-Adjective Forms

The noun-to-adjective forms identified in Table 2 include historical and bumpy. The form historical is formed from history with the suffix -ical, while bumpy is formed from bump through the addition of -y. These derivational processes change the grammatical category of the base forms from nouns to adjectives. In the selected article, historical modifies artefact, while bumpy describes energy

prices. Thus, these forms provide descriptive lexical information within their immediate textual contexts.

3.1.2.5 *Adjective-to-Adverb Forms*

The adjective-to-adverb forms identified in the selected article include roughly, typically, potentially, and sharply. These forms are derived through the addition of the suffix -ly to the adjective bases rough, typical, potential, and sharp. The derivational process changes the grammatical category from adjective to adverb. Within the selected article, these forms provide additional information about the events and conditions being described. For example, roughly qualifies the amount of the increase in oil prices, typically describes the usual response of the Federal Reserve, potentially indicates a possible future development, and sharply describes the degree of change.

3.2 DISCUSSION

The discussion below interprets how inflectional and derivational morphemes operate as complementary resources in the selected news text. Inflection provides grammatical information related to number, tense, degree, possession, and agreement, while derivation contributes to the formation of new lexical items and the development of lexical meaning (Fromkin et al., 2014; Aronoff & Fudeman, 2011; Plag, 2003). In the selected BBC News article, these two morphological processes contribute differently to the grammatical structure and lexical content of the text.

3.2.1 *INFLECTIONAL MORPHEMES*

The findings indicate that inflectional morphemes frequently occur in the BBC News article "US Inflation Stable Ahead of Iran Shock," highlighting their role in expressing grammatical information without changing the basic lexical category of the word. The use of plural forms such as prices, months, and analysts helps convey numerical information, while past tense forms such as gathered, triggered, and raised indicate completed actions. These grammatical markers enable the text to present information in a clear and structured manner (Fromkin et al., 2014; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002).

Plural marking -s appears in forms such as prices and months, including the clause "Consumer prices rose 2.4% over the 12 months to February," where -s signals more than one entity without changing the noun category (Fromkin et al., 2014; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002). Within the selected article, plural marking contributes to the expression of multiple entities and periods discussed in the report. This observation is consistent with previous studies that identified plural forms as a common type of inflectional morphology in written English texts (Pradana & Putra, 2024; Fitria, 2020).

Progressive marking -ing is visible in items such as rising and falling, as in the clause describing how "rising food and housing costs were offset by falling prices." In these forms, -ing contributes grammatical information associated with an ongoing or developing process while maintaining the verbal basis of the word (Fromkin et al., 2014; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002). Within the selected article, this form helps describe economic developments as processes occurring or developing during the period under discussion. Similar progressive forms have also been identified in previous analyses of written English morphology (Hutagalung et al., 2023; Fitria, 2020).

Past tense -ed occurs in forms such as gathered, triggered, and remained, where the suffix marks actions or events that occurred before the time of reporting. This function reflects the role of inflection in expressing tense and temporal relationships in English grammar (Biber et al., 1999; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002). In the selected article, past tense forms contribute to the chronological presentation of economic events by distinguishing completed developments from conditions described in the present.

Comparative and superlative marking -er and -est appears in forms such as harder and highest. These forms express different degrees of comparison without changing the grammatical category of the adjective (Fromkin et al., 2014; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002). In the selected article, harder is used to indicate a greater degree of difficulty, while highest identifies the greatest level within the stated period. These forms therefore contribute to the expression of comparison and degree in the description of economic conditions.

Possessive marking 's is represented by the form Fed's, which expresses a grammatical relationship between the Federal Reserve and the following noun. The possessive construction provides a concise way of expressing this relationship without changing the grammatical category of the base word (Fromkin et al., 2014; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002).

Third-person singular agreement is evidenced by offers and the irregular form has. The form offers is produced through the regular addition of -s, whereas has represents an irregular form of have. Both

forms occur in present-tense clauses and contribute to subject–verb agreement in English grammar (Fromkin et al., 2014; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002). This observation is consistent with previous studies identifying third-person singular forms as part of the inflectional system of English (Hutagalung et al., 2023; Goni et al., 2022).

Overall, the inflectional findings demonstrate how established grammatical patterns of English operate in the selected news article. The forms identified in the data do not create new lexical items; instead, they modify existing words to express grammatical categories. This finding supports the general distinction in morphological theory that inflection primarily encodes grammatical information while preserving the basic lexical identity of the word (Booij, 2005; Spencer, 2021).

3.2.2 DERIVATIONAL MORPHEMES

The analysis also shows that derivational morphemes contribute to lexical development through the formation of words with new meanings and, in some cases, different grammatical categories. Transformations such as *inflate* → *inflation* and *consume* → *consumer* demonstrate how derivational processes allow the formation of words that express processes, entities, qualities, and other lexical meanings (Fromkin et al., 2014; Plag, 2003).

Verb-to-noun derivation with *-ion* occurs in forms such as *inflation* and *situation*, where the suffix contributes to the formation of nouns referring to processes, results, or states. In the selected article, these forms allow complex events and conditions to be expressed as nominal concepts. This finding is consistent with the description of suffixation as an important process in English word formation (Plag, 2003; Aronoff & Fudeman, 2011) and with previous studies identifying *-ion* as a productive derivational suffix in written English (Pradana & Putra, 2024; Fitria, 2020).

Agent noun formation with *-er* is represented by *consumer* (*consume* + *-er*), where the suffix forms a noun referring to a person associated with the action expressed by the verb. In the selected article, this derived form identifies an economic participant within the reported situation. This process reflects the function of derivational morphology in forming new lexical items from existing bases (Plag, 2003; Bauer, 2003).

Verb-to-adjective derivation with *-ent* is illustrated by *persist* → *persistent*, where the suffix changes the verb into an adjective expressing a continuing quality or condition. In the selected article, *persistent* characterizes the continuing nature of the economic condition being discussed. This derivational process involves both a change in grammatical category and the development of a related lexical meaning (Fromkin et al., 2014; Plag, 2003; Simaremare et al., 2021).

Noun-to-adjective derivation with *-ical* appears in *history* → *historical*. The derived adjective expresses a relationship to the noun base and allows the article to characterize the described artefact in relation to history. This process illustrates how derivational suffixation can form adjectives that provide more specific lexical description (Plag, 2003; Aronoff & Fudeman, 2011). Similar adjective-forming processes have also been identified in previous analyses of media discourse (Fitria, 2020; Rahmadewi et al., 2023).

Noun-to-adjective derivation with *-y* appears in *bump* → *bumpy*. Unlike the relational meaning expressed by some adjective-forming suffixes, *-y* contributes the meaning of having or being characterized by a particular quality. In the selected article, *bumpy* describes the changing or uneven nature of energy prices. This semantic meaning is also consistent with the description of *-y* as an adjective-forming suffix indicating “having” or “characterized by” a particular quality (Collins Dictionary, n.d.). This finding demonstrates that derivational suffixes may contribute different semantic meanings even when they produce words within the same grammatical category (Plag, 2003; Simaremare et al., 2021).

Adjective-to-adverb derivation with *-ly* occurs in forms such as *roughly*, *typically*, *potentially*, and *sharply*. These forms are derived from adjective bases and function as adverbs that modify the manner, degree, or interpretation of events and conditions in the article. This process demonstrates the role of derivational morphology in expanding lexical resources through word-class transformation (Bauer, 2003; Plag, 2003). Previous studies have likewise identified *-ly* as a common derivational suffix in written English and media-related texts (Fitria, 2020; Rahmadewi et al., 2023).

The present findings are consistent with morphological theory, which distinguishes inflectional processes that primarily express grammatical information from derivational processes that contribute to the formation and development of lexical items (Booij, 2005; Haspelmath & Sims, 2010; Plag, 2003; Spencer & Zwicky, 2001). In the selected BBC News article, these two types of morphology perform complementary functions. Inflectional morphemes contribute to grammatical distinctions such as

number, tense, degree, possession, and agreement, whereas derivational morphemes contribute to the formation of lexical items used to express processes, participants, qualities, and manner. The findings therefore provide a text-specific illustration of how grammatical and lexical word-formation resources operate within an authentic contemporary news text.

IV CONCLUSION

This study concludes that both inflectional and derivational morphemes are present in the BBC News article “US Inflation Stable Ahead of Iran Shock.” Inflectional morphemes occurred more frequently, with 24 identified tokens, while derivational morphemes accounted for 10 tokens. The inflectional forms expressed grammatical information related to number, tense, degree, possession, and third-person singular agreement, whereas the derivational forms contributed to changes in lexical meaning and, in some cases, word class. These findings provide a focused description of how inflectional and derivational morphemes operate within the selected news text. However, the findings are limited to this article and are not intended to represent BBC News or economic news reporting in general. Future research may examine a larger number of news articles or compare different news outlets and genres to provide a broader understanding of morphological variation in English news texts.

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