

- 1. THE ROLE OF WATTPAD IN VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT: A
NARRATIVE INQUIRY**
- 2. A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS
AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN KATSEYE'S
EP SIS (SOFT IS STRONG)**
- 3. CONSTRUCTING MALE IMMATURITY THROUGH
FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE: A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS
OF SABRINA CARPENTER'S 'MANCHILD'**

FINAL PROJECT REPORT

BY

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223010201030**



**UNIVERSITAS PALANGKA RAYA
FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND ARTS EDUCATION
STUDY PROGRAM OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION
2026**

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FINAL PROJECT REPORT

Presented to
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
Universitas Palangka Raya
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Sarjana Pendidikan

BY

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FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND ARTS EDUCATION
STUDY PROGRAM OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION
2026**

STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

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Hereby solemnly declare that the final project report entitled THE ROLE OF WATTPAD IN VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY; A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN KATSEYE'S EP SIS (SOFT IS STRONG); CONSTRUCTING MALE IMMATURITY THROUGH FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE: A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF SABRINA CARPENTER'S 'MANCHILD', which I have written, is entirely my own work and has not been copied or plagiarized, either in whole or in part, from any other source.

If, at any point in the future, it is proven or can be demonstrated that this final project report is the work of another person or contain plagiarized material, either in whole or in part, I am willing to accept the consequences of such actions in accordance with the applicable regulations.

Palangka Raya, 16 September 2026

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This final project report has been approved for examination before the Final Project Examination Committee at the Study Program of English Language Education, Department of Languages and Arts Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Palangka Raya.

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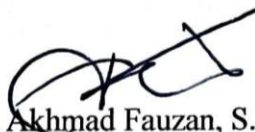
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This final project report has been defended before the Final Project Examination Committee of the Study Program of English Language Education, Department of Languages and Arts Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Palangka Raya, on Tuesday, 8 September 2026, and has been revised in accordance with the feedback provided by the Examination Committee.

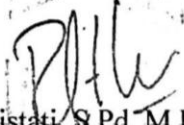
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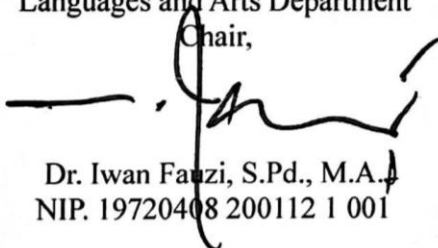
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I express my deepest gratitude to God Almighty for His endless blessings, guidance, strength, and grace throughout my academic journey. Through every difficulty, uncertainty, and moment of exhaustion, I have been given the strength to continue and complete this final project. Throughout the process, the writer received support, guidance, encouragement, and prayers from many individuals who contributed, directly or indirectly, to the completion of this work. In recognition of their kindness and contributions, the writer would like to extend his sincere appreciation and gratitude to the following:

1. Dr. Ristati, S.Pd, M.Hum., my Primary Supervisor, for the academic guidance, support, and encouragement given to me as part of this journey. I am sincerely grateful for the support, guidance, and encouragement I received throughout this journey.
2. Dellis Pratika, M.A., my co-Supervisor, for the invaluable guidance, patience, time, and continuous support throughout this project. I deeply appreciate your patience in accompanying me through numerous revisions. Your presence and consistent support gave me the confidence to keep moving forward and complete this project. I am truly grateful for the time, effort, understanding, and trust you invested in me throughout this journey.
3. Dr. Akhmad Fauzan, S.Pd., M.Pd., my Examiner and Coordinator of English Language Education, for his corrections, questions, and constructive suggestions. His feedback encouraged me to reconsider aspects of my research and significantly improved this final project. I deeply appreciate his support, guidance, and encouragement.
4. Dr. Rinto Alexandro, SE., MM., the Dean of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Palangka Raya, for providing academic facilities, resources, and a supportive environment that allowed me to complete this study.
5. Dr. Iwan Fauzi, S.Pd., M.A., the Head of the Languages and Arts Department, Universitas Palangka Raya, for the academic and administrative support.
6. All lecturers of English Language Education, Universitas Palangka Raya, for the knowledge, guidance, assistance, and academic experiences they provided throughout my college years. The knowledge I gained during my studies became an important foundation for conducting these research projects and completing this final project.

7. The administrative staff of English Language Education, especially kak Resti and kak Feby, for their assistance and patience throughout the administrative and academic processes of completing this final project.
8. Mami and Papa, for everything they have given me throughout my life. Thank you for the unconditional love, patience, sacrifices, prayers, and unwavering belief in me. Thank you for always making sure that I had what I needed, even when I didn't know how to ask for it, and for continuing to support me through every stage of my education. Whatever I have achieved in this journey cannot be separated from the love, effort, and sacrifices they have made for me.
9. Warga sekre and (A)eternum, for being among the people who accompanied me throughout my college journey. Thank you for bringing happiness and creating wonderful memories that helped make the tough parts of this journey easier to bear.
10. Geo, Ipit, Ila, and Aan, for the love, the laughs, and all the moments we shared throughout our college journey.
11. Putri, Bela, and Dea, for the friendship, support, and countless memories that have stayed with me since SMA.
12. V, for her willingness to share her experiences, time, and perspectives. Her participation made the completion of the first article possible.
13. KATSEYE and Sabrina Carpenter, their music has been a source of motivation and inspiration for my final project.
14. Finally, myself, for making it this far. There were moments of doubt, yet I kept learning, making mistakes, and trying again. I am proud of myself for not giving up when the process became difficult.

The writer acknowledges that this final project has limitations and may still contain shortcomings. Therefore, constructive criticism and suggestions are sincerely welcome to improve this work in the future. The writer hopes this final project report will benefit readers, students, lecturers, and future researchers, particularly those interested in English language education and linguistics.

Palangka Raya, September 2026

Yasin Ali Rogas

*“Nothing is impossible;
the word itself says 'I'm possible'!”*

— Audrey Hepburn

“Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear. The brave may not live forever, but the cautious do not live at all. From now on, you’ll be traveling the road between who you think you are and who you can be. The key is to allow yourself to make the journey.”

— Prince Philippe Renaldi, *The Princess Diaries*

*“Every story has an end. But in life,
every ending is just a new beginning.”*

— Ray Schleine, *Uptown Girls*

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ARTICLE I

1.1 Publication Information

- 1.1.1 Article Title** : The Role of Wattpad in Vocabulary Development: A Narrative Inquiry
- 1.1.2 Journal Name** : EBONY: Journal of English Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature
- 1.1.3 ISSN** : p-ISSN: 2797-4537/e-ISSN: 2809-4980
- 1.1.4 Accreditation** : National (SINTA 4)
- 1.1.5 DOI/Article Link** : <https://doi.org/10.37304/ebony.v6i1.23344>
<https://ejournal.upr.ac.id/index.php/ebony/article/view/23344>
- 1.1.6 Volume/Issue/Year** : Volume 6, No. 1 (2026)
- 1.1.7 QR Code** :



1.2 Final Published Version

ABSTRACT

Rogas, Yasin Ali. 2026. *The Role of Wattpad in Vocabulary Development: A Narrative Inquiry*. Final Project. Study Program of English Language Education, Department of Languages and Arts Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Palangka Raya. Supervisor I: Ristati, Supervisor II: Dellis Pratika.

Keywords: digital reading, reading motivation, vocabulary development, Wattpad

This study explores the role of Wattpad as a digital reading platform in supporting vocabulary development among Indonesian EFL learners. The research was motivated by the persistent issue of low reading motivation and limited vocabulary growth among students, despite increasing exposure to English through digital media. Using a qualitative descriptive design, data were collected through a semi-structured in-depth interview with one purposively selected participant who had actively read English stories on Wattpad. Findings revealed that the participant's engagement with Wattpad contributed to the formation of consistent reading habits, driven by both social influence and intrinsic motivation. Wattpad provided authentic, contextualized exposure to English vocabulary, allowing the participant to acquire and apply new words naturally in both academic and personal communication. Furthermore, the platform fostered pragmatic awareness and confidence in using English expressively and appropriately. Despite challenges such as misinterpretation and inconsistent language quality, the participant demonstrated autonomy and critical literacy in overcoming them. Overall, the study highlights Wattpad's pedagogical potential as an informal yet effective digital environment that promotes self-directed vocabulary learning and enhances reading motivation. The findings offer valuable implications for integrating authentic digital reading materials into EFL instruction to foster meaningful and learner-centered language development.

ABSTRAK

Rogas, Yasin Ali. 2026. *The Role of Wattpad in Vocabulary Development: A Narrative Inquiry*. Tugas Akhir. Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa dan Seni, Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Palangka Raya. Pembimbing I: Ristati, Pembimbing II: Dellis Pratika.

Kata Kunci: membaca digital, motivasi membaca, pengembangan kosakata, Wattpad

Penelitian ini mengkaji peran Wattpad sebagai platform membaca digital dalam mendukung pengembangan kosakata di kalangan pembelajar bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing (EFL) di Indonesia. Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh masalah yang terus berlanjut terkait rendahnya motivasi membaca dan pertumbuhan kosakata yang terbatas di kalangan siswa, meskipun paparan terhadap bahasa Inggris melalui media digital semakin meningkat. Dengan menggunakan desain kualitatif deskriptif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam semi-terstruktur dengan satu peserta yang dipilih secara purposif dan telah secara aktif membaca cerita berbahasa Inggris di Wattpad. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa keterlibatan peserta dengan Wattpad berkontribusi pada pembentukan kebiasaan membaca yang konsisten, yang didorong oleh pengaruh sosial dan motivasi intrinsik. Wattpad memberikan paparan kosakata bahasa Inggris yang otentik dan kontekstual, sehingga memungkinkan peserta untuk memperoleh dan menerapkan kata-kata baru secara alami baik dalam komunikasi akademis maupun pribadi. Selain itu, platform ini menumbuhkan kesadaran pragmatik serta kepercayaan diri dalam menggunakan bahasa Inggris secara ekspresif dan tepat. Meskipun menghadapi tantangan seperti kesalahpahaman dan kualitas bahasa yang tidak konsisten, peserta menunjukkan kemandirian dan literasi kritis dalam mengatasinya. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menyoroti potensi pedagogis Wattpad sebagai lingkungan digital yang bersifat informal namun efektif, yang mendorong pembelajaran kosakata secara mandiri dan meningkatkan motivasi membaca. Temuan-temuan ini memberikan implikasi berharga bagi pengintegrasian bahan bacaan digital otentik ke dalam pengajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL) guna mendorong perkembangan bahasa yang bermakna dan berpusat pada peserta didik.

THE ROLE OF WATTPAD IN VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

INTRODUCTION

In the Indonesian context, reading interest remains a persistent national concern. A meta-analysis by Pitoyo (2020) revealed that Indonesia's reading interest level is alarmingly low, as only 0.001% of Indonesians are considered active readers, meaning that merely one out of every thousand people read regularly. This finding aligns with global literacy studies, such as the World's Most Literate Nations Ranked report, which placed Indonesia 60th out of 61 countries, ranking just below Thailand (Pitoyo, 2020). Despite having adequate literacy infrastructure, such as libraries and internet access, the utilization of these resources is not directed toward reading or learning but rather toward entertainment and social media use. This suggests that the issue lies not merely in access but in reading motivation and habits.

Seventilova (2024) expands this discussion through a multidisciplinary perspective, highlighting that reading interest is influenced by individual, social, and external factors, including personal habits, family environment, educational systems, and access to quality reading materials. The dominance of digital media and the lack of exposure to reading materials, especially in rural areas, further suppresses the reading culture in Indonesia. Building a stronger reading culture, therefore, requires collaborative efforts among educational institutions, families,

and government initiatives, ensuring that reading is not merely a school task but part of daily life.

Research further shows that while Indonesian students recognize the importance of reading, their reading habits remain inconsistent. Hanah et al (2020) observed that during the pandemic, although many students expressed enjoyment in reading English materials, most read for less than an hour a day and only two to three times a week. Similarly, Beauty et al., (2022) found that over 60% of students in Indonesian Language and Literature programs demonstrated moderate levels of reading interest and motivation, yet fewer than half maintained consistent reading routines. These results suggest that while students acknowledge the value of reading, habitual and self-driven engagement is still lacking.

The motivational dimension also plays a crucial role. Research on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners shows that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations influence reading behavior (Indrayadi, 2021; Salikin et al., 2017). Intrinsic motivation, reading for pleasure or curiosity, encourages deeper comprehension, while extrinsic motivation, such as academic rewards or teacher feedback, drives achievement-oriented reading. Lustyantie & Aprilia (2020) further emphasize that reading interest and achievement motivation significantly impact comprehension ability, confirming that motivation is a strong predictor of reading success.

Vocabulary development has long been recognized as one of the most challenging yet essential aspects of English language learning. Vocabulary serves as the foundation of language proficiency, as all language skills including listening,

speaking, reading, and writing, depend on a sufficient vocabulary base (Brown & Lee, 2015; Haque et al., 2024). For EFL students, building a strong vocabulary foundation is crucial, as it allows one to comprehend written texts, express thoughts, as well as communicate well. Without sufficient vocabulary knowledge, learners may struggle to attain fluency as well as confidence while using the language for academic as well as everyday life purposes. However, many Indonesian EFL learners still struggle to acquire and retain English vocabulary due to limited exposure, reliance on rote memorization, and insufficient contextual practice.

Traditional vocabulary instruction often focuses on direct teaching and memorization rather than meaningful use, leading to short-term retention. Sutrisna (2021) observed that many learners are reluctant to explore unfamiliar words independently, often depending on teachers' explanations. As a result, vocabulary learning becomes passive, lacking opportunities for critical engagement and personal discovery. Nagodavithana & Premarathne (2021) further found that learners who relied heavily on translation from their first language demonstrated weaker retention and slower vocabulary growth compared to those who used contextual inference strategies. This indicates that successful vocabulary development requires active engagement, repeated exposure, and strategic learning rather than mechanical memorization.

In today's digital learning era, technology offers both opportunities and challenges for vocabulary growth. Tools and platforms allow interactive, multimodal learning experiences, enabling learners to engage with language through games, mobile applications, and collaborative reading spaces (Haque et al.,

2024). These environments promote learner autonomy and motivation through immediate feedback and diverse contexts. However, Jing et al (2023) caution that not all screen-based activities are beneficial, as passive digital consumption may limit meaningful word learning. To foster vocabulary development effectively, digital tools must be used purposefully to encourage interaction, reflection, and authentic language exposure.

In recent years, the use of digital platforms for language learning has become increasingly popular. Research by Grabe & Stoller (2011) suggests that reading in online contexts can facilitate vocabulary acquisition through contextual feedback, multimodal interaction, and exposure to a variety of literary texts. One such platform is Wattpad, an online platform that allows users to read and write stories in various genres (Arimbi & Daulay, 2024). Wattpad offers authentic, contemporary English language exposure that differs from traditional textbooks, providing learners with opportunities to encounter diverse vocabulary in informal and engaging ways. Unlike conventional classroom materials, Wattpad presents an opportunity for learners to encounter real-life language, idiomatic expressions, and diverse vocabulary in a casual and enjoyable environment. The availability of Wattpad, along with its wide range of content, makes it a valuable tool for those looking to improve their English language skills independently, outside a classroom environment. Furthermore, the interactive nature of the platform, including commenting, participating in discussions, and the ability to communicate with authors, adds a new aspect to learning, which can help improve vocabulary

retention (Al Falaq et al., 2021; Andaresa et al., 2024; Grabielle Nidar & Monteza, 2024; Sari & Haryanto, 2025; Tirocchi, 2018).

Apriyani (2020) found that children could enhance their literacy abilities through the use of Wattpad, as it allows them to read and write stories in an interactive digital environment. Wattpad serves as a participatory learning space where users can not only consume literary content but also contribute their own, fostering a sense of ownership and creativity in language learning. The researcher noted that this form of engagement promotes reading and writing literacy while cultivating critical thinking and interpretive skills through collaborative interaction among readers and writers.

Building upon this, Furotun et al (2021) demonstrated that Wattpad's integration into English learning environments effectively improves students' reading comprehension, vocabulary mastery, and motivation. The interactive nature of Wattpad, its story-commenting features, genre variety, and immersive reading experience create a meaningful learning ecosystem that encourages students to read regularly and incidentally acquire new words in context. Most participants in their study expressed that Wattpad stories felt more relatable and easier to understand than conventional classroom texts, making English reading less intimidating and more enjoyable.

From a broader perspective, Tirocchi (2018) describes Wattpad as an embodiment of transmedia environment, where reading and writing merge into participatory and collaborative digital practices. The platform empowers young readers to become prosumers, both producers and consumers, who actively shape

narratives, comment on others' works, and co-construct a shared culture of reading. This form of digital engagement supports critical literacy, creative expression, and community-based learning. Similarly, Dewi & Roysa (2024) found that Wattpad fosters a vibrant reading culture among youth by making reading accessible, interactive, and emotionally engaging, thereby reigniting young readers' interest in written narratives in an age dominated by visual media.

Furthermore, Andaresa et al (2024) provide empirical evidence of how Wattpad contributes to the development of reading habits and language proficiency among Indonesian EFL learners. Their study showed that consistent engagement with English stories on Wattpad, enhanced learners' vocabulary knowledge, grammatical understanding, and reading fluency. Additionally, the study revealed that readers' enjoyment and interest in storylines were key motivators for sustained engagement, demonstrating how intrinsic motivation, the pleasure derived from reading for personal enjoyment, plays a central role in the process.

Despite growing evidence supporting Wattpad's potential to enhance reading habits and literacy, there remains limited research exploring how Wattpad engagement specifically contributes to vocabulary development among Indonesian EFL learners. Existing studies have predominantly focused on its impact on reading motivation, digital literacy, and creative writing (Apriyani, 2020; Arimbi & Daulay, 2024; Dewi & Roysa, 2024; Furotun et al., 2021), yet few have examined how learners perceive their own vocabulary growth and learning experiences within this digital reading environment. Furthermore, most prior research has employed general or quantitative approaches, often overlooking the personal reflections and

affective dimensions of learners' experiences, factors that are essential to understanding how motivation, engagement, and vocabulary development interact in digital contexts. This gap highlights the need for an in-depth, qualitative investigation into learners' reading practices on Wattpad. In response to this gap, this study aims to explore the role of Wattpad in supporting vocabulary development through learners' reading engagement and self-perception. To address these aims, the study is guided by the following research questions: (1.) According to the participant, what contributions does Wattpad give towards her motivation to read in English? (2.) How does the participant perceive her vocabulary development as a result of engaging with Wattpad?

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive with narrative inquiry approach using an in-depth semi-structured interview as the primary data collection instrument. Narrative inquiry is a qualitative research approach that seeks to understand individuals' lived experiences by examining the stories they create and share, based on the idea that personal narratives are central to how people make sense of and communicate their experiences (Barkhuizen et al., 2024; Clandinin et al., 2018; Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002; Sonday et al., 2020). The interview was designed to explore the participant's experiences, perceptions, and reflections regarding their vocabulary learning and reading engagement through the Wattpad platform. The instrument was developed based on the research questions and consisted of two main sections: (1) reading habits and motivation, (2) perception and experiences with English vocabulary development while reading on Wattpad.

Each section contained several open-ended questions that encouraged the participant to elaborate on personal experiences and insights.

In total, the interview guide included 15 open-ended questions. These questions aimed to uncover how learner's Wattpad reading habits reflect her motivation to read in English and how she perceives her vocabulary development as a result of that engagement. The session lasted approximately 60 minutes, providing sufficient time for the participant to discuss her experiences comprehensively while allowing the researcher to probe for clarification or elaboration when necessary. The interview was conducted in English, recorded with the participant's consent, and later transcribed verbatim for analysis. The questions can be seen in the table below.

Table 1. Interview Questions

Category	Questions
Reading Habits and Motivation	1) Since when did you start reading stories on Wattpad?
	2) What made you interested in using Wattpad as a reading platform?
	3) What kinds of stories do you usually read on Wattpad?
	4) How often do you read on Wattpad, and for how long in each session?
Experience with English Vocabulary while Reading (Vocabulary Learning Process)	5) When reading in English, do you often encounter unfamiliar words? Can you describe how you deal with them?
	6) Have you ever learned new English words or phrases from Wattpad stories? Can you give some examples?
	7) Has Wattpad helped you understand how certain words or phrases are used in real-life situations?
	8) How do you feel about the language style used in Wattpad stories (e.g., slang, idioms, informal language)?

Reflection and Vocabulary Use (Participant's Perception of Vocabulary Development)	9) Do you think reading Wattpad stories has improved your English vocabulary? Why or why not?
	10) Have you ever used new words you learned from Wattpad in writing or speaking activities?
	11) How do you remember and retain the new vocabulary that you encounter?
	12) Have you noticed any changes in your confidence or fluency when using English since you started reading Wattpad?
Academic and Personal Impact	13) Do you think your Wattpad reading habit contributes to your academic performance in English? How?
	14) What do you think is the biggest benefit of reading Wattpad stories in English?
	15) Would you recommend Wattpad as a vocabulary learning tool to other students? Why or why not?

The data of this research consisted of a single in-depth interview transcript with one participant. The selection of only one subject was determined through purposive sampling, which is appropriate when the researcher aims to gain deep insights from an information-rich case that meets specific inclusion criteria (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The participant was purposefully chosen because she met all the required characteristics relevant to the study's aims: (1) a student who has actively read English stories on Wattpad for at least six months, (2) has experienced noticeable vocabulary development through Wattpad engagement, (3) demonstrates good English literacy proficiency as reflected in her academic performance and (4) is willing to share in-depth experiences through interviews and personal reflections.

Data collection followed an ethically approved procedure to ensure the credibility and integrity of the findings. Prior to the interview, the participant was

informed of the research purpose, confidentiality, and voluntary participation rights. After consent was obtained, the interview was conducted face-to-face by the researcher and audio-recorded for accuracy. During the interview, follow-up questions and prompts were used to encourage elaboration, reflection, and clarification, consistent with qualitative interviewing techniques that emphasize rapport and depth (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). The recorded interview was transcribed manually to ensure the researcher's full immersion in the data, as recommended by Braun & Clarke (2006).

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a flexible qualitative method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning within textual data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Thematic analysis was selected because it allows for both descriptive and interpretive engagement with data, suitable for exploring the participant's perceptions and lived experiences regarding vocabulary learning through Wattpad. To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, the researcher conducted member checking by sharing the interview data with the participant to verify for validation. A prolonged engagement was also applied to maintain consistent interaction with the participant throughout the research period.

RESULTS

Reading Habits and Motivation

The participant described several ways Wattpad contributed to her vocabulary growth. She mentioned that reading English stories exposed her to many new words, especially when she first started:

Excerpt 4: “Yes, especially when I first started reading in English. Now I still find new words, but maybe not as many as before.”

She explained that she used different strategies to understand unfamiliar words, including guessing meaning from context, using translation tools, and keeping notes:

Excerpt 5: “First, I try to guess the meaning from the sentence. If I still don’t get it, I use Google Translate or a dictionary. But I don’t stop for every word, only the important ones.... I keep a note in my phone where I list the words and their meanings.”

She also mentioned that she tried applying the new words she learned in her daily activities:

Excerpt 6: “... I also try to make sentences with them.... I try (using the new words), yes. Especially in class or when doing assignments in English. Sometimes I also use them when texting my friends in English.”

According to her, reading on Wattpad helped her build a wider range of vocabulary, including slang, idioms, casual expressions, and natural phrasing:

Excerpt 7: “I feel like my vocabulary has improved a lot. I know more casual and everyday words now. I also learned slang, idioms, and how native speakers usually express things in writing.”

She provided examples of the kinds of words and expressions she learned:

Excerpt 8: “I learned phrases like 'cut to the chase', 'I'm beat' for being tired, or 'spill the tea.' I also picked up adjectives like 'sassy', 'clingy', and verbs like 'tease', 'snap', and many more.”

She noted that some of the vocabulary she learned was useful in speaking, including presentations and daily interactions:

Excerpt 9: Yes, especially in speaking. Sometimes I also use them when doing presentations or just casual conversations with my friends. The words that I've found on Wattpad, for example is "Let's jump right in" to start the presentation."

She expressed that Wattpad made learning English enjoyable and natural:

Excerpt 10: "I just want to say that Wattpad has been a fun way for me to improve my English. It doesn't feel like studying, but I learn a lot."

She also felt more confident when dealing with academic English tasks:

Excerpt 11: "I feel more confident when writing essays or answering reading comprehension questions."

She perceived Wattpad as more practical compared to textbooks, since the vocabulary she encountered was commonly used in real-life contexts:

Excerpt 12: "Definitely. Wattpad feels more natural. Textbooks sometimes teach words that I rarely use. But with Wattpad, I learn words that I see used in real situations, so I remember them better."

She further shared that everyday expressions in Wattpad helped her develop her language awareness:

Excerpt 13: "I think reading on Wattpad really helps me improve my vocabulary and language awareness. Since they (most of the stories) are written in everyday English, I often learn new words or expressions that sound more natural than the ones I get from textbooks. (Because the context is clear) It's easier for me to understand and remember them."

Excerpt 14: “It makes me more aware of how language works in different situations, like how the tone changes between characters or how writers use certain words to express emotions. It (Wattpad) has made my English feel more natural and expressive.”

The participant also acknowledged certain challenges. One challenge was misinterpreting the meaning when relying too heavily on context:

Excerpt 15: “Yeah, sometimes I do misinterpret the meaning (of a word) because I rely too much on context. (To overcome this problem) I usually double-check by looking it up online, by searching how it’s used in other examples. That really helps me understand the meaning.”

She also mentioned that some Wattpad stories contained grammatical inaccuracies, prompting her to double-check:

Excerpt 16: “Also, there are stories with bad grammar, so I need to be careful not to follow the wrong structure or spelling. (To overcome this challenge) I try to compare what I read there with what I’ve learned in class or just look it up on the internet. So even though there are challenges, I think it actually trains me to be more critical and aware of correct language use.”

DISCUSSION

The participants’ reflections reveal a dynamic relationship between reading motivation, vocabulary development, and language awareness in the context of digital reading on Wattpad. This discussion interprets the findings based on several theoretical perspectives.

Wattpad Contribution towards Motivation in Reading in English

The reading practices of young people continually adapt with their engagement in digital platforms, reflecting changes in language preferences, access

to both local and global literature, and their overall personal development. This aligns with Krashen (2009) input hypothesis, which emphasizes that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible and meaningful input slightly beyond their current proficiency level.

The participant showed a gradual transformation in her reading experience, moving from mother tongue language to global literary exposure. Initially she was drawn to stories in Indonesian, then her transition to English texts indicates that there was a desire for broader cultural engagement. The daily reading routine, especially at night, highlights a strong intrinsic motivation and the establishment of reading as a habitual practice. Furthermore, it suggests that online platform like Wattpad not only provide entertainment but also function as a learning space where readers can improve their language proficiency, intercultural awareness, and increase motivation through consistent engagement. The habit of reading illustrates what Pitoyo (2020) identifies as the transformation of reading from a formal activity into a personalized literacy practice, supported by accessibility and convenience in digital spaces. This daily engagement indicates a shift toward intrinsic motivation, as the participant chooses to read voluntarily and incorporates it into leisure time, aligning with Salikin et al. (2017) finding that intrinsic motivation plays a crucial role in encouraging consistent reading behaviors among Indonesian EFL learners.

In examining learners' reading habits and vocabulary development, motivation emerges as a crucial factor that drives their engagement with English texts. Motivation can be broadly categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic types, each influencing how learners interact with reading materials and sustain language

learning. Extrinsic motivation arises from external influences, such as peers, teachers, or social trends, that encourage learners to begin reading. For instance, some participants were initially drawn to Wattpad because of social interaction and peer influence. Over time, this external stimulus often evolves into intrinsic motivation, where learners continue reading out of genuine interest and enjoyment in the stories themselves (Salikin et al., 2017).

The participant's statement highlights the initial social dimension of reading motivation, where peer influence plays a central role in fostering interest and engagement with Wattpad. Curiosity, triggered by conversations with peers, acted as the catalyst for her initial engagement, aligning with the notion that extrinsic motivation often precedes and eventually develops into intrinsic motivation (Hanah et al., 2020; Pitoyo, 2020; Salikin et al., 2017; Sultan et al., 2020). In this case, peer discussion served as an external stimulus that encouraged exploration, consistent with the statement by Seventilova (2024) that emphasizes how social and environmental factors significantly affect young people's reading behaviors.

As the participant discussed her experiences of reading on Wattpad, it became evident that motivation evolved over time, from curiosity and social influence to sustained engagement driven by personal enjoyment and perceived learning benefits. The participant explained that her consistent reading habits were not only shaped by interest in the stories but also by the platform's contribution to her English learning.

Her reflection illustrates a meaningful shift from extrinsically motivated reading to intrinsically motivated engagement, where the participant began to

associate reading with both pleasure and self-improvement. Initially using Wattpad as a source of entertainment, she later recognized its educational potential, confirming findings by Al Falaq et al. (2021) that Wattpad serves a two-fold purpose, as a platform for entertainment and as an effective space for informal language learning. The discovery that reading could simultaneously be enjoyable and beneficial reflects the natural development of autonomous motivation, a factor central to sustaining literacy engagement among EFL learners (Indrayadi, 2021).

The participant's emphasis on "interesting stories" and "casual language" underscores Wattpad's strength in providing authentic and comprehensible input, aligning with Krashen (2009) Input Hypothesis. Moreover, this participant's experience exemplifies the principle of reading for pleasure as a foundation for language development, as highlighted by Schmitt (2008), who argued that higher levels of exposure to language through enjoyable reading support vocabulary development and overall proficiency. The finding also resonates with Zhou (2024) argument that extensive digital reading encourages incidental vocabulary learning, where repeated encounters with new words in engaging contexts lead to natural language growth. Through continuous reading, the participant likely absorbed new lexical items subconsciously, a process that contributes to long-term vocabulary retention and fluency.

Participant's Perception of Vocabulary Development as a Result of Engaging with Wattpad

The participant perceived her vocabulary development on Wattpad as a gradual, multifaceted process shaped by both cognitive and affective dimensions of

reading. She believed that her growth emerged through interconnected stages that involved learning new words, applying strategies independently, using vocabulary productively, becoming more linguistically aware, and engaging critically and emotionally with the stories she read.

Vocabulary Learning Stages

The process of vocabulary learning among EFL learners typically involves three interrelated stages: discovering, acquiring, and implementing the new vocabulary (Krashen, 2009; Nation, 2001; Schmitt & McCarthy, 1998). The first stage, discovering, occurs when learners encounter unfamiliar words during reading and begin to notice their form and meaning within context. The second stage, acquiring, involves understanding and retaining those words through repeated exposure or contextual inference. Finally, implementing refers to the active use of newly learned vocabulary in communication or writing, solidifying long-term retention. In the context of digital reading environments like Wattpad, these stages occur organically, as readers continuously engage with authentic language use and contextualized expressions in diverse narratives.

The participant's evolving experience in vocabulary acquisition reflects a shift from frequent encounters with unfamiliar words to a stage of linguistic familiarity and confidence. At the early stage of her engagement with Wattpad, encountering new words was frequent, aligning with the finding phase of vocabulary learning (Schmitt, 2008). As her exposure increased, she gradually developed strategies for contextual inference and recognition, reducing the number of unknown words over time, an indication of progress toward vocabulary mastery.

This process exemplifies what Krashen (2009) described as incidental vocabulary learning, in which learners unconsciously acquire lexical knowledge through repeated, meaningful exposure rather than deliberate memorization.

The participant's description also aligns with the findings of Haque et al (2024), who noted that digital reading environments foster autonomous vocabulary learning by providing multimodal exposure and opportunities for independent discovery. Wattpad allows learners to infer word meaning naturally from dialogues, emotions, and plot development, an approach supported by Nagodavithana & Premaratne (2021), who found that contextual guessing significantly enhances retention compared to direct translation. Furthermore, this finding aligns with the notion that sustained exposure to English texts leads to a cumulative vocabulary effect, where each reading experience reinforces earlier learning (Nation, 2001).

The participant's long-term engagement with English stories on Wattpad provides consistent reinforcement of both high-frequency and context-specific vocabulary. This pattern is consistent with research by Zhou (2024) and Krashen (2009), who argue that extensive and enjoyable reading creates the optimal conditions for long-term lexical growth. Similarly, Al Falaq et al (2021) and Apriyani (2020) emphasize that Wattpad's balance between entertainment and learning encourages persistence and reduces the cognitive pressure typically associated with formal vocabulary study. The participant's decreasing frequency of encountering new words suggests that her receptive vocabulary breadth has expanded, indicating effective internalization of previously learned lexical items.

Strategies and Autonomy

The participant's response demonstrates an evolving use of metacognitive learning strategies, beginning with contextual inference before relying on external tools. Zhu et al (2024) emphasize the importance of incidental online reading in vocabulary development. The development of participants' ability to infer contextually corresponds with Nation (2001) and Krashen (2009) claims that vocabulary use within context enables comprehension as well as vocabulary growth. This approach reflects what Nagodavithana & Premarathne (2021) identified as a key strategy in effective vocabulary learning, where readers infer meaning based on context rather than memorizing isolated words. Her selective use of translation tools, focusing only on important words, also indicates a level of strategic autonomy. As noted by Haque et al (2024), proficient vocabulary learners often manage cognitive load by prioritizing words relevant to meaning-making instead of pausing for every unfamiliar term.

Additionally, her habit of keeping a digital note of new vocabulary shows a deliberate effort to reinforce retention, a step that aligns with what Sutrisna (2021) calls active consolidation. This behavior demonstrates awareness of how memory and repetition support long-term vocabulary development. By combining contextual guessing, selective translation, and personal documentation, the participant exemplifies a self-regulated learning process, where technology serves as a facilitator for vocabulary acquisition rather than a distraction (Dewi & Roysa, 2024).

Productive Vocabulary Use

In the vocabulary learning process, one crucial step after understanding a new word is using it actively in communication. Through practice, learners transition from recognition to mastery, transforming passive vocabulary into active, usable language. The participant described how she intentionally applies the words she learns from Wattpad in various contexts.

The participant's conscious effort to internalize and apply vocabulary knowledge demonstrates what Schmitt (2008) identifies as deep processing, the active manipulation of new words to enhance retention and recall. By creating sentences and using new vocabulary in different situations, she engages in meaningful language use that goes beyond memorization. Such behavior reflects the productive stage of vocabulary learning, where learners begin to integrate lexical items into speech and writing, reinforcing memory through repeated use (Nation, 2001).

The participant's use of new words in both academic and informal contexts highlights her adaptive learning behavior. According to Haque et al (2024), applying vocabulary in authentic settings helps learners solidify linguistic competence and confidence. Her initiative to use new expressions in texting also aligns with the finding by Sutrisna (2021) that shows how informal communication contributes to fluency and spontaneous recall. This demonstrates how Wattpad not only introduces learners to new words but also encourages them to apply these words naturally.

Her efforts to use the vocabulary she acquired from Wattpad in multiple settings affirm that digital reading platforms can foster independent learning habits and meaningful vocabulary application. Such engagement aligns with Krashen (2009) stating that language acquisition is most effective when learners are motivated and exposed to authentic, context-rich input that they can actively transform into output.

Linguistics Awareness

The participant's perceived growth in lexical range and pragmatic competence indicates that Wattpad provided meaningful exposure to authentic English. Her mention of "casual and everyday words" as well as "slang and idioms" suggests acquisition of context-bound vocabulary, which is often overlooked in formal instruction. This finding aligns with Al Falaq et al (2021), who emphasized that Wattpad functions as both an entertainment platform and a language-learning tool, exposing learners to colloquial, contemporary language. Such authentic exposure contributes to what Krashen (2009) terms comprehensible input, which fosters natural acquisition rather than rote memorization.

The participant's ability to recognize and internalize idiomatic expressions shows that extensive reading plays a crucial role as a source of incidental vocabulary learning (Zhou, 2024). By engaging with diverse story genres and writing styles, she absorbed not only individual words but also the subtleties of meaning and usage, skills that Schmitt (2008) links to deeper lexical processing. Dewi & Roysa (2024) also note that Wattpad's casual and narrative-driven format helps readers intuitively grasp linguistic patterns used by native speakers.

Wattpad provides incidental exposure to idiomatic and expressive vocabulary, which learners might rarely encounter in traditional EFL materials. The participant's recall of multiple examples shows not only awareness but also retention, indicating that these items have moved from passive recognition toward active understanding. This corresponds with the idea that extensive and enjoyable reading fosters natural acquisition of common and idiomatic expressions (Zhou, 2024). Similarly, Krashen (2009) argues that when learners are engaged in voluntary reading, they subconsciously absorb patterns of meaning, collocation, and usage, as seen in the participant's ability to recall phrases and word types across categories.

The participant's familiarity with idioms and expressive words such as "sassy" or "clingy" also reveals growing pragmatic and cultural competence. As Schmitt & McCarthy (1998) explain, vocabulary knowledge is not only about form and meaning but also about appropriateness and usage across social contexts. Through Wattpad, the participant gains insight into how native speakers convey emotions, attitudes, and humour, aligning with the concept of transmedia literacy by Tirocchi (2018), where learners acquire language as part of cultural participation. Dewi & Roysa (2024) further note that reading contemporary digital fiction exposes readers to modern linguistic trends, helping them adapt to evolving forms of English communication.

Wattpad encourages communicative vocabulary learning, where language acquisition extends beyond comprehension into practical usage. The participant's example of using "Let's jump right in" as an opening phrase in academic contexts,

demonstrates awareness of discourse patterns common among native speakers. Such pragmatic transfer illustrates what Nation (2001) describes as productive vocabulary use, where learners internalize not only word meaning but also its communicative function and tone. Similarly, Schmitt (2008) notes that the active use of newly learned expressions in speech solidifies retention and enhances fluency through repetition and contextual reinforcement.

The participant's use of Wattpad-acquired vocabulary in both formal and informal contexts also underscores contextual flexibility, a sign of deeper lexical mastery. This finding aligns with Haque et al (2024), who observed that learners engaged with digital reading platforms tend to transfer learned vocabulary into real-life interaction, thus improving both spoken fluency and confidence. Moreover, exposure to natural, conversational English on Wattpad enables learners to reproduce authentic expressions in real communication (Dewi & Roysa, 2024; Paringja & Fatriana, 2024). By practising these phrases in academic presentations and friendly chats, the participant demonstrates an evolving ability to adjust register and tone appropriately.

The participant's statement shows that learning through Wattpad blurs the line between study and leisure, an idea that echoes with the concept of free voluntary reading, where meaningful and enjoyable exposure leads to subconscious language acquisition (Krashen, 2009). Her experience also supports the view that exposure to authentic materials fosters pragmatic ability and sociolinguistic awareness (Fridland & Pavese, 2021).

Her statement highlights the participant's growing academic self-efficacy, showing that consistent engagement with Wattpad has not only enhanced her vocabulary knowledge but also improved her ability to perform in academic English contexts. Her confidence in writing and comprehension aligns with findings by Haque et al (2024), who noted that digital reading platforms enhance linguistic awareness and analytical reading skills through repeated exposure to varied sentence structures and contextual vocabulary. Similarly, Zhou (2024) asserts that extensive reading develops not only lexical knowledge but also textual understanding, skills that directly support writing and comprehension tasks.

Beyond academic outcomes, vocabulary development through Wattpad also contributes to learners' personal growth and language awareness (Arimbi & Daulay, 2024; Grabielle Nidar & Monteza, 2024). As learners read authentic stories, they develop an intuitive sense of how words, tone, and meaning function in real communication. This awareness shapes not only vocabulary recall but also how learners perceive and engage with English as a living, dynamic language. The participant reflected on how Wattpad reading has enhanced both her vocabulary and sensitivity to natural language use.

The participant's learning experience on Wattpad extends into metalinguistic awareness, where she not only acquires new words but also recognizes how authentic context shapes meaning and tone. Her preference for "everyday English" reflects a shift toward naturalistic learning, consistent with the claim that authentic and comprehensible input enhances both fluency and intuition in language use (Krashen, 2009). Similarly, Haque et al (2024) emphasize that

digital platforms like Wattpad provide meaningful exposure that nurtures learners' ability to interpret real-world communication patterns, an essential component of language awareness.

The participant's statement that "the context is clear" illustrates her understanding of contextual learning, where vocabulary is remembered and internalized through situational meaning rather than rote memorization. This observation aligns with findings by Schmitt (2008) and Zhou (2024) that words learned within rich narrative contexts are easier to retain and apply appropriately. Her recognition that Wattpad stories feel more "natural" than textbook examples also supports the claim that authentic materials strengthen pragmatic competence, allowing learners to perceive subtleties in register, expression, and emotional tone (Fridland & Pavese, 2021).

The participant grows pragmatic and stylistic awareness, the ability to recognize how language shifts depending on purpose, audience, and emotion. Her observation about tone and emotional expression further reinforces the view that exposure to authentic discourse fosters sociolinguistic competence, enabling learners to interpret meaning beyond vocabulary (Fridland & Pavese, 2021). Likewise, Zhou (2024) and Schmitt (2008) emphasize that narrative-based reading supports deeper comprehension by linking linguistic form to emotional context.

The participant's comment that her English now feels "more natural and expressive" also suggests internalized learning, where repeated exposure to authentic input has refined her intuitive grasp of rhythm, tone, and phrasing. Dewi & Roysa (2024) describe this as a key strength of Wattpad, as it mirrors real-life

communication patterns that encourage learners to experiment with language creatively. This naturalization of expression aligns with natural approach introduced by Krashen (2009), where meaningful and enjoyable input leads to subconscious mastery of form and fluency.

Furthermore, by checking how words are used across multiple examples, the participant demonstrates an advanced awareness of semantic variation, recognizing that meaning depends on context and usage. This behavior aligns with what Schmitt (2008) described as the depth of vocabulary knowledge, where learners progress from knowing a word's definition to understanding its connotation, collocation, and pragmatic value. Her experience confirms that digital reading environments promote analytical and adaptive thinking, enhancing both lexical accuracy and self-confidence in language interpretation.

Affective Engagement

The participant's sense of empowerment also connects to the affective filter hypothesis, which suggests that enjoyment and confidence lower psychological barriers to language learning, leading to greater fluency and performance (Krashen, 2009). By reading English stories that she finds interesting, the participant likely reduced anxiety and increased motivation, factors that directly influence reading comprehension and written expression (Brown & Lee, 2015).

Her statement suggests that Wattpad provides more relevant and memorable exposure to English than traditional textbooks, which often emphasize decontextualized or infrequent vocabulary. This observation supports the input hypothesis by Krashen (2009), which argues that natural and meaningful input leads

to deeper language acquisition. Similarly, Fridland & Pavese (2021) assert that exposure to authentic materials enhances learners' pragmatic awareness, helping them internalize how words function in genuine communication rather than isolated exercises. This example also shows the need for critical literacy in engagement with user-generated text, a viewpoint supported by Talib (2018), who argues that the specific nature of digital environments requires a critical, multimodal approach to literacy to better prepare users for assessing and interpreting information quality as well as context presented online.

Critical Literacy and Reflection

This response reveals the participant's critical literacy skills, the ability to question, evaluate, and cross-check information while reading. Her effort to verify correctness shows an awareness of linguistic accuracy and a willingness to bridge informal and formal learning. This aligns with the concept of transmedia literacy, where learners navigate between entertainment and education critically and reflectively (Tirocchi, 2018). Likewise, Dewi & Roysa (2024) observe that when learners encounter imperfect content online, they often develop stronger self-regulation and linguistic discernment.

The participant's reflection that these challenges demonstrate transformative learning, where difficulties become part of the learning process. As Sutrisna (2021) notes, reflection upon errors strengthens metalinguistic awareness and reinforces accurate language production. Thus, even when faced with imperfect input, the participant uses these challenges as opportunities to refine her

understanding, turning potential setbacks into catalysts for deeper, more conscious language development.

The participant shows strategic awareness in dealing with the limitations of contextual inference. While relying on context is a common and useful vocabulary-learning strategy, it may sometimes lead to misinterpretation, especially when idiomatic or figurative language is involved (Nagodavithana & Premarathne, 2021). Her approach of verifying usage online indicates self-monitoring and metacognitive regulation, traits that Haque et al. (2024) identify as essential for autonomous digital learners. This reflective habit shows that Wattpad encourages learners to become active problem-solvers who take ownership of their understanding.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to investigate how reading on Wattpad reflects learner's motivation to read in English and contributes to her perceived vocabulary improvement. The findings reveal that Wattpad functions as a meaningful digital space where reading, language learning, and personal engagement intersect. The participant's experience demonstrates that motivation to read initially stemmed from social factors but evolved into intrinsic motivation sustained by enjoyment and perceived learning benefits. Vocabulary learning occurred organically through the process of finding, acquiring, and implementing new words within authentic story contexts. Over time, the participant not only expanded her vocabulary range but also developed pragmatic sensitivity, stylistic awareness, and communicative confidence.

The study advances current understanding of informal digital literacy by illustrating how platforms like Wattpad serve as contextualized learning environments where learners can interact with real language and transfer that knowledge to academic and social settings. Importantly, the participant's reflective strategies in addressing challenges such as misinterpretation and inaccurate input underscore the development of critical digital literacy, an essential skill in the modern language-learning landscape.

This study suggests that integrating authentic, learner-driven reading platforms into EFL curricula can enhance students' motivation, autonomy, and vocabulary mastery more effectively than traditional textbook-based instruction. Future research should expand this inquiry by involving multiple participants or combining qualitative and quantitative methods to examine how sustained Wattpad engagement influences long-term vocabulary retention and overall language proficiency. Such research could further validate Wattpad's potential as a bridge between entertainment, literacy, and formal English learning in digital contexts.

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ARTICLE II

2.1 Publication Information

- 2.1.1 Article Title** : A Pragmatic Analysis of Illocutionary Acts and Identity Construction in KATSEYE's EP *SIS (Soft Is Strong)*
- 2.1.2 Journal Name** : IDEAS: Journal of Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature
- 2.1.3 ISSN** : p-ISSN: 2338-4778/e-ISSN: 2548-4192
- 2.1.4 Accreditation** : National (SINTA 3)
- 2.1.5 DOI/Article Link** : (Scheduled to be published later this year)
- 2.1.6 Volume/Issue/Year** :
- 2.1.7 QR Code** :

2.2 Final Published Version

ABSTRACT

Rogas, Yasin Ali. 2026. *A Pragmatic Analysis of Illocutionary Acts and Identity Construction in KATSEYE's EP SIS (Soft Is Strong)*. Final Project. Study Program of English Language Education, Department of Languages and Arts Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Palangka Raya. Supervisor I: Ristati, Supervisor II: Dellis Pratika.

Keywords: illocutionary acts, speech acts, song lyrics, identity construction, KATSEYE

This study investigates the types and functions of illocutionary acts in KATSEYE's debut EP, *SIS (Soft Is Strong)*, and examines how these acts contribute to identity construction and thematic progression across its five tracks. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed using Searle's (1979) theory of illocutionary acts. The data were analyzed at the utterance level using the interactive model of data analysis proposed by Miles et al. (2014). The analysis identified 67 unique utterances comprising four types of illocutionary acts: assertive, expressive, directive, and commissive, while no declarative acts were identified. Assertive acts were the most frequent, with 40 occurrences (59.7%), followed by expressive acts with 16 (23.9%), directive acts with seven (10.4%), and commissive acts with four (6.0%). Across the tracks, the functions of these acts varied. These findings show that illocutionary acts contribute to identity construction not only through their categories but also through the different communicative functions they perform across the EP. The study also shows that examining the tracks as a connected text provides insight into how illocutionary patterns support thematic progression.

ABSTRAK

Rogas, Yasin Ali. 2026. *A Pragmatic Analysis of Illocutionary Acts and Identity Construction in KATSEYE's EP SIS (Soft Is Strong)*. Tugas Akhir. Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa dan Seni, Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Palangka Raya. Pembimbing I: Ristati, Pembimbing II: Dellis Pratika.

Kata Kunci: tindakan ilokusi, tindakan wacana, lirik lagu, konstruksi identitas, KATSEYE

Penelitian ini mengkaji jenis dan fungsi tindakan ilokusi dalam EP debut KATSEYE, *SIS (Soft Is Strong)*, serta menelaah bagaimana tindakan-tindakan tersebut berkontribusi pada pembentukan identitas dan perkembangan tematik di seluruh lima lagunya. Pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif digunakan dengan mengacu pada teori tindakan ilokusi Searle (1979). Data dianalisis pada tingkat ucapan menggunakan model interaktif analisis data yang diusulkan oleh Miles dkk. (2014). Analisis tersebut mengidentifikasi 67 ucapan unik yang terdiri dari empat jenis tindakan ilokusi: asertif, ekspresif, direktif, dan komissif, sementara tidak ditemukan tindakan deklaratif. Tindakan asertif merupakan yang paling sering muncul, dengan 40 kejadian (59,7%), diikuti oleh tindakan ekspresif sebanyak 16 (23,9%), tindakan direktif sebanyak tujuh (10,4%), dan tindakan komissif sebanyak empat (6,0%). Di seluruh trek, fungsi-fungsi tindakan ini bervariasi. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa tindakan ilokusi berkontribusi pada konstruksi identitas tidak hanya melalui kategorinya, tetapi juga melalui berbagai fungsi komunikatif yang dilakukannya di seluruh EP. Studi ini juga menunjukkan bahwa menganalisis trek-trek tersebut sebagai teks yang terhubung memberikan wawasan tentang bagaimana pola-pola ilokusi mendukung perkembangan tematik.

A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN KATSEYE’S EP *SIS (SOFT IS STRONG)*

INTRODUCTION

Language functions not only as a medium for conveying information but also as a means of performing actions in social interaction. This functional perspective forms the basis of pragmatics, which examines how meaning is constructed through context, communicative intention, and interpretation rather than through linguistic forms alone (Birner, 2025; Cole, 1978; Cutting, 2002; Leech, 2016; Mey, 2001). From this perspective, utterances are understood as actions that speakers perform to achieve particular communicative purposes. Austin (1962) distinguishes three dimensions of speech acts—locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts—among which illocutionary acts occupy a central position because they represent the speaker's intended communicative force. Searle (1979) classifies illocutionary acts into five categories: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. Although this taxonomy provides a systematic framework for identifying communicative intentions, the interpretation of illocutionary force depends not only on grammatical form but also on contextual and discourse-level factors that shape how utterances function in communication.

One discourse context in which this issue is particularly relevant is song lyrics. Unlike spontaneous conversation, song lyrics are carefully constructed texts that present an implied speaker, an implied audience, and a communicative situation. Although they are produced in artistic settings rather than in face-to-face

interaction, they still perform communicative actions through language. As Birner (2025) and Mey (2001) argue, pragmatic meaning emerges from the relationship between linguistic choices and their social context rather than from literal meaning alone. Consequently, song lyrics may be examined as discourse in which speakers express attitudes, negotiate interpersonal relationships, and position themselves through language use. Rather than functioning as isolated expressions, the utterances within a collection of songs may also interact to create broader thematic and discursive meanings.

From this perspective, speech acts are viewed not just as linguistic categories but as pragmatic tools that allow speakers to shape their identities. Increasingly, identity is understood as something constructed through discourse rather than a fixed personal trait (Bamberg, De Fina, & Schiffrin, 2011; Fisher, Evans, Forbes, Gayton, & Liu, 2020; Goffman, 2021; Linaker, 2023). Speakers continually position themselves by expressing beliefs, evaluations, commitments, emotions, and interpersonal relationships through their communicative choices. Different illocutionary acts therefore contribute to identity construction in different ways. Assertive acts may position speakers by expressing beliefs, evaluations, or self-definitions; directive acts negotiate relationships between speakers and audiences by inviting, requesting, or instructing; commissive acts project future-oriented commitments and intentions; whereas expressive acts reveal emotional stance and personal evaluation. Examining these functions across an extended discourse makes it possible to understand not only what speakers say but also how

recurring communicative actions contribute to the construction and development of identity.

Previous studies investigating illocutionary acts in song lyrics have primarily focused on identifying and classifying speech-act categories within individual songs or relatively limited datasets (Jarassri & Phennapha, 2020; Milantina, Arifin, & Rois, 2025; Sari, 2024). These studies generally report the frequency of particular illocutionary types, with assertive and expressive acts often emerging as the dominant categories. Similarly, Gawa, Munir, & Setiawan (2023) found that assertive acts predominate in selected songs by Taylor Swift, while Zaki (2025) reported the predominance of assertive acts in songs from *The Greatest Showman*. Although these studies demonstrate that song lyrics contain diverse illocutionary forms, their analyses largely remain descriptive, emphasizing categorical classification rather than examining how speech acts function collectively within larger discourse. Consequently, relatively little attention has been given to how illocutionary acts interact across multiple songs to construct identity and thematic development within a cohesive musical work.

This limitation is particularly relevant when examining contemporary debut projects, as albums and extended plays (EPs) are increasingly treated as cohesive artistic works whose sequencing and thematic continuity contribute to meaning that goes beyond individual songs. Such works often portray evolving identities through recurring themes, interpersonal positioning, and changing communicative stances across tracks. KATSEYE's debut EP, *SIS (Soft Is Strong)*, provides an appropriate context for examining this phenomenon, as its five tracks collectively explore

themes of confidence, relationships, autonomy, vulnerability, and self-exploration. Rather than treating each song as an independent text, the EP can be interpreted as a connected discourse in which identity is progressively constructed through recurring pragmatic choices and thematic continuity.

Based on these considerations, this study examines the use of illocutionary acts in KATSEYE's debut EP, *SIS (Soft Is Strong)*, by treating the EP as a cohesive discourse rather than a collection of individual songs. Specifically, the study aims to (1) identify the types of illocutionary acts realized across the five tracks, (2) examine how these illocutionary acts function as pragmatic resources for expressing stance, agency, relational positioning, and identity construction, and (3) analyze how the distribution and interaction of these illocutionary acts contribute to thematic progression throughout the EP. By addressing these objectives, the study extends previous research beyond speech-act classification toward a discourse-level understanding of how language use contributes to identity construction in contemporary song lyrics.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to examine the realization of illocutionary acts in the lyrics of KATSEYE's debut EP, *SIS (Soft Is Strong)*. A qualitative descriptive approach was selected because the study seeks to interpret how utterances function pragmatically within their discourse context rather than to measure variables statistically (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Razavieh, 2010; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The analysis was grounded in speech act theory, particularly the concepts of illocutionary force and the classification of

illocutionary acts (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1979). The study focuses on how utterances perform communicative actions and how these actions contribute to identity construction and thematic progression across the EP's five tracks.

The data source of this study was KATSEYE's debut EP, *SIS (Soft Is Strong)*, which consists of five tracks: *Debut*, *Touch*, *My Way*, *I'm Pretty*, and *Tonight I Might*. The primary data consisted of the complete lyrics of all five songs, obtained from the physical copy of the EP. They were cross-checked with the official lyric releases available on KATSEYE's Spotify page to ensure textual accuracy. Both sources were compared prior to analysis, and the verified lyrics were used consistently throughout the coding and analysis process.

The unit of analysis in this study was the utterance. Rather than treating every lyric line as a separate unit, an utterance was defined as a segment of discourse that expresses a single complete communicative intention within its lyrical context. Accordingly, an utterance could consist of: a complete lyric line expressing one communicative act; multiple consecutive lines expressing a single communicative intention; or a clause functioning independently as one pragmatic act. Repeated choruses and recurring lyric lines were treated as a single analytical unit when they conveyed the same communicative intention. Consequently, identical lyric repetitions were coded only once, whereas utterances with different communicative functions or contextual meanings were treated as separate units. This procedure enabled the analysis to focus on the range of illocutionary acts realized in the EP rather than on the frequency of lyrical repetition.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña (2014), consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification as iterative and interconnected processes. During data condensation, the lyrics were segmented into utterances, and each utterance was examined according to its linguistic form, contextual meaning, and communicative purpose. Each category was identified using operational criteria adapted from Searle (1979). Because no declarative acts were identified in the dataset, the analysis focused on the remaining four categories.

Table 1. Operational Definitions and Linguistic Indicators of Illocutionary Acts

Illocutionary Type	Operational Definition	Linguistic Indicators
Assertive	Utterances through which the speaker commits to the truth of a proposition by stating, describing, evaluating, or claiming something.	Statements, evaluations, beliefs, self-definitions, judgments
Directive	Utterances intended to influence the hearer's future action through requests, invitations, commands, advice, or suggestions.	Imperatives, invitations, requests, instructions
Commissive	Utterances committing the speaker to a future course of action or expressing future intention.	Promises, commitments, intentions, willingness
Expressive	Utterances expressing the speaker's emotional or psychological state toward a situation.	Feelings, appreciation, regret, frustration, emotional evaluation

After classification, the coded data were organized into coding tables containing five analytical components: utterance, illocutionary type, linguistic indicator, contextual meaning, and functional interpretation. This organization enabled systematic comparison both within individual tracks and across the EP as a whole. During data display, frequencies of each illocutionary category were summarized for every track before patterns across tracks were examined. Finally, conclusion drawing and verification involved interpreting how the distribution and

interaction of illocutionary acts contributed to identity construction and thematic progression throughout the EP.

RESULT

The analysis identified 67 unique utterances across the five tracks of KATSEYE's *SIS (Soft Is Strong)*. The utterances were classified according to the taxonomy of illocutionary acts (Searle, 1979). Repeated lyric lines, including recurring choruses, were coded only once when they conveyed the same communicative function, as the analysis focused on unique utterances rather than the frequency of lyrical repetition. The findings show that four categories of illocutionary acts—assertive, expressive, directive, and commissive—are realized throughout the EP, whereas no declarative acts were identified. The distribution is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Overall Distribution of Illocutionary Acts

No	Type	Frequency	Percentage
1	Assertive	40	59.7%
2	Expressive	16	23.9%
3	Directive	7	10.4%
4	Commissive	4	6.0%
5	Declarative	0	0.0%
Total		67	100%

As shown in Table 2, assertive acts are the most frequent category, accounting for 40 of the 67 utterances (59,7%); expressive acts constitute the second-largest category with 16 utterances (23,9%), followed by directives with 7 utterances (10,4%) and commissives with 4 utterances (6,0%). No declarative acts were identified. The predominance of assertives is also evident across individual tracks, although the relative distribution of the other categories varies according to

the communicative content of each song. To demonstrate how the utterances were classified, Table 3 presents representative examples from the five tracks.

Table 3. Representative Coding Evidence

Track	Representative Utterance	Type	Contextual Meaning	Analytical Justification
Debut	"I don't need nobody tryna tell me how to run it."	Assertive	Rejecting external control.	The speaker presents a claim about her independence.
Touch	"Thought about you way too much."	Expressive	Expressing emotional preoccupation.	The speaker expresses emotional vulnerability (attachment).
My Way	"Yeah, I tried to fit in your box of pink Barbie dolls...."	Assertive	Unsuccessful attempt to meet an external standard.	Rejects external standards and embraces individuality.
I'm Pretty	"Heartbreak, move on."	Directive	Urging movement beyond emotional pain.	The imperative construction functions as an attempt to encourage action.
Tonight I Might	"Tonight I might do it a little different than I did before."	Commissive	Indicating a tentative intention to change behavior.	The speaker commits herself to a possible future action.

Table 4 shows the analysis of *Debut*, in which 13 unique utterances were identified. Assertive acts were predominant, with 10 occurrences (76.9%), followed by two directives (15.4%) and one expressive act (7.7%). No commissive or declarative acts were identified.

Table 4. Classification of Illocutionary Acts in Track 1: *Debut*

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Assertive	10	76.9%
Directive	2	15.4%
Expressive	1	7.7%
Total	13	100%

Table 5 presents the analysis of *Touch*, which contains 20 unique utterances, making it the track with the most coded utterances. Assertives account for 10

utterances (50.0%), expressives for 7 (35.0%), and directives for 3 (15.0%). No commissive or declarative acts were identified.

Table 5. Classification of Illocutionary Acts in Track 2: *Touch*

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Assertive	10	50.0%
Expressive	7	35.0%
Directive	3	15.0%
Total	20	100%

Table 6 summarizes the 13 unique utterances in *My Way*. Assertives account for 10 utterances (76.9%), while expressives account for 3 (23.1%); no directives, commissives, or declaratives were identified.

Table 6. Classification of Illocutionary Acts in Track 3: *My Way*

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Assertive	10	76.9%
Expressive	3	23.1%
Total	13	100%

The analysis of *I'm Pretty*, presented in Table 7, identified 12 unique utterances, with no declarative acts. Five are assertive (41.7%), four are expressive (33.3%), two are directive (16.7%), and one is commissive (8.3%).

Table 7. Classification of Illocutionary Acts in Track 4: *I'm Pretty*

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Assertive	5	41.7%
Expressive	4	33.3%
Directive	2	16.7%
Commissive	1	8.3%
Total	12	100%

Table 8 provides an overview of the illocutionary acts distribution in *Tonight I Might*. Assertive acts account for 5 utterances (55.6%), commissive acts for 3 (33.3%), and expressive acts for 1 (11.1%), and no directives were identified.

Table 8. Classification of Illocutionary Acts in Track 5: *Tonight I Might*

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Assertive	5	55.6%
Commissive	3	33.3%
Expressive	1	11.1%
Total	9	100%

DISCUSSION

This section discusses how illocutionary acts are realized across the five tracks in the KATSEYE's EP *SIS (Soft Is Strong)*. The analysis examines patterns of language use across the tracks and considers what these patterns reveal about meaning and identity construction. Although each track is examined individually, the songs are interpreted as a connected whole, allowing the discussion to move beyond identifying illocutionary act types to examining their contribution to thematic development and the construction of the speaker's identity throughout the EP. This approach highlights both the distinctive characteristics of each track and the thematic progression that connects them.

Track 1: Debut

Debut contains 13 unique utterances, of which 10 are assertives (76.9%), two are directives (15.4%), and one is expressive (7.7%). The high proportion of assertives is closely tied to lexical and structural choices that describe the speaker's identity. In "*I don't need nobody tryna tell me how to run it,*" the negative expression "*don't need nobody*" rejects external control. In "*Know just how to make a scene, just me, myself, my best friends,*" the speaker presents herself as capable of handling things on her own. Similarly, "*I don't need no cookie cutter, perfect ordinary*" rejects the idea of conforming to a standard or ordinary image.

These utterances therefore construct a sense of independence by clearly articulating what the speaker accepts and rejects, repeatedly positioning her as capable of determining her own actions and resisting externally imposed norms.

This pattern aligns with the role of assertives identified in previous studies of song lyrics. Gawa et al. (2023) found assertive acts to be the most frequent category in Taylor Swift's life-lesson songs, including acts such as stating, informing, rejecting, and insisting. Jarassri & Phennapha (2020) likewise found assertive acts to be the most common in encouragement songs and noted that these acts frequently convey truth, experience, and storytelling. In *Debut*, however, these acts are mainly used to make statements about independence, ability, and rejection of external control. This supports Bamberg et al.'s (2011) view that identity can be constructed through discourse, particularly in how speakers demonstrate agency and position themselves relative to others. Chen & Qiu (2025) similarly show that assertive acts can serve as linguistic resources for constructing pragmatic identity.

The two directives add an interpersonal function. "*Wanna pull up on us? Check in at the gate and come through*" contains an interrogative invitation followed by imperative forms. The phrases "*check in*" and "*come through*" clearly indicate that the speaker is asking the listener to take action and specify how that participation will occur. Within Searle (1979) framework, directives are speech acts through which a speaker attempts to get a hearer to perform an action, including invitations and requests. In this track, the directive also supports the assertives' confident identity, as the speaker determines how the audience can participate in the interaction.

The expressive act “*Uh-huh, I like it, it's simple as that*” adds a clear positive evaluation. The word “*like*” directly expresses approval, consistent with Searle's (1979) description of expressive acts. Overall, *Debut* primarily uses assertive acts to present independence, ability, and rejection of conformity, while directives help create a controlled interaction with the audience.

Track 2: Touch

Touch contains 20 unique utterances, including 10 assertives (50.0%), seven expressives (35.0%), and three directives (15.0%). Assertives remain the most frequent type, but the large number of expressives gives the track a more emotional focus than *Debut*. The assertives mainly evaluate another participant's behavior and the development of a relational narrative. This is evident in “*Cause you been so out of touch,*” “*You could've had my love, but you been so out of touch,*” and “*Yeah, you went and messed it up.*” These statements portray the other person as emotionally distant and responsible for problems in the relationship. The repeated phrase “*out of touch*” and the verb “*messed*” convey a negative evaluation, while “*You could've had my love*” frames the relationship as a lost possibility. These linguistic choices position the speaker through judgment of the other participant rather than through autonomous self-description, as in *Debut*.

One particularly important case is “*First, you're gonna say you're sorry, promise you won't do it anymore.*” Although the word “*promise*” is typically associated with commissive acts, the speaker is not making a promise in this utterance. Instead, she predicts what the other person will say. It is therefore classified as an assertive prediction. This example shows that speech-act

classification should be based on the function of the whole utterance rather than on a single word (Searle, 1979).

This finding remains compatible with previous studies that identified assertive acts as the most frequent type in song lyrics (Gawa et al., 2023; Jarassri & Phennapha, 2020; Sari, 2024). What differs is the propositional focus of the dominant acts. In *Debut*, assertives primarily describe independence and ability, whereas in *Touch*, they are mainly used to evaluate interpersonal behavior and attribute responsibility. This illustrates the contextual nature of illocutionary force, as the function of an utterance may vary according to the context in which it occurs (Mey, 2001; Mey & Brown, 2009).

Expressive acts are also substantially more frequent in this track. “*Thought about you way too much,*” “*Monday, I was dreaming 'bout ya,*” “*Tuesday, I was waiting near the phone,*” and “*Thursday, I was losing interest*” directly express thoughts, expectations, and shifts in interest. These examples fit the definition of expressives because they convey the speaker’s psychological state (Searle, 1979). This pattern aligns with the findings of Milantina et al. (2025), whose analysis of Sabrina Carpenter’s *Don’t Smile* identified expressive acts as the most frequent category, followed by assertives and directives. In *Touch*, however, expressives remain secondary to assertives. Their comparatively high frequency nonetheless shifts the discourse toward explicit emotional evaluation, as evidenced by the lexical choices “*thought,*” “*dreaming,*” “*waiting,*” “*getting bored,*” and “*losing interest.*”

The directives further reshape interpersonal positioning through imperative constructions that specify the actions expected of the hearer. *"Come up with a different story"* rejects the hearer's previous explanation, *"...say something I ain't heard before"* requests a different response, and *"If I ever call again, don't press ignore"* sets a condition for future communication. Compared with the invitation in *Debut*, these directives are more corrective and restrictive, as they place limits on future interaction.

Track 3: My Way

My Way contains 13 unique utterances, comprising 10 assertives (76.9%) and three expressives (23.1%), with no directives or commissives identified. The assertives center on personal choice and rejection of external expectations. In *"At least I can say that I did it my way"* and *"Yeah, I did it my way,"* the repeated phrase *"my way"* places personal choice at the center of each utterance. *"Gas pedal like 95, flyin' eastbound, hands up, no slowing me down"* uses a metaphor to convey unrestrained movement. These utterances create a strong sense of personal agency through repeated references to the speaker's choices and actions.

The theme of nonconformity is also clear in *"Yeah, I tried to fit in your box of pink Barbie dolls, found I still couldn't win them all."* As an assertive utterance, the speaker frames conformity as a past experience through the verbs *"tried"* and *"couldn't,"* while the metaphor *"fit in your box"* represents an external standard the speaker attempted to meet. The possessive determiner *"your"* places the standard outside the speaker, and the metaphor *"box"* frames that standard as a fixed space into which the speaker is expected to fit. The contrast between *"tried"*

to fit” and “*couldn't win them all*” therefore marks a shift from attempted conformity to recognition of its limits. Similarly, “*Thick hair, big curls and they all stare*” uses descriptive noun phrases to foreground the speaker’s distinctive physical appearance, while “*they all stare*” introduces others’ attention and places the speaker in relation to a social audience. These lexical and grammatical choices construct a contrast between fitting in and standing out.

The three expressive acts add a reflective dimension through different linguistic choices. “Pickin' apart, what's wrong with me?” is a rhetorical question that focuses on self-doubt to express internal conflict. Rhetorical questions can serve functions beyond asking for information and can strengthen implied meaning (Chen & Qiu, 2025). “*Oh, never wanna do what I'm told, even if I mess it all up and make a million mistakes*” uses the negative-frequency adverb “*never*” to emphasize refusal and the passive construction “*what I'm told*” to foreground the speaker’s refusal to be directed by others. Meanwhile, “*even if I mess it all up*” shows that the speaker accepts the possibility of failure rather than giving up her personal choice. Finally, “*I kinda miss being young, dumb and naive, 'cause now I realize growing up ain't what it seems*” contrasts the past with the present through the use of “*miss*” and “*now I realize.*” The words “*young, dumb and naive*” describe the former self, while “*ain't what it seems*” shows her changed understanding of growing up. These expressions reflect self-questioning, resistance, and evolving self-awareness centered on personal choice, consistent with the finding that expressive acts in song lyrics can reveal vulnerability, inner struggle, and emotional reflection (Milantina et al., 2025).

Track 4: I'm Pretty

I'm Pretty contains 12 unique utterances, consisting of five assertives (41.7%), four expressives (33.3%), two directives (16.7%), and one commissive (8.3%). The track strongly focuses on appearance and how emotional pain is presented or concealed. The assertive utterances present the speaker's experiences, actions, and attitudes, consistent with Searle's (1979) definition of assertives as acts through which speakers present something as the case. In "*New face, new song*," the repeated word "*new*" frames change as visible and tied to a fresh outward identity. In "...*I dry my tears with makeup*," "*tears*" represents emotional pain, while "*makeup*" links that pain to outward appearance. Similarly, in "*I'm not afraid to cover up, put on a front, put on a face and show it off*," the phrases "*cover up*," "*put on a front*," and "*put on a face*" describe ways of hiding what is felt, while "*show it off*" shifts the focus to the image presented to others. Together, these linguistic choices create a contrast between the publicly presented appearance and the emotions kept beneath the surface, highlighting the difference between what is shown to others and what is felt internally.

The expressive acts complement these assertions by explicitly articulating the concealed emotional state. "*You'd never know that I hurt*," "*Pretty sure I'm not done healing*," "*Pretty sure that I'm still breathing*," and "*Pretty far from feeling, pretty sure I'm not done healing*" contain lexical items directly associated with hurt, healing, and feeling. Their expressive force is therefore evident in the speaker's explicit articulation of emotional states, consistent with the characterization of expressives (Searle, 1979). This pattern aligns with the findings of Milantina et al.

(2025), who found that expressive acts can be especially prominent in lyrics centered on emotional experience, although expressives are not the dominant category in *I'm Pretty*. Unlike the audience-oriented directives in *Debut* and the interpersonal directives in *Touch*, the directives in this track, "*Heartbreak, move on*" and "*Try to hold on,*" are directed toward the self. Their imperative forms indicate that the speaker is telling herself what action to take. The commissive "*I'll meet someone, then back to square one*" adds a future-oriented statement, but it appears only once. Thus, the track mainly combines assertions about appearance with expressions of emotional experience, while the directives and commissive provide smaller supporting functions.

Track 5: Tonight I Might

Tonight I Might contains nine unique utterances, comprising five assertives (55.6%), three commissives (33.3%), and one expressive (11.1%). Assertives remain the most frequent type, but commissives are more common in this track than in the other four tracks. The track therefore gives greater attention to possible future actions while still relying mainly on self-description. The assertives describe the speaker's behavior and personality. "*There's a hundred reasons why I show up late and then I don't talk,*" "*I'm such an overthinker, loner, the one who misses all the jokes,*" and "*I'm not the perfect example...*" directly describe personal habits and limitations. Lexical labels such as "*overthinker,*" "*loner,*" and "*not the perfect example*" explicitly construct the speaker's self-description.

The commissives then shift the focus toward possible future actions, as seen in "*Tonight I might do it a little different than I did before,*" and "*Do all of the shit*

I know I didn't do when I was a kid....,” which present actions the speaker may undertake. According to Searle (1979), these utterances can be classified as commissives because they concern the speaker’s future actions, a function also identified in Zaki's (2025) analysis of commissive acts in song lyrics, particularly through expressions of determination and future-oriented action. In *Tonight I Might*, however, the future orientation is less categorical because the speaker repeatedly uses the modal construction “*might*,” which reduces the force of commitment by presenting the future action as possible rather than definite. The commissives in this track therefore differ from more categorical forms of commitment, such as promises or vows. This future-oriented possibility is connected to the expressive act, “*But I'm tired of focusing on all the things I don't got*,” where the adjective “*tired*” directly expresses dissatisfaction with the speaker’s present situation, while the subsequent commissives introduce possible actions in response to that dissatisfaction. The sequence thus moves from self-description and dissatisfaction toward possible future action.

Overall Thematic Progression Across the EP

Analyzing the five tracks together reveals that assertives are the predominant type of illocutionary act in the EP, but their roles vary across tracks. In *Debut*, they mainly express independence, ability, and rejection of conformity; in *Touch*, they evaluate interpersonal behavior; in *My Way*, they focus on personal choice and resisting external expectations; in *I'm Pretty*, they describe outward appearance and ways of hiding emotional pain; and in *Tonight I Might*, they serve as explicit self-descriptions and self-assessments. Although assertives are the most

common category overall, their content and functions differ throughout the EP. This supports prior research identifying assertives as the most frequent lyric category (Gawa et al., 2023; Jarassri & Phennapha, 2020; Sari, 2024). However, this study emphasizes that frequency alone does not explain their role; their significance depends on the meaning and context within each track. This finding is vital for understanding identity, as Bamberg et al. (2011) note, because identity is constructed through discourse—how speakers portray agency, differentiate themselves, and navigate change.

Expressive acts show a different pattern. They are limited in *Debut*, become much more frequent in *Touch*, remain secondary in *My Way*, become almost as frequent as assertives in *I'm Pretty*, and appear only once in *Tonight I Might*. The lexical evidence also shifts across the sequence: positive evaluation in *Debut*; thought, anticipation, disappointment, and shifting interest in *Touch*; self-questioning and retrospection in *My Way*; hurt and incomplete healing in *I'm Pretty*; and dissatisfaction with negative self-focus in *Tonight I Might*. The pattern, therefore, shows that emotional expression plays different roles at different points in the EP.

The directives also show a clear change in their function. In *Debut*, they control audience participation; in *Touch*, they set conditions for interpersonal interaction; and in *I'm Pretty*, they are directed toward the speaker herself. This progression indicates that directives evolve from managing interactions with others to regulating the speaker's own behavior. These shifts are linked to how speech acts shape relationships and pragmatic identity (Chen & Qiu, 2025). Consequently,

directive force not only reflects attempts to influence actions but also highlights changes in interactional focus throughout the EP.

Commissive acts are generally the least common and only appear in *I'm Pretty* and *Tonight I Might*. However, their presence becomes more prominent in the final two tracks. The single commissive in *I'm Pretty* discusses a potential future relationship, while the three commissives in *Tonight I Might* consider possible behavioral changes. This shift emphasizes a stronger focus on future actions in the latter part of the EP. This pattern aligns with the role of commissives as acts related to future intentions or actions (Searle, 1979).

Taken together, these patterns support the view that identity in the EP is constructed through language and varies with the situation represented in each track. Bamberg et al. (2011) emphasize agency, the relationship between self and others, and change as important parts of identity construction through discourse. Chen & Qiu (2025) similarly show that speech acts can serve as language resources for constructing pragmatic identities. In *SIS (Soft Is Strong)*, these identity-related patterns are evident in the repeated use of statements about independence, evaluations of relationships, expressions of emotion, self-directed instructions, and statements about possible future actions.

Overall, the five tracks can be understood as a connected sequence in which different aspects of identity become increasingly visible through changing patterns of illocutionary acts. Previous studies have shown that assertive acts are prevalent in song lyrics, whereas other types of speech acts serve distinct communicative purposes (Gawa et al., 2023; Jarassri & Phennapha, 2020; Milantina et al., 2025;

Sari, 2024; Zaki, 2025). The present findings extend these observations by showing how the functions and configurations of illocutionary acts vary across a connected EP, contributing to identity development and thematic progression from one track to the next. Thus, the thematic progression of *SIS (Soft Is Strong)* is realized in part through changes in the configuration of illocutionary force. Identity is consequently constructed through the cumulative interaction of assertive, expressive, directive, and commissive across the EP rather than through a single recurring speech-act function.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the types and functions of illocutionary acts in KATSEYE's *SIS (Soft Is Strong)* and their contributions to identity construction and thematic progression across its five tracks. The analysis identified 67 unique utterances comprising assertive, expressive, directive, and commissive acts, with no declarative acts; assertives were the most frequent (40; 59.7%), followed by expressives (16; 23.9%), directives (7; 10.4%), and commissives (4; 6.0%). Across the tracks, *Debut* mainly used assertives to establish independence and confidence; *Touch* combined assertive evaluation with more frequent emotional expressions; *My Way* emphasized personal choice and resistance to conformity; *I'm Pretty* combined statements about outward appearance with expressions of hurt and incomplete healing; and *Tonight I Might* combined self-description with tentative intentions for future action. These findings show that illocutionary acts contribute to identity construction by presenting independence, evaluating relationships, expressing emotions, regulating actions, and expressing future possibilities. In

contrast, the changing functions of the acts contribute to the thematic connection among the tracks. The study contributes to research on speech acts in song lyrics by examining not only their categories and frequencies but also their functions across a connected EP. However, the findings are limited to *SIS (Soft Is Strong)* and therefore should not be generalized to other artists, genres, or forms of musical discourse. The analysis is also limited to the written lyrics and does not consider musical, visual, or performance elements. Future studies may examine larger or comparative datasets and include musical, visual, and performance elements to explore meaning and identity construction further.

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ARTICLE III

3.1 Publication Information

- 3.1.1 Article Title** : Constructing Male Immaturity through Figurative Language: A Stylistic Analysis of Sabrina Carpenter’s “Manchild”
- 3.1.2 Journal Name** : Journal of English Language and Education (JELE)
- 3.1.3 ISSN** : p-ISSN: 2502-4132/e-ISSN: 2597- 6850
- 3.1.4 Accreditation** : National (SINTA 4)
- 3.1.5 DOI/Article Link** : <https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v11i4.2848>
<https://mail.jele.or.id/index.php/jele/article/view/2848>
- 3.1.6 Volume/Issue/Year** : Volume 11, No. 4 (2026)
- 3.1.7 QR Code** :



3.2 Final Published Version

ABSTRACT

Rogas, Yasin Ali. 2026. *Constructing Male Immaturity through Figurative Language: A Stylistic Analysis of Sabrina Carpenter's "Manchild"*. Final Project. Study Program of English Language Education, Department of Languages and Arts Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Palangka Raya. Supervisor I: Ristati, Supervisor II: Dellis Pratika.

Keywords: figurative language, stylistic analysis, gender representation, masculinity

This study examines how figurative language constructs male immaturity in Sabrina Carpenter's *Manchild*. The song was selected because it has attracted widespread public attention for its critical portrayal of male behavior through rich figurative expressions, making it an appropriate text for stylistic analysis. Using a qualitative descriptive design, the study applies Perrine's and Rozakis' classifications of figurative language alongside Leech and Short's stylistic theory to analyze both the types and functions of figurative expressions. The data consist of lyric lines collected through documentation and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings reveal that irony is the dominant device (36.8%), followed by hyperbole (31.6%) and sarcasm (15.8%), while metaphor, paradox, and ambiguity occur less frequently. Rather than functioning independently, these devices interact to construct a critical representation of male immaturity. Irony serves as the primary evaluative strategy, whereas hyperbole and sarcasm intensify criticism through exaggeration and ridicule. This study contributes to stylistic and linguistic research by integrating figurative language classification with functional analysis and demonstrating how figurative language constructs gendered meaning and social criticism in contemporary popular music.

ABSTRAK

Rogas, Yasin Ali. 2026. *Constructing Male Immaturity through Figurative Language: A Stylistic Analysis of Sabrina Carpenter's "Manchild"*. Tugas Akhir. Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa dan Seni, Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Palangka Raya. Pembimbing I: Ristati, Pembimbing II: Dellis Pratika.

Kata Kunci: bahasa kiasan, analisis gaya bahasa, representasi gender, maskulinitas

Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana bahasa kiasan membentuk citra ketidakdewasaan laki-laki dalam lagu "*Manchild*" karya Sabrina Carpenter. Lagu ini dipilih karena telah menarik perhatian publik secara luas berkat penggambaran kritisnya terhadap perilaku laki-laki melalui ekspresi kiasan yang kaya, sehingga menjadikannya teks yang tepat untuk analisis gaya. Dengan menggunakan desain deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini menerapkan klasifikasi bahasa kiasan dari Perrine dan Rozakis serta teori gaya dari Leech dan Short untuk menganalisis jenis dan fungsi ekspresi kiasan. Data terdiri dari baris-baris lirik yang dikumpulkan melalui dokumentasi dan dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa ironi merupakan perangkat dominan (36,8%), diikuti oleh hiperbola (31,6%) dan sarkasme (15,8%), sedangkan metafora, paradoks, dan ambiguitas muncul lebih jarang. Alih-alih berfungsi secara mandiri, perangkat-perangkat ini saling berinteraksi untuk membangun representasi kritis terhadap ketidakdewasaan laki-laki. Ironi berfungsi sebagai strategi evaluatif utama, sedangkan hiperbola dan sarkasme memperkuat kritik melalui pembesaran dan ejekan. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada penelitian stilistik dan linguistik dengan mengintegrasikan klasifikasi bahasa kiasan dengan analisis fungsional serta menunjukkan bagaimana bahasa kiasan membangun makna berbasis gender dan kritik sosial dalam musik populer kontemporer.

**CONSTRUCTING MALE IMMATURITY THROUGH
FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE: A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS
OF SABRINA CARPENTER’S “*MANCHILD*”**

INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental means of human communication that enables individuals to express ideas, emotions, experiences, and social meanings across various contexts. Beyond serving as a vehicle for exchanging information, language also functions as a social resource through which people construct identities, negotiate relationships, and interpret the world around them (Hall, 2021). In everyday interaction, speakers use language not only to convey messages but also to express attitudes, establish interpersonal connections, and achieve communicative goals. From a functional perspective, meaning is created through the interaction between linguistic forms and their social contexts, making language an essential element of effective communication (Gee, 2022). Furthermore, language reflects cultural values and social practices, allowing individuals to participate in communities and shape shared understandings through discourse (Swarniti, 2022). As communication increasingly occurs through digital media and popular culture, the study of language has become increasingly important for understanding how meaning, identity, and social relationships are constructed in contemporary society (Tagg, 2024).

In artistic and literary works, the function of language becomes more complex and intensified as language use is not restricted to its literal function but

also extends to more imaginative and stylistically complex uses to create aesthetic effects and convey deeper meanings (Eagleton, 2008; Leech, 2015). One key linguistic feature that enables such complexity is figurative language. Figurative language refers to expressions whose meanings extend beyond their literal interpretation, allowing speakers or writers to convey abstract, emotional, or evaluative meanings more effectively (Perrine & Arp, 1992; Rozakis, 1995). Figurative language is widely used across literary genres, including poetry, prose, and song lyrics, to enhance emotional intensity and communicative impact (Anggraini et al., 2022; Gea et al., 2025).

Song lyrics represent a distinctive form of literary expression that combines linguistic creativity with musical elements. In vocal music, language serves as a medium of expression, interacting with sound to convey meaning (Denac, 2022). Similarly, both music and language offer creative possibilities for expressing human experience and emotion (Sloboda, 1985). In contemporary popular music, song lyrics frequently employ figurative language to communicate complex emotional states, personal experiences, and social messages (Nur Fadilla et al., 2023). Unlike ordinary language, lyrics rely heavily on imaginative expressions to intensify meaning and engage listeners. As a result, figurative language in song lyrics plays a crucial role in shaping how meanings are constructed and interpreted, particularly in relation to themes such as relationships, identity, and emotional experience.

A substantial body of research has examined figurative language in song lyrics. For instance, studies on contemporary music have identified various types of figurative language and demonstrated how these devices contribute to the

expression of emotions and thematic content. Research on Taylor Swift's songs reveals that figurative language conveys deep emotional experiences and personal narratives (Fatikha & Masykuroh, 2022). Other studies by Saraswati & Skolastika (2025) show that figurative expressions can enhance emotional intensity and represent complex relational dynamics. Similarly, investigations of Taylor Swift's song albums indicate that figurative language is widely used to create imagery, emphasize feelings, and construct meaning beyond literal interpretation (Santika & Syafryadin, 2023). Research on Ariana Grande's songs identified various types of figurative language, with metaphor as the most dominant form (Nur Fadilla et al., 2023). Other research on Adele's songs also demonstrates that figurative language, particularly hyperbole, intensifies emotional expression and enhances the aesthetic quality of the lyrics (Hanisfi et al., 2022).

Despite these contributions, existing studies exhibit several limitations. Many of them focus primarily on identifying and categorizing types of figurative language without sufficiently explaining how these devices function together to construct meaning. While some research considers contextual meaning, it often lacks a systematic stylistic framework that links linguistic form to interpretive function. Relatively few studies explicitly address how figurative language contributes to the construction of social identities, particularly in relation to gender and masculinity. This is a significant gap, considering that language, especially in popular music, plays a central role in shaping and negotiating gender representations. As highlighted in studies of gender and popular music, artistic

expressions can both reflect and challenge dominant gender norms and power relations (Werner, 2024).

The present study addresses these gaps by focusing on Sabrina Carpenter's song "*Manchild*," which centers on the representation of male immaturity in romantic relationships. The term "manchild" itself encapsulates a paradoxical identity, referring to an adult male who exhibits childlike immaturity. This notion resonates with broader cultural discussions of masculinity, where contemporary society has been observed to blur the boundaries between adulthood and immaturity, producing what has been described as the "boy-man" phenomenon (Cross, 2008). Furthermore, psychological perspectives suggest that emotionally immature individuals often demonstrate limited self-awareness, responsibility, and relational competence (Gibson, 2023). These perspectives indicate that the concept of male immaturity is not only personal but also socially constructed and culturally embedded.

From a theoretical standpoint, such constructions can be understood through discourse and performativity. Gender identities are not fixed but are continuously produced through repeated linguistic and social practices (Butler, 2015). In this context, figurative language becomes a crucial mechanism for articulating and evaluating identities. Therefore, analyzing figurative language in "*Manchild*" provides insight into how linguistic choices construct and reinforce representations of male immaturity.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine how figurative language functions in Sabrina Carpenter's "*Manchild*." Specifically, the objectives

of this research are: (1) to identify and classify the types of figurative language used in the song, and (2) to analyze how these figurative devices function stylistically to construct the representation of male immaturity. By integrating figurative language classification with stylistic analysis, this study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how meaning is constructed in song lyrics, particularly in relation to gendered identity and social critique.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design, which focuses on exploring and interpreting the meaning embedded in textual data rather than measuring variables numerically (Ary et al., 2010; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research is characterized by its focus on understanding meaning, context, and interpretation through descriptive data. More specifically, this research adopts a document or content analysis approach, since the primary data source is a written text (Ary et al., 2010). This approach is appropriate because the research seeks to identify types of figurative language and examine how these linguistic features function stylistically to construct the concept of male immaturity.

The theoretical framework of this study integrates two complementary perspectives. First, the classification of figurative language is based on the frameworks proposed by Perrine & Arp (1992) and Rozakis (1995), which provide systematic categories such as metaphor, irony, hyperbole, and sarcasm. These classifications enable the identification of various figurative devices present in the lyrics. Second, the study employs the stylistic approach proposed by Leech & Short (2015) to analyze how these figurative expressions function in constructing

meaning. This stylistic framework focuses on how linguistic choices produce aesthetic, emotional, and evaluative effects within a text. By combining these frameworks, the study not only identifies the types of figurative language but also explains how they contribute to the construction of the representation of male immaturity in the song.

The data of this study consist of the lyrics of the song “*Manchild*” by Carpenter (2025). The data collection and analysis follow the interactive model, which consists of three concurrent activities: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles et al., 2014). In the data condensation phase, the researcher selected and focused the data by identifying lyric lines that contain figurative language. Each identified unit was then coded according to the classification of figurative language, using a layered coding approach that distinguishes between primary and secondary devices where necessary. In the data display phase, the coded data were organized into a structured table to facilitate systematic analysis and pattern identification. This display allows the researcher to observe relationships between figurative language types and their stylistic functions. In the conclusion drawing and verification phase, the researcher interpreted the data to explain how figurative language constructs the representation of male immaturity. The conclusions were continuously reviewed and verified by re-examining the data and ensuring consistency between the findings and the theoretical frameworks.

To ensure the study's trustworthiness, several criteria based on qualitative research principles outlined by Miles et al. (2014) were applied, including

credibility, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was achieved through careful, repeated examination of the data and the consistent application of established theoretical frameworks. Dependability was ensured by providing a clear, systematic description of the research procedures, enabling the study to be evaluated or replicated by other researchers. Confirmability was maintained by grounding all interpretations in the data, supported by explicit lyric excerpts and systematic coding. These measures ensure that the findings are not based on subjective assumptions but are firmly rooted in the textual evidence and analytical process.

FINDINGS

This section presents the study's findings from the analysis of figurative language in the song “*Manchild*” by Sabrina Carpenter. Each lyric line was treated as a unit of analysis, and a dominant-type coding approach was applied while still acknowledging the possibility of layered figurative meanings. The results are presented in tabular form to provide a clear and systematic overview of the types of figurative language identified, along with their corresponding stylistic functions.

Table 1. Figurative Language and Stylistic Functions in “Manchild”

No	Lyric Excerpt	Primary Device	Secondary Devices	Stylistic Function
1	You said your phone was broken, Just forgot to charge it	Irony	Sarcasm, Understatement	Evaluative exposure
2	Whole outfit you're wearing / God, I hope it's ironic	Sarcasm	Irony	Ridicule
3	Did you just say you're finished? / Didn't know we started	Irony	Sarcasm	Dismissal

4	It's all just so familiar / Baby, what do you call it?	Irony	Sarcasm	Patterned evaluation
5	Stupid / Or is it / Slow? / Maybe it's / Useless? / But there's a cuter word for it, I know	Sarcasm	Hyperbole, Irony	Intensification through ridicule
6	Manchild	Metaphor	—	Characterization
7	Why you always come a-running to me?	Hyperbole	—	Dependency emphasis
8	Fuck my life	Hyperbole	—	Emotional intensification
9	Won't you let an innocent woman be?	Irony	Sarcasm	Self-positioning
10	Never heard of self care	Sarcasm	Irony	Criticism
11	Half your brain just ain't there	Hyperbole	Sarcasm, Understatement	Ridicule
12	Why you always come a-running / Taking all my loving from me?	Hyperbole	Metaphor	Emotional amplification
13	Why so sexy if so dumb?	Paradox	Sarcasm, Hyperbole	Contrastive ridicule
14	And how survive the Earth so long?	Hyperbole	Sarcasm	Mockery
15	If I'm not there, it won't get done	Hyperbole	Sarcasm	Self-elevation
16	I choose to blame your mom	Irony	Sarcasm, Metonymy	Deflection
17	Oh, I like my boys playing hard to get / And I like my men all incompetent	Irony	Sarcasm	Self-irony
18	And I swear they choose me / I'm not choosing them	Irony	Contrast	Reversal
19	Amen / Hey, men!	Ambiguity	Wordplay	Phonological foregrounding

Table 2. Frequency of Primary Figurative Language

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Irony	7	36.8%
Hyperbole	6	31.6%
Sarcasm	3	15.8%
Metaphor	1	5.3%
Paradox	1	5.3%
Ambiguity	1	5.3%
Total	19	100%

The results show that irony is the most dominant figurative device, followed by hyperbole and sarcasm. This distribution implies that the construction of meaning in the song is primarily achieved through contrastive and evaluative mechanisms rather than purely descriptive ones. Irony serves as the central strategy for highlighting the gap between expectation and reality, while hyperbole intensifies emotional and evaluative expressions. Sarcasm, although less frequent as a primary device, operates as an important reinforcing layer that sharpens the critical tone of the lyrics. Overall, the interaction of these figurative devices demonstrates that the song's meaning is constructed through a combination of contrast, exaggeration, and an evaluative stance, which collectively contribute to the representation of male immaturity.

DISCUSSION

Figurative Language as a Mechanism of Evaluation

The findings show that figurative language in “*Manchild*” functions primarily as a mechanism of evaluation rather than mere stylistic ornamentation. This is most clearly reflected in the dataset's dominance of irony. Rather than directly stating that the male figure is irresponsible or immature, the song repeatedly

exposes these traits through contradiction. For instance, statements that appear neutral on the surface are systematically undermined by contextual cues, producing a pattern of evaluative exposure. For example, the line “*You said your phone was broken, just forgot to charge it*” creates meaning by contrasting the excuse “*broken*” with the much simpler reality “*just forgot to charge it*”. This contrast highlights the person’s carelessness and presents it as something trivial rather than serious. In this way, the line reflects irony, where sarcasm is used to mock or criticize the situation (Rozakis, 1995). Similarly, the line “*Did you just say you're finished? / Didn't know we started*” further illustrates how evaluation is carried out through figurative contrast rather than direct accusation. On the surface, the speaker appears to question the status of the interaction, but the second clause immediately undermines the first clause's premise. By stating “*didn't know we started,*” the speaker implies that whatever the other person considers meaningful or complete was never significant to begin with. In both cases, evaluation emerges indirectly, through the gap between literal meaning and intended interpretation.

In stylistic terms, this pattern aligns with the foregrounding concept proposed by Leech & Short (2015), in which deviation from expected or literal meaning draws attention and intensifies interpretation. The frequent use of irony creates a sustained pattern of semantic deviation, which functions to highlight the incompetence of the male figure in the song. In these lyrics, irony consistently creates such deviation, forcing the listener to reinterpret the literal statement and recognize the underlying critique embedded within it. This supports the argument that figurative language is central to meaning construction in literary texts, as it

enables writers to convey attitudes and judgments with greater nuance (Eagleton, 2008; Leech, 2015).

This finding both aligns with and extends previous research. While earlier studies such as Nur Fadilla et al. (2023) emphasize that figurative language enhances meaning and interpretive depth beyond literal expression, they often frame this function in terms of emotional expression. For example, recent studies on song lyrics frequently highlight how figurative language conveys feelings, personal experience, or emotional intensity (Fatikha & Masykuroh, 2022; Saraswati & Skolastika, 2025). While those functions are present in many lyrical texts, the present findings indicate that figurative language in “*Manchild*” is primarily used to assess and critique rather than to express emotion. In other words, the song relies less on emotional disclosure and more on linguistic strategies that expose and judge behavior. This shows that figurative language can serve a more critical function, acting as a tool for evaluation and judgment rather than solely for emotional expression.

Construction of Male Immaturity Through Linguistic Contrast

The construction of male immaturity in the song is achieved through repeated patterns of linguistic contrast, rather than direct description. The term “*manchild*” is central to how the song constructs the idea of male immaturity, and its effect comes from the way it compresses a complex contrast into a single lexical unit. The word brings together two categories that do not normally coexist: “*man*,” associated with adulthood, maturity, and responsibility, and “*child*,” associated with immaturity, dependence, and a lack of self-control. This fusion creates a

conceptual contradiction that defines the character from the outset. This reflects what Rozakis (1995) describes as a direct metaphor, since no comparative markers such as “like” or “as” are used. Instead, the qualities of “child” are directly mapped onto “man”. As Lakoff & Johnson (2008) argue, metaphor functions as a conceptual system that structures how we understand abstract ideas. In this case, the mapping *adult is child* frames immaturity as an inherent trait rather than an occasional behavior.

This conceptualization is reinforced throughout the lyrics by repeated contrasts between expected adult behavior and the actions described. For instance, the line “*Never heard of self-care*” serves as a concise yet sharp form of evaluative criticism, and its force lies in its contrast between literal meaning and implied judgment. On the surface, the statement suggests complete ignorance, as if the addressee has no knowledge at all of what self-care is. However, in context, this is clearly not meant to be taken literally. Instead, it implies that the person behaves in ways that show a consistent lack of responsibility or awareness, particularly in managing their own affairs. The exaggeration of “never heard” intensifies the critique by presenting neglectful behavior as a total absence of understanding. The irresponsibility of the “*manchild*” is further explained through the line “*If I’m not there, it won’t get done,*” which positions the speaker as the responsible agent in contrast to the addressee’s incompetence.

This is where sarcasm becomes the primary device. As outlined by Rozakis (1995), sarcasm is a form of irony used specifically for mockery or criticism, in which the intended meaning sharply contrasts with the literal expression. In this

line, the speaker does not genuinely question the addressee's knowledge, but rather, the statement ridicules their behavior by framing it as if they are completely incapable of basic self-awareness. The effect is direct and evaluative, reinforcing the portrayal of immaturity.

Moreover, the line "*Why so sexy if so dumb?*" sharpens the construction of male immaturity by presenting a clear internal contradiction. It brings together two qualities that are not typically expected to align: "sexy," which signals attractiveness and desirability, and "dumb," which implies a lack of intelligence (Merriam-Webster, n.d.-b, n.d.-a). The tension between these two attributes creates what Perrine & Arp (1992) identify as a paradox, where seemingly incompatible ideas are placed side by side to produce meaning through contradiction. Rather than resolving this tension, the line sustains it, forcing the listener to confront the inconsistency in the character being described.

This paradox is not presented as a neutral observation. The interrogative form suggests a question, but it is not intended to elicit an answer. Instead, it functions rhetorically, expressing disbelief that such opposing qualities can coexist. This is where sarcasm becomes a secondary but crucial layer. As Rozakis (1995) explains, sarcasm often operates through irony with a clear intent to mock or criticize. In this case, the speaker uses the question format to ridicule the addressee, turning the contradiction into a point of derision rather than curiosity.

More broadly, this paradox contributes to the ongoing construction of male immaturity in the song. By highlighting a mismatch between outward appeal and intellectual or behavioral competence, the line reinforces the idea that surface-level

desirability does not compensate for underlying deficiencies. The contradiction becomes part of a larger pattern in which expected adult qualities are consistently undermined, further strengthening the portrayal of the “*manchild*” as a figure defined by inconsistency and inadequacy. In other words, they highlight a gap between the ideal image of adulthood and the reality of behavior that falls short of those standards.

Such representation resonates with broader socio-cultural discussions of masculinity. Cross (2008) identifies the emergence of the “boy-man” phenomenon, where traditional markers of adulthood are increasingly destabilized, resulting in blurred boundaries between maturity and immaturity. The song reflects and reinforces this phenomenon by presenting male immaturity as a recognizable pattern and recurring social type rather than an isolated case. At the same time, this pattern supports Ricoeur's (2003) notion of semantic tension, which explains how meaning is generated through these contradictions. The tension between “man” and “child,” or between competence and incompetence, is not resolved but sustained, allowing meaning to emerge through the interaction of opposing elements. In this sense, figurative language serves as a bridge between individual behavior and broader cultural narratives about masculinity, translating abstract social concepts into concrete linguistic expressions.

Compared to Santika & Syafryadin (2023), who emphasize metaphor as the dominant device in song lyrics, the present findings show that metaphor plays a relatively limited but conceptually central role. Instead of multiple metaphors constructing meaning, a single, condensed metaphor like “*manchild*” anchors the

analysis, while other devices, such as irony and hyperbole, reinforce it. This suggests a different stylistic strategy in which conceptual labeling is supported by evaluative contrast.

Hyperbole and Sarcasm as Intensification Strategies

According to Perrine & Arp (1992), hyperbole involves deliberate exaggeration for emphasis, and in this song, it serves to strengthen the speaker's critical stance. The lines "*Half your brain just ain't there*" and "*And how survive the Earth so long?*" demonstrate how hyperbole and sarcasm operate not merely as expressive devices but as structured strategies of intensification and evaluation. Both lines rely on extreme exaggeration: the first reduces cognitive ability to an impossible deficit, while the second questions the addressee's very capacity to function in the world. These are not literal claims but deliberate overstatements that amplify perceived incompetence. In line with Perrine & Arp's (1992) definition, hyperbole functions here as a form of emphasis; however, its role extends beyond intensification into evaluative judgment.

This use of hyperbole aligns with Hanisfi et al. (2022), who argue that exaggerated expressions in song lyrics create a dramatic effect and emphasize meaning. However, the function observed in "*Manchild*" differs in orientation. Whereas previous studies often associate hyperbole with emotional intensity or personal vulnerability, the hyperbole in this song is directed outward, constructing mockery and criticism rather than expressing emotion.

Sarcasm, alongside hyperbole, sharpens this evaluation by introducing a mocking or derisive tone. Statements that appear superficially positive are revealed

to carry negative implications, thereby reinforcing the critical perspective (Rozakis, 1995). For example, the line “*Oh, I like my men all incompetent*” appears to express preference, but the context clearly signals the opposite. The statement functions as mock approval, reinforcing criticism through inversion. Similarly, “*Never heard of self-care*” uses a seemingly neutral statement to convey strong disapproval. In both cases, sarcasm depends on the listener’s ability to recognize the gap between literal and intended meaning, making it closely related to irony but more explicitly evaluative (Rozakis, 1995). Importantly, sarcasm often operates in conjunction with irony and hyperbole, creating layered meanings that intensify the overall effect.

This pattern both aligns with and extends previous research. It supports the general claim of Nur Fadilla et al. (2023) that figurative language enhances meaning beyond literal expression, but it challenges the tendency to interpret figurative language primarily as emotional expression (Fatikha & Masykuroh, 2022; Saraswati & Skolastika, 2025). Instead, the findings demonstrate that exaggeration and sarcasm can function as tools of evaluative discourse. This is consistent with more recent studies suggesting that irony and sarcasm in song lyrics can disrupt expectations and critique social representations (Arifah et al., 2025). In “*Manchild*,” this critique is directed toward masculinity, where exaggerated incompetence undermines traditional expectations of male capability.

Layered Meaning and Interaction of Figurative Devices

Another significant finding of this study is that figurative language in “*Manchild*” operates through overlapping and interacting devices rather than through isolated categories. Many lines simultaneously exhibit multiple figurative

features, creating layered meanings. For example, the line “*You said your phone was broken, just forgot to charge it*” combines irony with a subtle form of understatement, while “*Half your brain just ain’t there*” merges hyperbole with sarcasm. These examples show that meaning is constructed through interaction rather than through single devices.

This phenomenon can be explained through Lakoff & Johnson's (2008) view, which holds that figurative language reflects interconnected conceptual systems in which multiple mappings can coexist. Similarly, Ricoeur (2003) argues that meaning emerges from the semantic tension between literal and figurative interpretations, rather than from a single, fixed meaning. The interaction between devices creates layers of meaning that cannot be fully explained by classification alone. The data in this study support these perspectives, as meaning is consistently produced through the interaction of multiple figurative devices within the same line.

Moreover, the pre-chorus “*Stupid / Or is it / Slow? / Maybe it's / Useless? / But there's a cuter word for it, I know*” incorporates sarcasm with hyperbole and irony. The line operates primarily through sarcasm, using a sequence of labels like “stupid,” “slow,” and “useless”, that reads less like genuine evaluation and more like a deliberately exaggerated, mocking judgment. This escalation in tone builds toward the closing remark, “*there’s a cuter word for it,*” which appears to soften the criticism but in fact sharpens it. By implying a gentler alternative while maintaining a clearly derisive tone, the statement intensifies the insult rather than mitigating it. This effect is reinforced through hyperbole, as the accumulation of extreme negative descriptors exaggerates the subject’s perceived shortcomings,

signaling that the intent is not a literal assessment but amplified criticism. At a structural level, irony emerges from the contrast between the phrase “*cuter word*” and the harsh language that precedes it. The suggestion of something “cute” clashes with the severity of the insults, creating a tension that underscores the speaker’s mocking intent rather than offering any real softening of the critique.

This is a strong example of foregrounding through parallelism and escalation, where the use of short, fragmented lines creates a rhythmic pattern that draws attention to form, while the cumulative structure gradually intensifies the evaluative force. Rather than delivering its impact immediately, the sequence builds toward a delayed punchline, allowing meaning to emerge through progression rather than from any single lexical item (Leech & Short, 2015).

This layered structure also explains why certain devices, such as sarcasm, appear less frequently as primary categories but remain highly significant in the overall interpretation. Sarcasm often functions as a secondary layer that intensifies or modifies the meaning produced by irony or hyperbole. Consequently, the analysis of figurative language must move beyond simple classification and account for the dynamic interaction between devices.

This finding also addresses a limitation in previous studies, which tend to focus on identifying types of figurative language without examining their interaction. Studies such as those by Anggraini et al. (2022), Gea et al. (2025) and Santika & Syafryadin (2023) provide valuable classifications but often treat figurative devices as discrete units, and do not examine how these devices interact within a single text. In contrast, the present analysis demonstrates that figurative

language functions as an integrated system, in which multiple devices work together to produce meaning, and that this interaction is essential for understanding how meaning is constructed.

Figurative Language and Gendered Representation

Beyond its linguistic and stylistic functions, figurative language in “*Manchild*” contributes to the construction of gendered representation. Through repeated use of evaluative and critical figurative expressions such as irony, hyperbole, and sarcasm, the song constructs a consistent image of masculinity characterized by immaturity and incompetence. This representation is not delivered explicitly but is built cumulatively through stylistic choices that expose behavioral patterns.

This aligns with Butler's (2015) concept of performativity, which suggests that gender identities are constructed through repeated discursive acts rather than existing as fixed attributes. In this context, the recurring use of figurative language contributes to the construction of a particular version of masculinity, one that deviates from traditional expectations of responsibility and competence. The label “*manchild*” itself, repeated throughout the song, becomes more than a descriptive term; it acts as a performative utterance that continuously reinforces the identity it names. Each ironic remark, exaggerated criticism, or sarcastic statement contributes to this construction, gradually solidifying the association between masculinity and immaturity within the song's discourse.

This representation also supports broader findings in studies of gender in popular music, which suggest that song lyrics can both reflect and challenge

dominant gender norms. As Werner (2024) argues, popular music plays a role in negotiating gender representations. The findings of this study support this view, as the song does not simply depict male immaturity but actively critiques it through linguistic strategies. In “*Manchild*,” the figurative language does not simply mirror existing stereotypes; it actively critiques them. By highlighting incompetence, dependency, and lack of self-awareness, the lyrics challenge traditional expectations of men as responsible, capable, and emotionally stable. The repeated contrast between what is expected and what is depicted creates a critical stance toward these norms, suggesting a shift in how masculinity is understood and evaluated. In doing so, the song participates in a wider discourse that questions traditional constructions of masculinity.

The portrayal of male immaturity in the song also resonates with psychological perspectives. Emotional immaturity is often associated with limited self-regulation, lack of accountability, and difficulty in maintaining balanced relationships (Gibson, 2023). These traits are consistently reflected in the lyrics, not through explicit psychological terminology but through figurative expressions that translate abstract concepts into concrete and relatable forms. For instance, hyperbole and sarcasm exaggerate these traits to make them more apparent, while irony exposes the gap between expected and actual behavior. In this way, figurative language translates psychological traits into linguistic form, making them accessible and relatable for listeners.

Importantly, the construction of masculinity in “*Manchild*” is not neutral; it is evaluative and critical. The speaker’s voice consistently positions the male figure

as lacking, while simultaneously asserting her own awareness and agency. This dynamic reflects a broader discursive shift in which female perspectives in popular music articulate critique rather than passively narrate experience. Figurative language serves as the key mechanism through which this critique is expressed, allowing the speaker to challenge and reinterpret gender roles without resorting to direct or overly explicit statements.

Overall, the findings indicate that figurative language in "*Manchild*" by Sabrina Carpenter serves not only as a stylistic device but also as a powerful tool for constructing meaning and critiquing gendered identities. Through the interaction of dominant figurative types such as irony, hyperbole, and sarcasm, the song creates a coherent and sustained representation of male immaturity, linking individual behavior to wider cultural and psychological frameworks. This demonstrates that language is not only central to shaping meaning but also participates in the construction and negotiation of social perception.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how figurative language functions in Sabrina Carpenter's *Manchild* and found that meaning is constructed primarily through evaluative and contrastive strategies rather than literal description. Irony emerges as the dominant device, supported by hyperbole and sarcasm, while metaphor, though less frequent, provides the conceptual foundation of the song. These figurative devices work together to create layered meanings by contrasting expectation with reality, competence with incompetence, and adulthood with childishness. Through these recurring oppositions, the lyrics construct a coherent

representation of male immaturity and reinforce the label “manchild” as a form of social evaluation. The findings demonstrate that figurative language functions not only to express emotions but also to deliver social criticism and construct gendered identities. By integrating figurative language classification with stylistic analysis, this study addresses the gap between identifying linguistic devices and explaining their contribution to meaning construction. Nevertheless, the analysis is limited to a single song, restricting broader generalization. Future research should examine multiple songs, artists, or genres and investigate audience interpretations of figurative language in relation to contemporary understandings of masculinity and gender representation.

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REFLECTION

Looking back on my years as a student of English Language Education at Universitas Palangka Raya, I realize that this final project means more than just fulfilling a degree requirement. It's a heartfelt reflection of how much I've grown, both as a student and as a person. When I first started college, I mostly saw the university as just a place to earn a degree. But as I went through various courses, completed assignments, participated in discussions, and worked on research projects, I realized that college isn't just about improving hard skills; it's also about developing critical thinking, sharing ideas, understanding diverse viewpoints, and responding thoughtfully to challenges. The journey here has pushed me beyond the habits and perspectives I had when I first arrived at college. There were times I doubted my abilities, felt overwhelmed by academic pressures, or wondered if I was making enough progress. Still, these moments helped me grow; I've become more open to expressing myself, to questions, and to recognizing that making mistakes is a necessary part of learning.

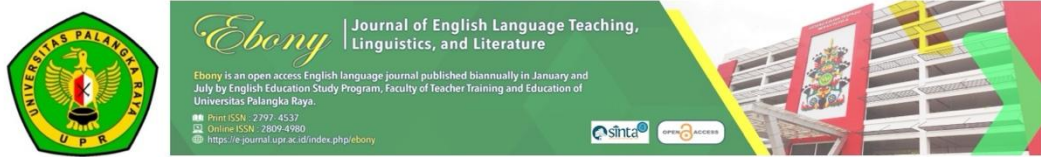
College opened my eyes to a wonderful diversity of people, each with unique personalities, ideas, and approaches to solving problems. Interacting with such a lively and diverse group taught me that personal growth isn't just about academic achievements. I've learned to stay flexible when things don't go as planned and to feel more comfortable with uncertainty. I realized that progress isn't always reflected in grades or completed assignments. Sometimes, growth shows up in smaller, meaningful ways, like feeling more confident in myself, knowing when to seek help, or persisting even when things get tough. These little changes have gradually transformed how I see myself. Completing this final project isn't just an ending; it's a milestone, one chapter closing and another opening. It's a fresh start, where I carry the knowledge and values I've gained into new adventures.

Reflecting on my time here, I realize that things didn't always unfold exactly as I imagined. I had to rethink some expectations, face challenges, and learn new things about myself along the way. These experiences showed me that growth isn't a straight line. I didn't become more confident or independent all at once; it happened gradually, through trying, failing, adjusting, and trying again. Looking back, some of the toughest moments turned out to be the most valuable for my growth. They taught me resilience; the understanding that I'll always have more to learn and skills to improve. As I finish this chapter of my studies, I see myself not as someone who has all the answers, but as someone eager to keep learning. I still have my doubts and areas to improve, but I leave this experience with a clearer sense of who I am and a deep appreciation for the journey that brought me here.

Finally, I realize that my experience here has shaped me in many meaningful ways beyond just academics. The three articles in this final project are just a small part of a much bigger story. Behind them are years of learning and adapting, all of which have helped shape the person I am today. As Ray Schleine says near the end of the movie *Uptown Girls*, “*Every story has an end. But in life, every ending is just a new beginning.*” As I close this chapter as an English Language Education student at Universitas Palangka Raya, I carry with me not only the knowledge I’ve gained but also the understanding that learning is a lifelong journey. This final project is a heartfelt reminder of where I’ve been, how much I’ve grown, and the kind of learner and person I aspire to become. I hope this ending will be the beginning of many new things, experiences, and possibilities.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Letter of Acceptance (LoA) of article 1



Letter of Acceptance (LoA)

Ref number: 0078/LoA-ebony/1/2026

EBONY: Journal of English Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature
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January 20, 2026

To:
Yasin Ali Rogas
Universitas Palangka Raya
yasinrogas@gmail.com

Subject: Acceptance of Your Article for Publication

Dear Author(s),

It is with great pleasure that we inform you of the acceptance of your article, for publication in **EBONY: Journal of English Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature**. After a rigorous review process, our editorial team and peer reviewers have determined that your work meets the standards of quality, originality, and significance required by our journal.

Manuscript Details

Title	: <i>Role of Wattpad in Vocabulary Development: A Narrative Inquiry.</i>
Author(s)	: Yasin Ali Rogas, et al.
Manuscript ID	: -
Publication Issue	: Volume 6, Number 1, January 2026

We appreciate your trust in *EBONY: Journal of English Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature* as the platform to showcase your research.

Once again, congratulation on the acceptance of your article.

Warm regards,

Dr. Iwan Fauzi, S.Pd., M.A.
Editor in Chief



Appendix 2. Letter of Acceptance (LoA) of article 2



LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

No. 10285.521/LoA-Ideas/V/2026

Dear

Yasin Ali Rogas, Ristati, Dellis Pratika
Universitas Palangka Raya

Assalamu'alaikum Warahmatullaahi Wabarakaatuh

We respectfully inform you that the editorial team has received article **ID 10285** entitled "**A Pragmatic Analysis of Illocutionary Acts and Identity Construction in the Ep Sis (Soft Is Strong) by Katseye**" and has deemed it suitable for publication in the **Volume 14 Nomor 1 June 2026** edition of Ideas Journal.

Thank you for your attention.

Wassalamu'alaikum Warahmatullaahi Wabarakaatuh



Palopo, May 21, 2026
Editor in Chief


Dr. Masruddin., SS., M.Hum.
NIP. 19800613 200501 1 005

Appendix 3. Letter of Acceptance (LoA) of article 3



Journal of English Language and Education

ISSN 2597- 6850 (Online), 2502-4132 (Print)

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Article

LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

No. 2848/JELE/VII/2026

Journal of English Language and Education (JELE)

Journal of English Language and Education (JELE) editorial team at University of Pahlawan Tuanku Tambusai (UP) declared that the manuscript with the following information:

Title : **Constructing Male Immaturity through Figurative Language: A Stylistic Analysis of Sabrina Carpenter's "Manchild"**

Author : * Yasin Ali Rogas¹, Ristati², Dellis Pratika³

Affiliation : ¹²³Universitas Palangka Raya, Indonesia

Has been **Accepted** for publication in Journal of English Language and Education (JELE) Volume 11 Number 4 in 2026.

Bangkinang, 01st July 2026

Editor in Chief

Lusi Marleni

Appendix 4. Submission and Review of Article 1

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Yulitriana Yulitriana
[EBONY] Editor Decision
To: Yasin Ali Rogas, Ristati, Dellis Pratika

Inbox - Google 30 December 2025 at 10:01

Yasin Ali Rogas, Ristati, Dellis Pratika:

We have reached a decision regarding your submission to EBONY: Journal of English Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature, "The Role of Wattpad in Vocabulary Development: A Narrative Inquiry".

Our decision is to: Accept Submission

Appendix 5. Submission and Review of Article 2

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Submission Review Copyediting Production

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Revisions have been submitted.

Notifications

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Andi Indah Yulianti via Rumah Jurnal Institut Agama Islam Negeri Palopo

Inbox - Google 14 September 2026 at 13.44

[IDEAS] Editor Decision

To: Yasin Ali Rogas, Ristati, Dellis Pratika,

Reply-To: Andi Indah Yulianti

Yasin Ali Rogas, Ristati, Dellis Pratika:

We have reached a decision regarding your submission to IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature, "A Pragmatic Analysis of Illocutionary Acts and Identity Construction in the EP SIS (Soft Is Strong) by KATSEYE".

Our decision is to: Accept Submission

Appendix 6. Submission and Review of Article 3

JOURNAL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION
UNIVERSITAS PAHLAWAN TUANKU TAMBUSAI
E-ISSN 2592-4132 P-ISSN 2597-6850

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#2848 Review

SUMMARY REVIEW EDITING

Submission

Authors Yasin Ali Rogas, Ristati Ristati, Dellis Pratika
Title Constructing Male Immaturity through Figurative Language: A Stylistic Analysis of Sabrina Carpenter's "Manchild"
Section Articles
Editor Delviana Fitri

Peer Review

Round 1

Review Version	2848-12668-1-RV.DOCX	2026-06-25
Initiated		2026-06-27
Last modified		2026-06-27
Uploaded file	Reviewer A 2848-12733-1-RV.DOCX	2026-06-27
	Reviewer B 2848-12734-1-RV.DOCX	2026-06-27

Editor Decision

Decision	Accept Submission 2026-07-11
Notify Editor	☒ Editor/Author Email Record 2026-07-11
Editor Version	2848-13320-1-ED.DOCX 2026-07-11
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ARTICLE TEMPLATE

Article Template

Lusi Marleni
[jele] Editor Decision
To: Yasin Ali Rogas

Inbox - Google 11 July 2026 at 09.04

Yasin Ali Rogas:

We have reached a decision regarding your submission to Journal of English Language and Education, "Constructing Male Immaturity through Figurative Language: A Stylistic Analysis of Sabrina Carpenter's "Manchild".

Our decision is to: Accept Submission

Lusi Marleni
Universitas Pahlawan Tuanku Tambusai
lusimarlenihz@gmail.com

Journal of English Language Education
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Appendix 7. Plagiarism Rate Check of Article 1

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