

TikTok dan Bahasa Iklan: Kajian Percampuran Kod dalam Pengiklanan Digital Kosmetik

TikTok and Advertising Language: A Study of Code-Mixing in Digital Cosmetic Advertising

Nurulalya Husna Muhamad Rup¹, Norhazlina Husin^{2*}

^{1,2}*Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam, Malaysia*

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 30 December 2025

Revised 31 January 2026

Accepted 31 May 2026

Online first 01 July 2026

Published 01 July 2026

Keywords:

percampuran kod, pengiklanan digital, media sosial, TikTok

DOI:

ABSTRACT

Percampuran kod merupakan fenomena yang sering berlaku dalam kalangan penutur atau masyarakat yang bertutur lebih daripada satu bahasa. Percampuran kod boleh berlaku di mana-mana sahaja termasuk pengiklanan digital. Pengiklanan digital pula adalah sebahagian daripada strategi pemasaran digital yang mencakupi sebahagian besar daripada strategi penjualan produk dalam talian dan seringkali menjadi kaedah pilihan untuk mengiklan sesuatu produk. Platform sebegini dilihat lebih mudah digunakan untuk menarik perhatian pengguna sasaran. Kajian dijalankan bagi mengkaji percampuran kod dalam iklan kosmetik yang menggunakan TikTok sebagai platform pengiklanan. Objektif kajian ini terbahagi kepada dua iaitu (i) mengenal pasti jenis percampuran kod dan (ii) menganalisis fungsi percampuran kod yang terdapat dalam pengiklanan digital TikTok produk kosmetik. Kajian secara kualitatif ini menggunakan kaedah analisis kandungan sebagai kaedah kajian. Teori Hamers dan Blanc (2000) pula digunakan sebagai kerangka teori untuk menganalisis jenis percampuran kod yang terdapat dalam iklan digital. Manakala bagi menganalisis fungsi percampuran kod pula, kajian ini menggunakan teori fungsi percampuran kod K.Kanthimathi 2007. Hasil analisis menunjukkan terdapat tiga jenis percampuran kod dan tiga fungsi percampuran kod dalam video iklan kosmetik dalam proses mempromosikan produk kosmetik kepada pengguna sasaran. Kesimpulannya daripada kajian yang dijalankan, didapati bahawa video pengiklanan produk kosmetik yang terdapat

^{3*}Corresponding author. E-mail address : norha462@uitm.edu.my

10.24191/ijmal.v10i3.7036

dalam media sosial terutamanya TikTok mempunyai jenis dan fungsi percampuran kod.

Code-mixing is a common phenomenon among speakers or communities who speak more than one language. It can occur anywhere, including in digital advertising. Digital advertising is part of a broader digital marketing strategy that plays a major role in online product sales and is often the preferred method for promoting products. This platform is seen as more accessible for attracting target consumers. This study was conducted to examine code-mixing in cosmetic advertisements using TikTok as the advertising platform. The objectives of the study are: (i) to identify the types of code-mixing, and (ii) to analyse the functions of code-mixing found in TikTok digital advertisements for cosmetic products. This qualitative study uses content analysis as the method of analysis. Hamers and Blanc's (2000) theory was used as the framework to analyse the types of code-mixing present in digital ads. Meanwhile, to analyse the functions of code-mixing, the study refers to the theory by K. Kanthimathi (2007). The analysis results reveal the presence of three types of code-mixing and three functions of code-mixing in cosmetic advertisement videos, which are used to promote products to target consumers. Hence, the study found that cosmetic product advertisements on social media, especially TikTok, feature both types and functions of code-mixing.

PENGENALAN

Dalam era digital moden ini, media sosial telah menjadi alat yang penting dalam strategi pemasaran digital moden. Antara platform yang paling popular dan berpengaruh ketika ini ialah TikTok (Statista, 2024). TikTok merupakan sebuah aplikasi perkongsian video pendek yang telah dijadikan sebagai satu platform pemasaran digital untuk sesuatu jenama berkomunikasi dengan pelanggan sasaran (Alfian et al, 2024). Sejak kemunculannya, TikTok telah menarik perhatian berjuta-juta pengguna di seluruh dunia dan mencipta peluang baharu dalam dunia pemasaran digital.

Satu daripada peranan utama TikTok dalam pemasaran digital ialah kemampuannya mencipta kandungan viral dengan cepat. Dengan algoritma yang pintar, video daripada pengguna biasa atau perniagaan kecil berpotensi untuk mendapat tontonan yang banyak dalam masa yang singkat (Ling et al, 2021). Ini secara tidak langsung membuka peluang besar kepada perniagaan untuk mempromosikan produk atau perkhidmatan dengan kos yang rendah tetapi mendapat impak yang memuaskan.

Selain itu, TikTok juga menjadi platform kepada sesuatu jenama untuk berinteraksi secara lebih santai dengan pengguna terutamanya di kalangan pengguna muda (Bahiyah & Wang, 2020). Berbeza dengan platform lain yang lebih formal, TikTok mendorong kandungan bersifat spontan, santai, dan dekat dengan kehidupan seharian. Ini membolehkan sesuatu jenama membina hubungan yang lebih mesra dan rapat dengan audiens sasaran, terutamanya dalam kalangan generasi muda seperti Gen Z dan Milenial yang lebih gemar dengan pendekatan yang santai (Trissetianto & Ali, 2024).

TikTok juga menyediakan peluang kolaborasi dengan pempengaruh, atau dikenali sebagai influencer, yang mempunyai pengaruh besar ke atas pengikut mereka. Sesuatu jenama boleh memanfaatkan pengaruh ini untuk mempromosikan produk secara halus dan lebih berkesan. Penggunaan strategi ini sering kali lebih memberi impak berbanding iklan biasa kerana pengguna lebih mudah mempercayai maklum balas dan pengalaman sebenar yang dikongsi oleh pempengaruh yang mereka ikuti (Duffy & Hund, 2019).

TikTok juga telah memperkenalkan fitur TikTok Shop, yang membolehkan pengguna membeli produk secara langsung daripada aplikasi. Ini menjadikan proses pemasaran digital lebih efisien kerana pengguna boleh terus membuat pembelian selepas melihat kandungan promosi tanpa perlu meninggalkan aplikasi (Marketing Donut, 2024). Fitur ini menunjukkan betapa pentingnya TikTok dalam menyatukan hiburan, kandungan, dan e-dagang dalam satu platform. Secara keseluruhannya, TikTok bukan lagi sekadar aplikasi hiburan namun ia telah menjadi satu komponen penting dalam pemasaran digital moden (The Times, 2025).

Industri kosmetik merupakan salah satu industri yang menggunakan aplikasi Tiktok sebagai salah satu cara bagi mempromosikan sesuatu jenama. Aplikasi TikTok secara tidak langsung membuka platform baru kepada jenama kosmetik untuk mempromosikan sesuatu produk dengan lebih santai dan kreatif. Tren-tren yang sering mendapat perhatian dan memberikan pengaruh yang besar terhadap populariti sesuatu produk kosmetik ialah video demonstrasi solekan (makeup tutorials), ulasan produk (product reviews) dan beauty challenges sering digunakan oleh jenama kosmetik dalam mempromosikan sesuatu produk misalnya jenama tempatan popular seperti DHerbs dan jenama antarabangsa popular seperti Too Faced (Fitri & Ananta, 2025). Tren kreatif seperti transformasi “before-after” oleh Too Faced menunjukkan bahawa tren di TikTok boleh meningkatkan pendedahan atau populariti sesuatu produk kosmetik (GetKobe, 2020). Penggunaan tren-tren yang santai dan kreatif ini berjaya menarik minat pengguna sasaran untuk mencuba produk yang dipromosikan sekali gus memberikan pendedahan kepada pengguna tentang sesuatu produk.

Dalam dunia pemasaran moden yang penuh dengan persaingan, pendekatan komunikasi yang kreatif dan berkesan perlu dititikberatkan bagi menarik perhatian pengguna sasaran. Satu daripada teknik yang semakin digunakan dalam bidang pengiklanan di Malaysia ialah percampuran kod atau code-mixing. Secara umumnya, percampuran kod merujuk kepada pertukaran bahasa daripada satu bahasa kepada bahasa lain, sama ada dalam bentuk pertuturan mahupun penulisan (Noor Aida et al., 2016). Dalam komunikasi pengiklanan, strategi ini bukan sahaja mencerminkan realiti penggunaan bahasa harian masyarakat, malah turut meningkatkan daya tarikan dan keberkesanan penyampaian mesej.

Fenomena percampuran kod ini turut meresap ke dalam industri pengiklanan, yang juga tidak terkecuali dalam memanfaatkan penggunaan pelbagai bahasa untuk menarik perhatian pengguna sasaran (Sulaiman et al, 2020). Pengiklanan kini telah berevolusi seiring dengan kemajuan teknologi. Jika dahulu iklan hanya tersebar melalui media cetak seperti akhbar dan risalah, kini iklan disampaikan melalui pelbagai peranti digital. Kemunculan pelbagai media sosial hasil daripada perkembangan teknologi digital yang telah menjadi platform pemasaran digital, termasuk TikTok, Instagram dan Facebook (Van Wyngarden, 2025). Penggunaan media sosial sebagai platform pemasaran digital secara tidak langsung membuka ruang berlakunya fenomena percampuran kod dalam pemasaran digital (Adnan & Nik Mat, 2024). Platform seperti TikTok, yang menjadi fokus utama kajian ini, sering memaparkan kandungan iklan yang mengandungi frasa atau ayat dalam lebih daripada satu bahasa, khususnya campuran antara bahasa Melayu dan bahasa Inggeris.

Oleh itu, kajian percampuran kod dalam pengiklanan digital kosmetik dijalankan bagi mengenal pasti dan menganalisis jenis serta fungsi percampuran kod yang digunakan secara meluas di dalam pemasaran digital bidang kosmetik khususnya di aplikasi Tiktok. Hal ini kerana, penggunaan Tiktok sebagai salah satu cara bagi mempromosikan sesuatu jenama atau produk semakin popular di dalam kalangan jenama bidang kosmetik (CosmeticsDesign-Europe, 2024). Secara tidak langsung, ia akan menyumbang kepada

peningkatan fenomena percampuran kod yang berlaku di dalam pemasaran digital. Fenomena percampuran kod yang berlaku ini memberikan pelbagai impak misalnya video pemasaran yang lebih kreatif dan berjaya menarik perhatian ramai pengguna sasaran terutamanya di dalam kalangan Gen Z dan Milenial (Belaidouni & Kherbach, 2024). Jadi kajian ini penting bagi mengenalpasti dan menganalisis jenis serta fungsi percampuran kod yang sering digunakan di dalam pemasaran digital pada era moden ini.

SOROTAN LITERATUR

Konsep Percampuran Kod

Percampuran kod merupakan fenomena linguistik yang sering terjadi dalam konteks komunikasi sehari-hari, khususnya dalam kalangan penutur bilingual atau multilingual. Percampuran kod secara tidak langsung dapat menunjukkan identiti sosial, kognitif dan interaksi bahasa dalam pelbagai latar budaya. Percampuran kod merupakan satu fenomena pertukaran bahasa daripada satu bahasa ke satu bahasa yang lain dalam bentuk lisan atau penulisan (Noor Aida et al., 2016). Misalnya perbualan yang menggunakan dua bahasa yang berbeza seperti bahasa Melayu dan bahasa Inggeris.

Terdapat beberapa definisi percampuran kod daripada pakar-pakar bahasa. Poplack (1980), berpendapat bahawa percampuran kod merupakan satu proses pertukaran dua bahasa dalam satu ayat atau wacana yang sama manakala Halliday (1978) mengatakan bahawa percampuran kod ialah satu proses yang berlaku dalam diri seseorang penutur itu sendiri. Percampuran kod merupakan alternatif antara dua variasi dalam komponen yang sama oleh seseorang penutur yang mempunyai kecekapan yang baik dalam dua variasi untuk menghasilkan sebuah pertuturan monolingual yang betul (Scotton, 2002). Fenomena percampuran kod merupakan fenomena yang biasa terjadi di dalam pertuturan penutur di Malaysia yang terdiri daripada pelbagai suku kaum dan ia juga melibatkan semua peringkat sosial (Asmah, 2007). Menurut Syuhaidi dan Audra (2018), percampuran kod sering berlaku dalam kalangan penutur di Malaysia yang merupakan sebuah negara yang terdiri daripada pelbagai kaum dan agama (Syuhaidi & Audra, 2018) misalnya kaum Melayu, Cina dan India. Faktor-faktor ini merupakan salah satu ruang bagi percampuran kod berlaku dalam kalangan penutur di Malaysia kerana pendedahan kepada pelbagai bahasa dan budaya misalnya bahasa Melayu, Inggeris, Cina dan India.

Menurut Hamers dan Blanc (2000), percampuran kod terbahagi kepada tiga jenis iaitu percampuran kod dalaman (inner code mixing), percampuran kod luaran (outer code mixing) dan percampuran kod ayat tambahan (extra-sentential code mixing). Percampuran kod dalaman berlaku apabila terdapat percampuran dialek dan bahasa utama di dalam sesebuah pertuturan atau penulisan. Percampuran kod luaran pula ialah percampuran dua bahasa berbeza di dalam ayat pertuturan atau penulisan yang sama misalnya bahasa Melayu dan bahasa Inggeris. Manakala percampuran kod ayat tambahan pula merupakan penggunaan kata pengisi di dalam sesebuah pertuturan ataupun penulisan contohnya penggunaan perkataan 'lah' di penghujung sesebuah ayat.

Bahasa dalam Pengiklanan Digital

Dalam era digital masa kini, media sosial telah menjadi salah satu platform utama dalam menyampaikan maklumat dan mempromosikan jenama atau perkhidmatan. Sifat media sosial yang lebih interaktif dan pantas menjadikannya platform yang sangat berkesan untuk tujuan pengiklanan. Sehubungan itu, bahasa yang digunakan dalam iklan di media sosial juga mempunyai ciri-ciri yang unik, berbeza daripada bahasa

iklan dalam media tradisional seperti televisyen atau akhbar. Bahasa iklan di media sosial bukan sahaja bertujuan untuk menyampaikan maklumat, tetapi juga untuk menarik perhatian, memujuk, dan mempengaruhi pengguna (Hidarto, 2024).

Ciri utama bahasa iklan di media sosial ialah sifatnya yang memujuk dan bertujuan mempengaruhi pengguna supaya membeli atau mencuba sesuatu produk. Bahasa yang digunakan biasanya bersifat emotif dengan memainkan emosi pengguna seperti rasa takut ketinggalan, keinginan, atau kebimbangan (Ting, 2023). Contoh frasa yang sering digunakan termasuklah “Jangan lepaskan peluang ini!”, “Tawaran terhad!”, dan “Beli sekarang sebelum habis!”. Menurut Kotler dan Keller (2016), keberkesanan sesuatu iklan banyak bergantung pada keupayaannya membangkitkan emosi pengguna untuk mendorong tindakan.

Media sosial juga ialah ruang yang bersifat santai dan tidak formal. Maka, bahasa yang digunakan dalam iklan juga cenderung bersifat mesra, santai, dan menggunakan gaya bahasa seharian. Penggunaan sapaan seperti “Korang kena cepat try!” atau penggunaan emoji dan singkatan sering kali digunakan untuk menyesuaikan diri dengan gaya komunikasi pengguna media sosial (Mimi et al, 2021). Seperti yang dijelaskan oleh Crystal (2011), gaya komunikasi dalam talian mengaburkan sempadan antara bahasa lisan dan tulisan, menjadikan bahasa lebih fleksibel dan berorientasikan pengguna.

Perhatian pengguna di media sosial sangat terhad. Oleh itu, iklan perlu disampaikan dalam bentuk yang pendek, padat dan terus kepada maksud. Frasa atau ayat yang digunakan kebanyakannya lebih ringkas, mudah diingat dan cepat difahami (Hidarto, 2024). Teknik penggunaan slogan atau tagline seperti “Murah dan berkualiti”, “Cepat, mudah, selamat” adalah antara strategi yang sering digunakan (Ting, 2023). Suryani (2015) menyatakan bahawa penggunaan bahasa yang ringkas dan jelas dapat meningkatkan keberkesanan komunikasi dalam pengiklanan.

Walaupun aspek visual sangat penting dalam iklan media sosial, bahasa juga memainkan peranan dalam menarik perhatian. Bahasa yang digunakan kebiasaannya lebih kreatif, berunsur jenaka, permainan kata, atau aliterasi (Ning et al, 2022). Contohnya, “Segar, sedap, siap hantar!” atau “Lapar? Kami ada jalan penyelesaiannya!”. Gabungan bahasa kreatif dan visual menarik menjadikan iklan lebih mudah diingat dan berkesan dalam menyampaikan mesej (Mohd Noor & Ismail, 2021). Secara keseluruhannya, bahasa iklan di media sosial mempunyai ciri-ciri khas seperti bersifat memujuk dan emotif, gaya bahasa santai, penggunaan ayat pendek dan jelas, serta interaktif dan kreatif.

TikTok sebagai Medium Pengiklanan

TikTok merupakan salah satu platform media sosial yang pesat berkembang dan popular dalam kalangan pengguna global, khususnya golongan muda seperti Gen Z (Bourgault, 2021). Format video pendek yang menarik dengan pelbagai ciri interaktif, menjadikan TikTok medium utama dalam penyampaian kandungan berkaitan gaya hidup termasuk bidang kosmetik (Han & Kim, 2021). Gaya penyampaian kandungan kosmetik di TikTok adalah berbeza berbanding iklan tradisional kerana ia menekankan aspek keaslian, hiburan, dan interaksi dengan penonton. Perubahan ini mencerminkan cara baharu dalam strategi pemasaran digital yang lebih relevan dengan gaya hidup pengguna masa kini (Elliott & Tan, 2021).

Kebanyakan kandungan kosmetik di TikTok disampaikan secara autentik iaitu menampilkan maklum balas sebenar pengguna atau pencipta kandungan (content creator) dalam menggunakan sesuatu produk

(Alghaniy & Mukaram, 2025). Gaya penyampaian ini menjadikan kandungan lebih meyakinkan kerana ia tidak kelihatan seperti iklan tradisional yang mempunyai skrip tertentu. Kandungan berbentuk ulasan jujur atau perkongsian rutin penjagaan kulit harian memberi kesan yang lebih mendalam kepada penonton (Astita & Azhar, 2025). Konsep “keaslian yang boleh dikaitkan” (relatable authenticity) dalam media sosial menjadikan kandungan lebih meyakinkan dan berpengaruh terhadap keputusan pembelian (Abidin, 2020).

Kandungan yang bersifat visual dan berdurasi pendek adalah ciri utama TikTok (Zannettou et al, 2023). Oleh itu, penyampaian kandungan kosmetik lazimnya dibuat dalam bentuk demonstrasi yang pantas, seperti tutorial solekan, transformasi wajah, atau ulasan produk (Wen & Kim, 2024). Gaya penyampaian ini membantu penonton memahami cara penggunaan sesuatu produk dengan mudah dan cepat (Lu et al, 2024). Pengguna lebih tertarik kepada kandungan yang menunjukkan hasil produk secara visual berbanding hanya penerangan secara lisan atau bertulis (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

Bagi menarik perhatian pengguna TikTok, kandungan kosmetik sering digabungkan dengan elemen hiburan seperti lagu popular, jenaka ringan, cabaran viral atau penggunaan penapis (filters) yang menarik (Swadison & Prajaknate, 2023). Zhang (2022), menjelaskan bahawa elemen hiburan memainkan peranan penting dalam memperkukuh daya tarikan sesuatu kandungan, terutamanya dalam persekitaran digital yang dipenuhi dengan pelbagai bentuk maklumat.

Tren semasa memainkan peranan besar dalam penyebaran kandungan di TikTok (GetKobe, 2020). Kandungan kosmetik yang berjaya biasanya menggunakan tanda pagar (hashtag) yang popular seperti #MakeupRoutine, #TikTokMadeMeBuyIt, atau #SkincareTips. Tanda pagar ini membantu kandungan lebih mudah dicari dan muncul dalam carian pengguna lain. Laporan TikTok for Business (2023) menyatakan bahawa penggunaan tanda pagar yang relevan boleh meningkatkan capaian dan keterlibatan pengguna secara signifikan. Secara keseluruhannya, gaya penyampaian kandungan kosmetik di TikTok menekankan aspek keaslian, demonstrasi visual, elemen hiburan, komunikasi yang lebih santai serta penggunaan trend semasa. Gaya ini bukan sahaja menjadikan kandungan lebih menarik dan mudah diikuti, malah meningkatkan kepercayaan dan keyakinan pengguna terhadap sesuatu produk (Nielsen, 2021).

Kajian Lepas

Terdapat beberapa kajian terdahulu yang mengkaji tentang percampuran kod dalam pengiklanan digital. Kajian yang mengkaji ‘Percampuran Kod dalam Kalangan Peniaga dalam Talian di Instagram’ telah dijalankan oleh Mimi, Afiqah dan Sa’adiah (2021) mendapati bahawa terdapat dua fungsi percampuran kod yang mendominasi video dan gambar promosi yang dimuat naik di Instagram. Dua fungsi percampuran kod tersebut ialah fungsi sikap dan fungsi arahan. Kajian ini mendapati, peniaga dalam talian di Instagram menggunakan percampuran kod bagi mewujudkan personaliti yang mesra, trendy serta cekap dalam pemasaran digital.

Kajian oleh Julaina dan Athirah (2025) yang mengkaji ‘Kecenderungan Penggunaan Percampuran Kod Bahasa Inggeris dalam Video Masakan di TikTok’ pula mendapati bahawa terdapat tiga fungsi percampuran kod iaitu fungsi sikap, fungsi ekspresif dan fungsi arahan. Ketiga-tiga fungsi yang terdapat dalam video masakan di TikTok bertujuan untuk mewujudkan suasana video yang spontan dan santai bagi menarik minat pengguna TikTok. Bahasa slanga juga digunakan secara meluas dalam kalangan pencipta kandungan terutamanya di platform TikTok dan Youtube. Terdapat beberapa penggunaan bahasanya

slanga yang digunakan oleh pencipta kandungan misalnya ‘korang’, ‘terciduk’, ‘nok’, ‘koyak’ dan sebagainya. Penggunaan bahasa slanga ini boleh mewujudkan suasana yang mesra bersama pengikut dan menjadikan video tersebut lebih santai untuk ditonton (Munirah & Ira, 2023).

Kajian oleh Ting (2023) yang mengkaji percampuran bahasa digunakan dalam pengiklanan untuk memperkukuh daya tarikan sesebuah iklan. Kajian ini menganalisis 30 iklan digital tempatan daripada pelbagai platform seperti poster di media sosial dan video promosi produk. Hasil daripada kajian ini, jenis percampuran kod yang paling kerap digunakan ialah percampuran kod dalaman atau inner code mixing misalnya frasa seperti “Jom try something new!” yang menggabungkan bahasa Melayu dan bahasa Inggeris dalam satu ayat. Berdasarkan kajian Ting (2023), percampuran kod dalam pengiklanan digital berperanan sebagai strategi retorik dan pemasaran digital.

Kajian bertajuk ‘The Influence of TikTok Marketing on Consumer Purchase Intention among Students’ (Nurazree et al., 2024) yang mengkaji pengaruh pemasaran menerusi aplikasi Tiktok dalam niat pembelian pengguna terutamanya kalangan pelajar institusi pengajian tinggi (IPT) di Malaysia. Kajian mendapati bahawa gaya penyampaian mempengaruhi dalam mempromosikan sesuatu produk dengan menggunakan penyampain yang kreatif serta santai mempengaruhi tahap keyakinan pengguna terhadap sesuatu produk. Jadi berdasarkan kajian ini, dapat disimpulkan bahawa TikTok merupakan platform yang sangat berpengaruh dari segi mendapatkan keyakinan serta kepercayaan pembeli terhadap sesuatu jenama, produk mahupun perkhidmatan.

Maarof (2024), dalam kajian ‘The evolution of fashion content on TikTok: From 2020 to 2024 in Malaysia’ yang mengkaji berkenaan perkembangan kandungan berkaitan fesyen di TikTok Malaysia dari tahun 2020 hingga 2024. Kajian ini mendapati bahawa tren seperti #FashionTok, #OOTD serta cabaran yang viral mempengaruhi populariti sesebuah jenama melalui tren-tren tersebut. Kolaborasi bersama mempengaruhi atau pencipta kandungan yang terkenal dengan kandungan gaya berpakaian juga menjadikan video promosi secara tidak langsung bersifat lebih autentik atau asli. Dengan cara pemasaran yang kreatif dan santai ini dapat menarik perhatian pengguna Gen Z dan Milenial untuk mengetahui dengan lebih lanjut tentang sesuatu fesyen tersebut.

OBJEKTIF KAJIAN

Kajian ini dijalankan bagi mencapai dua objektif kajian iaitu:

1. Mengenal pasti jenis percampuran kod dalam pengiklanan digital produk kosmetik di Tiktok.
2. Menganalisis fungsi percampuran kod dalam pengiklanan digital produk kosmetik di Tiktok.

KERANGKA TEORI

Kajian ini menggunakan Teori Jenis Percampuran Kod oleh Hamers dan Blanc (2000) dan Teori Fungsi Percampuran Kod oleh K.Kanthimathi (2007) sebagai kerangka teori kajian. Teori Jenis Percampuran Kod oleh Hamers dan Blanc (2000) digunakan untuk mengenal pasti jenis percampuran kod yang wujud dalam iklan kosmetik secara digital di platform TikTok. Percampuran kod yang dikenal pasti ini kemudiannya dianalisis fungsinya berdasarkan Teori Fungsi Percampuran Kod oleh K.Kanthimathi (2007).

Jenis Percampuran Kod (Hamers & Blanc, 2000)

Dapatan analisis Menurut Hamers dan Blanc (2000), percampuran kod boleh dikategorikan kepada tiga jenis, iaitu:

a. Percampuran Kod Dalam (Inner Code Mixing)

Percampuran kod dalam merujuk kepada percampuran dialek dalam satu ayat, sama ada dalam bentuk pertuturan mahupun penulisan. Fenomena ini turut dikenali sebagai intrasentential code mixing, iaitu gabungan antara dialek dan bahasa utama dalam struktur ayat yang sama. Sebagai contoh, penggunaan dialek Kelantan dalam ayat berbahasa Melayu atau Mandarin. Percampuran kod dalam berlaku apabila unsur-unsur linguistik daripada satu dialek diserap masuk ke dalam bahasa utama, sekali gus mencerminkan kepelbagaian variasi linguistik dalam kalangan penutur dwibahasa atau pelbagai dialek (Syuhaidi & Audra, 2017).

b. Percampuran Kod Luaran (Outer Code Mixing)

Percampuran kod luaran pula melibatkan penggunaan dua atau lebih bahasa yang berbeza dalam satu ayat atau wacana. Jenis percampuran ini turut dikenali sebagai intersentential code mixing, yang berlaku apabila elemen daripada bahasa asing digunakan bersama bahasa utama secara bergilir atau berselang dalam satu unit komunikasi. Sebagai contoh, percampuran antara bahasa Melayu dan bahasa Inggeris dalam satu struktur ayat atau dialog. Dimas et al (2020) berpendapat bahawa percampuran kod luaran sering berlaku dalam kalangan individu dwibahasa yang menggabungkan pelbagai unsur linguistik dalam satu ujaran bagi memenuhi kehendak komunikasi dan gaya bahasa tertentu.

c. Percampuran Kod Ayat Tambahan (Extra-Sentential Code Mixing)

Percampuran kod ayat tambahan merujuk kepada penyisipan kata-kata pengisi atau tag elements yang lazimnya bersifat ringkas dan berfungsi sebagai unsur retorik atau penanda identiti etnik penutur. Contohnya termasuk penggunaan kata seperti 'lah', 'alamak', 'adoi', dan 'alah'. Jenis percampuran ini berlaku sama ada dalam pertuturan mahupun penulisan dan lazimnya muncul di hujung ayat. Menurut Aida et al (2016), percampuran kod ayat tambahan bukan sahaja memperkaya intonasi serta gaya ujaran, tetapi juga mengekspresikan identiti sociolinguistik penutur melalui penggunaan unsur-unsur yang dekat dengan budaya tempatan.

Fungsi Percampuran Kod (K. Kanthimathi, 2007)

Dapatan analisis K.Kanthimathi (2007) menjelaskan bahawa percampuran kod mempunyai fungsinya yang tersendiri. Fungsi percampuran kod dibahagikan kepada sembilan jenis iaitu:

a. Fungsi Sikap

Fungsi ini merujuk kepada kecenderungan penutur menggunakan percampuran kod berdasarkan sikap yang dipengaruhi oleh prestij, tahap pendidikan, dan gaya hidup. Penutur berpendidikan tinggi sering menganggap keupayaan mencampurkan bahasa sebagai lambang kecerdasan dan status sosial. Tambahan pula, percampuran kod dapat mencerminkan latar tempat asal penutur. Menurut Ilyani dan Azian (2020), individu berlatar belakang pendidikan yang baik lebih cenderung menggunakan percampuran kod dalam komunikasi harian.

b. Fungsi Ekspresif

Percampuran kod juga digunakan untuk mengekspresikan emosi dan perasaan seperti marah, gembira atau sedih. Ia menjadi alat linguistik bagi penutur meluahkan keadaan emosi secara lebih berkesan (Ilyani & Azian, 2020).

c. Fungsi Identifikasi Laras Bahasa

Fungsi ini berkait rapat dengan penggunaan istilah khusus dalam bidang tertentu seperti sains, perubatan atau teknologi. Penutur cenderung mencampur bahasa untuk menjelaskan konsep atau istilah teknikal dengan lebih tepat dan efisien (Ilyani & Azian, 2020).

d. Fungsi Sosialisasi

Percampuran kod juga bertindak sebagai alat sosialisasi yang mencerminkan hubungan interpersonal. Ia boleh menunjukkan tahap keakraban atau kemesraan antara penutur, sekali gus mengukuhkan jalinan sosial.

e. Fungsi Arahan

Fungsi ini merujuk kepada penggunaan percampuran kod dalam menyampaikan arahan. Ia boleh mencerminkan hierarki sosial, contohnya majikan menggunakan kod campur untuk menegaskan kedudukan atau status mereka (Mimi et al, 2021).

f. Fungsi Pengulangan

Percampuran kod digunakan untuk mengulangi maklumat dalam bahasa lain sebagai strategi penjelasan dan pemahaman, terutamanya apabila wujud jurang bahasa antara penutur (Mimi et al., 2021).

g. Fungsi Rujukan

Fungsi ini hampir serupa dengan fungsi pengulangan tetapi lebih tertumpu kepada penyampaian maklumat dalam bentuk yang lebih mudah difahami, berfungsi sebagai alat bantu faham.

h. Fungsi Instrumental

Fungsi ini berkait dengan usaha mempertingkatkan kemahiran berbahasa, khususnya dalam menambah kosa kata bahasa asing melalui penggunaan harian percampuran kod.

i. Fungsi Pendedahan kepada Bahasa Asing

Percampuran kod turut menjadi medium pendedahan kepada bahasa asing seperti bahasa Inggeris atau Mandarin. Ini membantu membina literasi bahasa dalam kalangan masyarakat (Mimi et al., 2021).

METODOLOGI

Pengkaji telah Kajian TikTok dan Bahasa Iklan: Kajian percampuran kod dalam pengiklanan digital kosmetik ini menggunakan pendekatan secara kualitatif bagi menganalisis percampuran kod dalam iklan kosmetik di platform TikTok. Kajian kualitatif merupakan pendekatan yang digunakan bagi mengukur pemboleh ubah yang tidak mempunyai nilai numerik. Teori jenis percampuran kod oleh Hamers dan

Blanc (2000) digunakan untuk mengenal pasti jenis percampuran yang terdapat dalam iklan kosmetik yang dipilih manakala Tteori fungsi percampuran kod oleh K.Kanthimathi (2007) digunakan sebagai kerangka untuk menganalisis fungsi percampuran kod dalam pengiklanan digital yang dianalisis.

Video promosi yang digunakan sebagai bahan kajian merupakan video yang mempromosikan produk berkaitan bidang kosmetik tempatan sahaja. Video yang digunakan sebagai bahan analisis mempunyai audio lisan dan kapsyen. Ini bagi memudahkan proses untuk mengenal pasti penggunaan percampuran kod di dalam video promosi tersebut.

Bagi tujuan makalah ini, satu iklan kosmetik dipilih sebagai bahan kajian. Iklan ini diambil dari platform TikTok produk kosmetik buatan Malaysia yang terkenal iaitu Wawacosmetichqmalaysia dan telah disiarkan pada 22 April 2024 di akaun Tiktok jenama tersebut iaitu @wawaofficial_hq. Video promosi daripada Wawacosmetichqmalaysia dipilih sebagai bahan kajian kerana jenama tersebut merupakan salah satu jenama kosmetik tempatan yang terkenal di Malaysia dengan jumlah pengikut sebanyak 762 ribu pengikut di laman akaun TikTok jenama Wawacosmetichqmalaysia. Video promosi yang dipilih merupakan iklan berbentuk video maklum balas atau feedback daripada pencipta kandungan di platform tersebut yang mendapat jumlah tontonan sebanyak 5.09 ribu.

DAPATAN KAJIAN

Jenis Percampuran Kod dalam Video Pengiklanan Kosmetik

Analisis menunjukkan terdapat tiga jenis percampuran dalam iklan kosmetik di platform TikTok *Wawacosmetichqmalaysia* iaitu (i) percampuran kod luaran, (ii) percampuran kod luaran dan (iii) percampuran kod ayat tambahan.

Percampuran Kod Dalam

Contoh 1

Makeup seharian kena **panaih** kena tu so kita nak kena *hydrate*. Kita nak kena **segaqkan** balik.

Contoh 1 menunjukkan contoh percampuran kod dalaman yang terdapat dalam iklan kosmetik *Wawacosmetichqmalaysia*. Dalam contoh di atas terdapat dua kata percampuran kod dalaman daripada dialek utara iaitu panaih dan segaqkan. Panaih merupakan perkataan panas dalam bahasa Melayu standard manakala segaqkan pula ialah segarkan dalam bahasa Melayu standard.

Percampuran kod dalaman dialek utara ini berlaku kerana pengaruh penutur dialek utara kerana penutur dalam video pengiklanan *Wawacosmetichqmalaysia* tersebut merupakan penutur yang berasal dari utara Malaysia. Penggunaan dialek dalam video pengiklanan tersebut dapat memberikan sentuhan unik dan pengguna sasaran akan rasa lebih tertarik untuk mendengar informasi tentang produk yang dipromosikan.

Percampuran Kod Luaran

Contoh 2

Dia (*Wawa Hydrating Cleansing Oil*) **purify** dan **moisturize** okay.

Berdasarkan Contoh 2, terdapat percampuran kod luaran yang terdapat dalam iklan kosmetik Wawacosmetichqmalaysia iaitu perkataan purify dan moisturize. Kedua-dua perkataan tersebut merupakan perkataan pinjaman daripada bahasa Inggeris. Purify bermaksud membersihkan dalam bahasa Melayu manakala moisturize pula bermaksud melembabkan dalam bahasa Melayu.

Penggunaan perkataan bahasa Inggeris dalam iklan tersebut dapat menarik minat pengguna sasaran kerana perkataan-perkataan bahasa Inggeris yang digunakan lebih kerap didengar dalam video pengiklanan yang terdapat di platform TikTok. Secara tidak langsung ia dapat mendedahkan pengguna atau pendengar sasaran dengan kosa kata bahasa Inggeris yang baru.

Percampuran Kod Ayat Tambahan

Contoh 3

Kami suka macam *like* sekali cuci *so* bila pakai *cleansing oil* ni senang sekali cuci ja **ha!**

Contoh 3 menunjukkan terdapat percampuran kod ayat tambahan dalam iklan kosmetik Wawacosmetichqmalaysia. Percampuran kod ayat tambahan yang digunakan ialah ha!. Perkataan ha bertindak sebagai kata pengisi dalam ujaran pengiklanan tersebut. Penggunaan perkataan tersebut sebagai kata pengisi dapat menjadikan iklan promosi tersebut lebih santai untuk didengar dan secara tidak langsung ia dapat menarik minat pengguna sasaran.

Fungsi-Fungsi Percampuran Kod dalam Pengiklanan Kosmetik

Hasil analisis menunjukkan terdapat tiga fungsi percampuran kod yang dikenal pasti dalam iklan kosmetik Wawacosmetichqmalaysia di platform TikTok. Ketiga fungsi ini adalah (i) fungsi identifikasi laras bahasa, (ii) fungsi ekspresif dan (iii) fungsi pendedahan bahasa asing.

Fungsi Identifikasi Laras Bahasa

Laras bahasa merujuk kepada variasi penggunaan bahasa yang dipengaruhi oleh konteks situasi, termasuk topik perbualan, hubungan antara penutur dan pendengar atau pembaca, serta latar keadaan ketika komunikasi berlaku (Nik Safiah Karim et al, 2015). Sebagai contoh, laras bahasa yang digunakan di rumah bersama keluarga berbeza daripada laras bahasa dalam suasana formal seperti di sekolah bersama guru dan rakan sekelas.

Berdasarkan data yang dianalisis, kajian ini mendapati wujudnya fungsi identifikasi laras bahasa kosmetik dalam proses promosi produk kepada pengguna sasaran. Laras bahasa ini mencerminkan penggunaan istilah khusus dan gaya bahasa yang sesuai dengan bidang kosmetik, bertujuan menarik perhatian khalayak sasaran.

Contoh 4

Yang baguinya dia buang segala kekotoran kat muka, *makeup*

Contoh 5

Kami suka macam *like* sekali cuci *so* bila pakai *cleansing oil* ni senang sekali cuci ja **ha!**

Dalam kedua-dua Contoh 4 dan Contoh 5, terdapat dua perkataan yang dapat menunjukkan fungsi identifikasi laras bahasa iaitu laras bahasa bidang kosmetik. Perkataan *makeup* dan *cleansing* adalah dua perkataan yang sering digunakan dalam bidang kosmetik. *Makeup* merujuk kepada alat solek manakala *cleansing* pula merujuk kepada pembersih. Perkataan-perkataan tersebut secara lazimnya digunakan dalam iklan kosmetik untuk memastikan pengguna sasaran dapat memahami maklumat tentang sesuatu produk dengan lebih mudah. Penggunaan istilah tersebut dapat membantu pengguna sasaran, khususnya pengguna alat solek dan pembersih solekan, memahami maklumat produk yang dipromosikan.

Penggunaan istilah dalam bahasa Inggeris pula bukan sahaja memudahkan penyampaian maklumat teknikal, malah mampu menarik perhatian serta minat khalayak sasaran. Gabungan bahasa Inggeris dalam ayat berbahasa Melayu memberikan sentuhan moden dan menarik, sekali gus meningkatkan daya tarikan video pengiklanan tersebut.

Fungsi Ekspresif

Fungsi Ekspresif merujuk kepada penggunaan percampuran kod untuk mengekspresikan emosi atau perasaan penutur. Berdasarkan data yang dianalisis, fungsi ini dikesan dalam bentuk perasaan teruja dan kagum yang dizahirkan melalui penggunaan percampuran kod dalam video pengiklanan. Penggunaan dua bahasa secara serentak membolehkan penutur mengekspresikan reaksi emosi dengan lebih berkesan dan meyakinkan kepada khalayak.

Contoh 6

Memang *best* eh
korang

Contoh 7

So memang *recommend* kat
hangpa

Penggunaan perkataan bahasa Inggeris *best* dan *recommend* yang digunakan boleh diklasifikasikan sebagai fungsi ekspresif dalam iklan kosmetik yang dianalisis. Pengiklan sebagai penutur menggunakan perkataan-perkataan tersebut bagi mewakili perasaan teruja serta kagum penutur dalam mempromosikan serta menjelaskan kebaikan produk yang dipromosikan oleh penutur.

Perkataan *best* atau dalam bahasa Melayu membawa maksud terbaik, menunjukkan bahawa produk yang dipromosikan itu adalah produk yang bagus dan penutur kagum dengan keberkesanan produk tersebut. Manakala perkataan *recommend* pula menunjukkan bahawa penutur ingin menarik minat pengguna sasaran untuk mencuba produk yang dipromosikan tersebut.

Fungsi Pendedahan Bahasa Asing

Percampuran kod juga berfungsi sebagai satu alat untuk mendedahkan penutur atau pembaca kepada bahasa asing. Fungsi ini juga terdapat dalam iklan kosmetik secara digital yang dianalisis.

Contoh 8

Dia *purify* dan *moisturize*
okay

Contoh 9

Dia ada *sunflower seed oil* dia ada *grape seed oil*, *jojoba seed oil* dan *black currant seed oil*.

Terdapat fungsi pendedahan kepada bahasa Inggeris dalam video pengiklanan tersebut, antaranya melalui penggunaan istilah seperti *purify* (membersihkan), *moisturize* (melembapkan), *sunflower seed oil*, *grape seed oil*, *jojoba seed oil*, dan *black currant seed oil*. Penggunaan istilah-istilah ini mencerminkan kebolehan penutur bertutur lebih daripada satu bahasa. Secara tidak langsung, percampuran kod ini memberi pendedahan kepada kosa kata bahasa Inggeris serta menyampaikan maklumat baharu kepada penonton atau pengguna sasaran.

KESIMPULAN

Hasil analisis kajian mendapati bahawa berlakunya percampuran kod dalam pengiklanan digital kosmetik di TikTok. Berdasarkan kajian ini, dapat disimpulkan bahawa terdapat tiga jenis percampuran kod seperti yang dikemukakan oleh Hamers dan Blanc (2000), serta tiga fungsi percampuran kod berdasarkan Teori Fungsi Percampuran Kod oleh K. Kanthimathi (2007) dalam pengiklanan digital kosmetik di TikTok. Analisis menunjukkan bahawa iklan digital masukkan nama iklan/jenama menggunakan tiga jenis percampuran kod, iaitu percampuran kod luaran, percampuran kod dalaman, dan percampuran kod ayat tambahan. Hasil analisis juga menunjukkan bahawa percampuran kod yang dikenal pasti dalam video iklan tersebut dikategorikan kepada tiga fungsi utama, iaitu fungsi identifikasi laras bahasa, fungsi ekspresif, dan fungsi pendedahan kepada bahasa asing. Kajian ini membuktikan bahawa percampuran kod sememangnya berlaku dalam iklan kosmetik digital, dan ia memainkan fungsi tertentu yang berperanan dalam menyampaikan mesej promosi secara lebih menarik, efektif dan relevan kepada khalayak sasaran.

Sumbangan Pengarang

Penulisan draf awal artikel oleh Nurulalya Husna dan disemak serta disunting oleh Norhazlina Husin.

Pembiayaan

Tidak dibiayai oleh mana-mana pihak.

Pernyataan Ketersediaan Data

Tiada.

Konflik Kepentingan

Tiada.

Penghargaan

Penulis berterima kasih kepada semua pihak yang membantu dalam menjalankan kajian ini.

RUJUKAN

- Abidin, C. (2020). Mapping Internet Celebrity on TikTok: Exploring Attention Economies and Visibility Labours. *Cultural Science Journal*, 12(1), 77-103. <https://doi.org/10.5334/csci.140>
- Alfian, N. B. K., Jamri, M. H., Ridzuan, A. R., Ismail, N., Khairuddin, K., Hassan, M. S., & Hashim, N. H. (2024). *A paradigm shift: TikTok's impact on social media marketing strategies*. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 8(10), 3001–3009. <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.8090249>
- Alghaniy, A. M. (2025). *Influence of user generated content (UGC) on skincare product purchase decisions among Gen Z on TikTok: A case study in Bandung City*. *Jurnal Ekonomi Manajemen Sistem Informasi*, 6(5), 2997–3005. <https://doi.org/10.38035/jemsi.v6i5.5049>
- Aman. (2023, 7 Julai). *Malaysia Antara Negara Dengan Angka Pengguna TikTok Tinggi Di Dunia- Lebih 19.3 Juta Pengguna*. <https://amanz.my/2023402179/>
- Astita, F., & Azhar, A. (2025). The effectiveness of using influencers in promoting products in TikTok social media: A case study on cosmetic brands. *Paraplu Journal*, 2(1), 179–195. <https://doi.org/10.70574/w144te91>
- Bahiyah, O. & Wang, D. (2020). Watch, Share or Create: The influence of personality traits and user motivation on TikTok mobile video usage. *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies (iJIM)*, 14(4), 121–137. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijim.v14i04.12429>

- Belaidouni, Z., & Kherbache, F. (2024). Code-switching in Facebook Live sales: A marketing strategy in the Algerian context. *AL-Lisaniyyat*, 30(1), 170–188. <https://doi.org/10.61850/allj.v30i1.656>
- CosmeticsDesign-Europe. (2024, Februari 20). *8 beauty brands that have nailed TikTok marketing strategy*. <https://www.cosmeticsdesign-europe.com/Article/2024/02/20/8>
- Crystal, D. (2011). *Internet Linguistics: A Student Guide*. Routledge.
- Duffy & Hund. (2019). Influencer marketing and social media: The new frontiers of digital advertising. Media and Communication.
- Dimas Miftah Arrizki, Yuliarti Mutiarsih, & Iis Sopiawati. (2020). An Analysis of Code Switching and Code Mixing in The Film “Tokyo Fiancée” by Stefan Liberski. Dalam *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Language, Literature, Culture, and Education (ICOLLITE 2020)*, 190–196. Atlantis Press. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.201215.029>
- Fitri, S. D., & Ananta, Y. (2025). TikTok algorithm in fast beauty product marketing: Influencing consumer behavior of the digital generation. *Greenation International Journal of Engineering Science*, 2(4), 192–199. <https://doi.org/10.38035/gijes.v2i4.358>
- GetKobe. (2020). Tiktok Marketing: Nyx #BrowFitness challenge & Too Faced #toofaced partner. Marketing Device. <https://www.getkobe.com/blog/tik-tok-marketing/>
- Hamers, J. F. & Blanc, H. A. (2000). *Bilinguality and bilingualism*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hidarto, A. (2024). *The persuasive language of online advertisements featuring social media influencers on Instagram: A multimodal analysis*. Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching, 16 (1). <https://doi.org/10.25170/ijelt.v16i1.2550>
- Kanthimathi, K. (2007). Mixing Mother Tongue and English: Exploring the Reasons and Functions of Code Mixing. In *The Second Biennial International Conference on Teaching and Learning of English in Asia: Exploring New Frontiers (TELiA2)*, 1-12. Universiti Utara Malaysia. <https://repo.uum.edu.my/id/eprint/3258/>
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing Management* (15th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Ling, C., Lim, B., Gurupur, P., & Nguyen, M. H. (2021). *Slapping cats, bopping heads, and Oreo shakes: Understanding indicators of virality in TikTok short videos*. [Pra-cetak]. arXiv. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2111.02452>
- Lou, C., & Yuan, S. (2019). Influencer marketing: How message value and credibility affect consumer trust. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 19(1), 58–73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2018.1533501>
- Lu, M., Sining, K., Shen, D., & Yongyue, B. (2024). *The impact of content characteristics of short-form video ads on consumer purchase behavior: Evidence from TikTok*. *Journal of Business Research*.
- Maarof, S. (2024). The evolution of fashion content on TikTok: From 2020 to 2024 in Malaysia. *Journal of Creative Arts*, 1(2), 74–81. <https://doi.org/10.24191/jca.v1i2.1567>
- Marketing Donut (2024). *The benefits of the TikTok Shop for e-commerce businesses*. Marketing Donut.
- Mimi Suhana Hakim, Nur Afiqah Ahmad Raof, & Sa’adiah Ma’alip (2021). Percampuran Kod Dalam Kalangan Peniaga Dalam Talian Di Instagram. *Jurnal Melayu*, 20(2), 223–237. <https://journalarticle.ukm.my/18394/>
- Mohd Syuhaidi Abu Bakar & Nor Audra Dayana Dahlan. (2018). Percampuran Kod Bahasa Di Dalam Filem: Satu Kajian Kualitatif Terhadap Filem J Revolusi (2017). *e-Academia Journal*, 7(2), 107-121. <https://e-ajuitmct.uitm.edu.my/v2/images/vol7issue2/PID197-PERCAMPURANKODBAHASADIDALAMFILEM.pdf>
- Munirah Zulkifli & Ira Meilita Ibrahim. (2023). Penggunaan Bahasa Slang di Media Sosial Dalam Kalangan Pencipta Kandungan. Prosiding Seminar Antarabangsa Susastera, Bahasa dan Budaya Nusantara (SUTERA) ke-2. https://penerbit.unimap.edu.my/images/pdf/SUTERA2023/SUTERA_2023_201-210.pdf
- Ning, Y. M., Hu, C., Tu, T. T., & Li, D. (2022). Offensive or amusing? The study on the influence of brand-to-brand teasing on consumer engagement behavioral intention based on social media. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 966254. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.966254>
- Noor Aida Mahmor, Nasariah Mansor, & Faizah Ahmad. (2016). “Hahaha... Cool Gila Kau Punya Acting Ariana...”: Percampuran Kod Dalam Novel ‘The Wedding Breaker’. *Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 4, 192-200. <https://repo.uum.edu.my/id/eprint/21668/>
- Nurazree, M., Ahmad Mirza, N. Y., Nurul Ain, A. M., Nur Afrina, N., & Nur Husnina, K. (2024). The influence of TikTok marketing on consumer purchase intention among students. *International Journal of Art and Design*, 8(2), SI. <https://doi.org/10.24191/ijad.v8i2/SI.3014>
- Statista (2024). *Number of TikTok users worldwide from 2018 to 2024*. Statista Research Department. <https://www.statista.com>
- Suryani, T. (2015). *Perilaku Konsumen: Implikasi untuk Strategi Pemasaran*. Andi.
- Swasdison, N., & Prajaknate, P. (2023). The analysis of the content marketing strategies of cosmetic brands affecting the engagement of TikTok users. *Executive Journal*, 43(1), 1–23. <https://so01.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/executivejournal/article/view/265770>

- The Times. (2025, 26 Mei). Why TikTok is the new face of the £30bn UK cosmetics industry. *The Times*. <https://www.thetimes.com/business-money/companies/article/why-tiktok-is-the-new-face-of-the-30bn-uk-cosmetics-industry->
- TikTok for Business. (2023). *How Hashtags Drive Engagement and Discoverability*. <https://www.tiktok.com/business>
- Ting, S. H. (2023). *Advertising Language: Secrets of Persuasion*. Universiti Malaysia Sarawak.
- Trissetianto, A. C., & Ali, H. (2024). *The role of TikTok in shaping Gen Z's brand loyalty and consumer behavior*. *Greenation Management and Business Review*, 1(2), Artikel. <https://doi.org/10.38035/gmbr.v1i2.818>
- Van Wyngarden, A. (2025). *The evolution of advertising: From print to digital*. *Creative DSM*. <https://www.creativedsm.com/creative-dsm/the-evolution-of-advertising-from-print-to-digital-dominance/>
- Wen, J., & Kim, H. (2024). *The impact of TikTok K-beauty video characteristics on beauty management behavior and cosmetics purchase intention*. *Journal of International Crisis and Risk Communication Research*, 7(3), 60–73. <https://doi.org/10.63278/jicrcr.vi.2210>
- Zannettou, S., Nemeth, O., Ayalon, O., Goetzen, A., Gummedi, K. P., Redmiles, E. M., & Roesner, F. (2023). *Analyzing user engagement with TikTok's short format video recommendations using data donations* [Pra-cetak]. arXiv. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2301.04945>
- Zhang, Y. (2022). *The Role of Entertainment and Trend Culture in TikTok Marketing Strategies*. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 22(2), 150-165.



© 2026 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY-NC-ND) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Exploring Multimodal Meaning-Making in Lecturer Discourse: Language, Gesture, and Space in CEW Classrooms

Dong Wan¹, Mazlin Azizan^{2*}, Puspallata C Suppiah³

^{1,2,3}*Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam, Malaysia*

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 4 January 2026

Revised 4 January 2026

Accepted 08 May 2025

Online first 01 July 2026

Published 01 July 2026

Keywords:

multimodality, SF-MDA, College
English Writing, gesture, space

DOI:

10.24191/ijmal.v10i3.6809

ABSTRACT

Multimodality has become a central concern in applied linguistics, particularly for understanding how meaning is constructed in classroom interaction. This study examines how lecturers in College English Writing (CEW) classrooms use multimodal communication to construct meaning, drawing on Systemic Functional–Multimodal Discourse Analysis (SF-MDA). Whereas classroom discourse research has often privileged verbal interaction, this study foregrounds the coordinated use of language, gesture, and spatial positioning as semiotic resources that shape students' engagement and participation. It addresses two questions: (1) How do CEW lecturers deploy language, gesture, and spatial positioning to co-construct meaning during instruction? (2) How does multimodal communication influence student engagement and support the teaching of writing in CEW classrooms? Adopting an ethnographic design, the study captured naturally occurring classroom practices through participant observation and video-recorded lessons involving two lecturers at a Chinese university, with analytical attention to episodes of explicit instruction, feedback, and classroom interaction. Using ELAN, transcripts were systematically annotated to integrate linguistic choices with gesture types and spatial positioning. The findings show that lecturers mobilise gesture and space not as add-ons to speech, but as integral meaning-making resources that strengthen writing instruction: gestures support the explanation and elaboration of writing concepts, while spatial positioning contributes to interpersonal alignment and the organisation of instructional discourse. The study argues that cultivating lecturers' multimodal awareness is essential for creating effective and engaging CEW instruction, and it outlines directions for future research on multimodal classroom discourse.

^{3*}Corresponding author. *E-mail address* : mazlinazizan@uitm.edu.my

INTRODUCTION

Communication, especially in multimedia and social media environments, extends beyond language and draws on a range of multimodal semiotic resources, such as images, videos, bodily actions, and three-dimensional objects, to construct meaning across contexts (Lim, 2018). Multimodal discourse refers to communication that mobilises multiple sensory modalities (e.g., auditory, visual, tactile) and coordinates diverse semiotic modes, including language, image, sound, gesture, and movement (Zhang, 2015). Although meaning-making has always been inherently multimodal, traditional linguistic research has tended to privilege language, often overlooking how other modes contribute to communication.

Since the 1990s, the development of Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) has shifted this perspective by foregrounding the interplay between linguistic and non-linguistic resources in meaning-making (Kress, 2015). As contemporary communication becomes increasingly multimodal, researchers have been urged to examine how meanings are constructed not only through language, but also through semiotic resources such as gaze, facial expression, gesture, images, and digital tools. As an analytical framework, multimodality enables scholars to investigate how people construct and communicate meaning through the coordination of multiple modes (Jewitt, 2013). Jewitt et al. (2016) identify three major approaches to multimodal studies: systemic functional linguistics (Bateman, 2014; O'Halloran & Lim, 2014), social semiotics (Kress, 2010), and conversation analysis (Broth & Mondada, 2013; Mondada, 2019). Among these, systemic functional linguistics (SFL), developed by Michael Halliday, provides a particularly robust foundation for MDA because it conceptualises meaning as socially and contextually situated (Halliday, 1978). Building on SFL, multimodal analysis examines how semiotic resources work together to realise metafunctional meanings across diverse contexts, including visual texts, websites, social media, and classroom discourse (Bateman, 2014; O'Halloran & Lim, 2014).

In recent years, the integration of multimodal resources in classroom teaching and learning has attracted growing attention because of its potential to enrich students' learning experiences (Lim, 2021a; Peng, 2019; Qin & Wang, 2021; Salamanti, 2023; Widiatmoko & Endarto, 2018). In parallel, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching in China's higher education has undergone substantial development over the past decades (Cai, 2025; Yang & Xu, 2023). Against this backdrop, effective classroom communication increasingly depends on the coordinated use of semiotic resources—verbal and non-verbal, digital and non-digital, material and non-material—to support meaning-making and learning (Dagenais et al., 2017; Erfanian Mohammadi et al., 2019). This has brought the notion of multimodal competence to the foreground. In the context of EFL teaching, multimodal competence refers to teachers' ability to strategically orchestrate multiple communicative modes alongside spoken language to achieve instructional goals (Morell, 2018; Qin & Wang, 2021). This issue is particularly salient in College English Writing (CEW), a course intended to develop students' writing ability, critical thinking, and capacity to express complex ideas in English. To make writing instruction more accessible and engaging, CEW instructors are increasingly moving beyond spoken and written language by integrating additional modes into classroom teaching (Qin & Wang, 2021).

Among the semiotic resources available in classroom interaction, teachers' gestures and spatial positioning warrant particular attention because they are central to embodied meaning-making. As Lim (2021a) notes, teachers are encouraged to reflect critically on how they use these modes in instruction and to develop greater skill in deploying space and gesture to communicate pedagogical intentions—such as presenting knowledge, building connections with students, and organising classroom activity. Gestures

have long been recognised as an integral component of communication (Lim, 2019, 2021b). They provide immediate and dynamic visual cues that can clarify abstract concepts, reinforce spoken language, and, in some cases, substitute for verbal explanation. Similarly, spatial positioning—including teachers' movement across the classroom and their proximity to students—carries both deliberate and incidental meanings. It can direct students' attention, regulate interaction, and shape the overall classroom atmosphere (Lim et al., 2012; Lim, 2021a).

Thus, an in-depth analysis of these embodied resources offers valuable insights into how lecturers construct meaning, shape classroom discourse, and support student learning through multimodal strategies.

Research objectives

- i. To investigate how lecturers utilise multimodal semiotic resources—including language, gesture, and spatial positioning—to construct meaning in CEW classrooms.
- ii. To explore the role of multimodal communication in shaping student engagement and enhancing the effectiveness of writing instruction.

Research questions

- i. How do CEW lecturers deploy language, gesture, and spatial positioning to co-construct meaning during instruction?
- ii. How does multimodal communication influence student engagement and support the teaching of writing in CEW classrooms?

LITERATURE REVIEW

In contemporary language education, meaning-making extends beyond verbal communication to include a range of multimodal resources, such as gesture, spatial positioning, and visual cues. This shift has generated increasing interest in how lecturers orchestrate multiple semiotic modes to scaffold learning and engage students. To examine these processes, the present study adopts Systemic Functional Multimodal Discourse Analysis (SF-MDA), a socially grounded framework for investigating how different modes work together to construct meaning in classroom interaction. The following literature review examines four interrelated areas: the College English Writing (CEW) classroom within China's EFL context, theoretical foundations of Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA), the principles and applications of SF-MDA, and empirical studies on multimodal meaning-making in language classrooms. Together, these strands of literature provide a conceptual basis for the present study and highlight existing gaps in research on lecturer multimodal discourse in writing instruction.

College English Writing Classrooms

English language education in China is primarily situated within the paradigm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Over the past few decades, EFL teaching and learning in China's higher education have evolved substantially, shaped by national policies, economic demands, and shifting educational priorities (Dai & Liu, 2024; Yang & Xu, 2023). Within this context, College English Writing (CEW) occupies an

important position, as it is explicitly intended to develop students' writing proficiency, critical thinking, and ability to express complex ideas in English. In the present study, the CEW course is offered to non-English majors at a university in Shaanxi Province, China. It introduces foundational concepts and strategies for multiple writing genres, guiding students to understand genre-specific features and to apply appropriate techniques across narrative, argumentative, expository, descriptive, practical, and academic abstract writing (Jin & Yang, 2018). Through structured classroom instruction and guided practice, students are expected to complete writing tasks that are substantive in content, clear in central ideas, appropriate in diction, and coherent in organisation. Beyond linguistic development, the course also aims to foster critical thinking and cultural awareness by engaging students with diverse topics through integrated reading and writing activities. For students who plan to study abroad, CEW further functions as essential preparation, given that English writing proficiency is often a requirement for admission to universities in English-speaking countries.

In EFL teaching, it is important for both teachers and learners to draw on a coherent repertoire of semiotic resources—verbal and non-verbal, digital and non-digital, material and non-material—to support meaning-making and learning (Erfanian Mohammadi et al., 2019; Peng, 2019). In this sense, EFL instruction in Chinese universities is inherently multimodal: spoken language is continuously coordinated with other communicative modes to facilitate understanding and participation. Consequently, EFL teachers' multimodal competence—their ability to strategically integrate multiple modes alongside spoken language to achieve instructional purposes—plays a crucial role in supporting effective learning (Peng, 2019; Qin & Wang, 2021). In CEW classrooms, lecturers typically use a range of multimodal resources, including spoken explanations, written texts, visual aids, digital tools, and interactive activities, to scaffold students' understanding of writing principles and genre conventions.

Multimodal Discourse Analysis

Functional theories of language have faced significant challenges due to the growing prominence of visual modes of communication. They can no longer overlook other semiotic systems or the reality that humans use various semiotic resources when interacting. To fully understand human communication, it is essential to consider non-linguistic semiotic systems in both discourse analysis and the theoretical frameworks that support such analyses. MDA is a rapidly developing approach to studying discourse, emphasising that “meanings are created in texts and interactions in a complex interplay of semiosis across multiple modes which include but are not limited to written and spoken language” (Bhatia et al., 2008). Following Halliday's (1978) metafunctional view of language as a social semiotic system, many researchers have extended the linguistic framework to study meaning-making in other multimodal semiotic resources.

Semiotic resources offer the tools to create meanings by selecting from various modes at a given moment. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2001), modes, the channel of representation or communication, refer to a set of socially and culturally shaped semiotic resources for making meaning. Jewitt (2013) states that to determine if a set of resources can be considered a mode, it is assessed based on its ability to fulfill all three of Halliday's (1978) meaning functions, that is, ideational meaning (representing experiences), interpersonal meaning (establishing relationships), and textual meaning (organising messages). This functional approach provides a systemic way to identify and categorise modes.

Some in-depth studies focusing on specific modes have contributed to the initial exploration of these semiotic resources. These studies have helped in describing their material affordances, organising principles, and cultural references (Jewitt, 2008). Examples of accepted modes include speech (Kress et al, 2005), image, colour, and layout (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), sound and music (van Leeuwen, 1999), gesture (Hood, 2011; Lim, 2011, 2021b; Martinec, 2001), posture (Martinec, 2000), gaze (Amundrud, 2018; Harrigan, 2013), facial expression (Martinec, 2001), furniture (Björkvall & Karlsson, 2011), screens and digital technologies (Jewitt, 2012; Lim & Toh, 2022). Since modes have different affordances, people always use various modes simultaneously to ‘orchestrate complex multimodal ensembles’ (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2010). The selection of a mode and its corresponding semiotic resources has epistemological consequences, as it can shape the way concepts are designed. Consequently, this can impact the potential for interaction in the classroom.

Over the past two decades, research on multimodality has grown significantly, as it sheds light on how speakers and writers convey their intended meanings and purposes (Alyousef, 2020). Multimodality examines the integration of various semiotic resources, or modes, within texts and communicative events, including static and dynamic images, speech, writing, layout, gestures, and positioning (Adami, 2016). Lim (2021a) states, “Multimodality specifically focuses on exploring the interactions and interplay across the semiotic resources in the constellation of meanings made”. Multimodality designates a phenomenon that discourse is almost always multimodal, indicating that a range of semiotic modes are integrated in a given instance of discourse (van Leeuwen, 2015). This challenges the traditional framework of categorising communication as either ‘verbal’ or ‘non-verbal’, which usually gives preference to language as the central or primary mode of communication (Lim & Tan, 2018). Jewitt (2013) defines multimodality as an interdisciplinary approach drawn from social semiotics that goes beyond language and recognises communication and representation in various forms. It emphasises the systematic examination of how different modes of communication contribute to meaning-making, considering the social interpretation of these diverse forms of expression. Jewitt (2013) also stresses three interconnected theoretical assumptions that form the foundation of multimodality. The first assumption is that “multimodality steps away from the notion that language always plays the central role in interaction, without denying that it often does” (Norris, 2004). The second asserts that all modes have been molded by their cultural, historical, and social utilisation to fulfill specific social functions as demanded by different communities. The third is that people orchestrate meaning through their choices of modes. Given the theoretical understandings developed in recent research in multimodality, it is worthwhile to explore how they can be extended to inform the teaching and learning of students in classrooms (Lim & Tan, 2018).

Systemic Functional Multimodal Discourse Analysis

According to O’Halloran (2008), Systemic Functional Multimodal Discourse Analysis (SF-MDA) is an approach to analyzing discourse in the social semiotic tradition. SF-informed MDA focuses on the theory and practice of examining meaning derived from the use of various semiotic resources in discourses such as spoken and written language, visual imagery, gesture, architecture, sculpture, and other physical modes (O’Halloran, 2008). The interest in applying SFL theory for MDA has grown steadily, influenced by works like O’Toole’s (1994) *Language of Displayed Art* and Kress and van Leeuwen’s (1996) *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. Later, many other scholars contributed to this area, including Unsworth (2001), Baldry and Thibault (2006), Bateman (2008), Kress et al. (2005), Lemke (2002), Martin (2002), Martinec (2005), O’Halloran (2004), Ventola et al. (2004), Lim (2011).

According to Lim (2021a), the SF-MDA perspective highlights the notion of choice and meaning potential in system networks. The metafunctional framework is especially useful in multimodal studies as it provides a common foundation for integrating and comparing different semiotic resources. The SF-MDA approach adopts a genre-based orientation toward multimodality and is organised around metafunctional meanings, that is, ideational meaning, interpersonal meaning, and textual meaning (Lim, 2018). The SF-informed studies of various semiotic resources include paintings, film, music, visual images, books, websites, newspapers and magazines, space and special organisation, gesture and body language, typography and colour, digital platforms and interactive technologies (Bateman, 2008; Hood, 2011; Lim et al., 2012; Macken-Horarik, 2004; Martin, 2008). In conclusion, the paradigmatic approach of SF theory to language has established a theoretical foundation for systematically and comprehensively examining semiotic systems beyond language.

The MDA informed by SF theory has been taken up to explore practices in the classrooms across a range of subjects. Earlier studies have investigated how teachers coordinate various modes of communication, such as facial expression, gaze, posture, action with books and boards, and talk, within the classroom (Jewitt, 2013), and the meaning construction has been the focus of much research. O'Halloran (1996) highlighted the semiotic nature of mathematics and its discourse, involving natural language, mathematical symbolism, and visual display in the form of diagrams and graphs. He suggested that the systemic functional model provides a framework to analyze such semiotic systems constructing reality and emphasised the need to examine the joint construction of meaning between codes, leading to the phenomenon of semiotic metaphor. Kress et al. (2001) conducted an earlier study investigating how science teachers convey subject matter and influence their students' comprehension through interactive classroom teaching and learning processes. They claim that a linguistic description alone cannot fully capture these processes, and each mode contributes to the overall meaning of the multimodal ensemble in quite specific ways. Therefore, communication in science classrooms should include the utilisation and mapping of all available visual representational and communicative resources used by teachers and students. The realisation of each mode and its meaning construction is also studied in language teaching and learning classrooms. Kress et al. (2005) also examined the meaning making of English classrooms in urban secondary schools in Inner London through the observation of three English teachers' lessons. They stress that the meaning of English language learning is not solely dependent on verbal communication or written expression. Instead, it can be equally influenced by non-verbal modes, which play a substantial role in shaping the meaning of English in the learning environment. They claim that "*in any lesson, several modes are in use at the same time: the layout of the classroom remains-more or less-fixed, as does the display on the walls; teachers take up certain, always meaningful, positions in the space of the classroom, textual objects are present and usually, but not always, all this is enveloped in the talk*" (Kress et al., 2005).

Empirical Studies on the Impact of Multimodal Resources on Student Learning

The integration of multimodal resources in classrooms has gained significant attention for its potential to enhance student learning and engagement. Gillies and Baffour (2017) explored how teacher-introduced multimodal representations and discourse influenced students' task engagement. It found that very effective teachers utilised longer durations of embodied and visual representations, which were crucial in enhancing student understanding and engagement with scientific concepts. Significant differences in the types and durations of multimodal language used by teachers underscore their impact on student learning

and engagement, highlighting the importance of multimodal teaching in science education. In language classrooms, Salamanti et al. (2023) investigated the effectiveness of multimodal and collaborative learning methods in enhancing English language competence among ESL and EFL learners. Using a pre-test and post-test design, the study measured language skills and student engagement through standardised tests (Oxford Quick Placement Test). The results showed that students taught with multimodal methods had significantly improved performance, engagement, and motivation. Taljaard (2016) highlighted the advantages of employing multimodal resources in education, noting that they enhance student engagement and learning outcomes by enabling students to learn in their preferred styles. In terms of student engagement, the impact of multimodal approaches on student engagement and motivation across different educational contexts underscores their potential to enhance learning experiences and foster active participation in learning processes (Claman, 2015). In terms of learning outcomes, Kim (2015) demonstrated that using a Social Network Service-based writing platform in L2 university students enhances writing performance, motivation, and peer collaboration.

However, Vungthong et al. (2017) pointed out several limitations despite the benefits of multimodal resources in education, emphasising the crucial role of teachers in supporting students' understanding and integration of abstract concepts across cultures. To sum up, understanding the current state of research in this area is crucial for informing effective teaching practices and providing a deeper comprehension of how meanings are constructed within educational settings. Emerging trends identified in the literature include multimodal literacy cultivation, multimodal learning resources, and multimodal pedagogical discourse. Despite the wealth of research on this topic, there remains a need for further investigation into lecturers' use of body display in CEW classrooms applying SF-MDA.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology to explore how CEW lecturers utilise semiotic resources during classroom instruction. As Fraenkel et al. (2023) note, qualitative research enables a more holistic understanding of classroom practices, allowing researchers to move beyond measuring how well something is done to examining what actually happens in a given educational context. Aligned with this perspective, the study employs an ethnographic approach, which focuses on documenting the everyday experiences of participants through observation and interviews. Specifically, the researcher conducts participant observations and semi-structured interviews with the two lecturers to investigate how they deploy both linguistic and non-linguistic resources to construct metafunctional meanings in their teaching. All participation was voluntary. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants, including permission for video recording.

Participants

The study involves two CEW lecturers from a university in Shaanxi Province, China, as well as about 70 students (35 in each class) who are enrolled in the class. These two lecturers were chosen because they were both university or provincial teaching contest winners. The demographic information of the two lectures is shown in Table 1. Thus, assessing how these lecturers incorporate multimodal resources into their instructional methods can offer valuable insights into effective multimodal discourse. All the

students engaged in the class are sophomores aged 18 to 20. They have already completed one year of College English Integrated Course learning and have already undergone the initial adjustment to the transition from high school to college, which can positively impact their engagement and participation in CEW classes. The demographic information of the students is shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Demographic information of two lecturers

Information	Lecturer A	Lecturer B
Gender	Female	Female
Age	35	33
Education	Master	Master
Language	Fluent English	Fluent English
Years of teaching CEW	6	4

Table 2. Demographic information of the students

Information	Class 1	Class 2
Age	18-20	18-20
Grade	Sophomore	Sophomore
Major	Transportation	E-commerce
Years of English Learning	8-10 years	8-10 years

Data Collection

Participant Observation

In participant observation studies, researchers participate in the situation or setting they are observing (Fraenkel et al., 2023). The researcher personally conducts the observation for each CEW class in this study. However, it is important to acknowledge the potential presence of the Observer's Paradox, wherein the awareness of being observed might influence the participants' behaviors. To mitigate this effect, the researcher uses the long-term observation method from the beginning of the course, thus helping the participants gradually get used to the observer's presence. Data collection concentrates on the "Expository Writing" lesson delivered by the two CEW lectures, typically scheduled mid-semester, by which point students and lecturers are accustomed to the researcher's presence.

Video Recordings

Recording people's behavior on video allows the researcher to revisit and examine individual or group actions multiple times, enabling more convenient and accurate coding at a later stage (Fraenkel et al., 2023). Jewitt (2012) emphasised that video, as a shareable digital record capturing all modes sequentially, provides a fine-grained multimodal account of events, including gaze, facial expression, posture, and gesture. At this university, each classroom is equipped with four 360-degree cameras capable of recording full panoramic views. For this study, the cameras are configured to focus specifically on the lecturers, which not only ensures clear tracking of their multimodal behaviors but also minimises disruptions during data collection.

Semi-structured Interviews with Lecturers

Following each class recording, semi-structured interviews are conducted with the lecturers. Interviews serve as a valuable tool for researchers to verify and enrich the impressions formed during observation (Fraenkel et al., 2023). Positioned between fully structured and entirely open-ended formats, semi-structured interviews rely on open-ended questions that encourage participants to elaborate on their

thoughts and perspectives (Karatsareas, 2022). This approach provides deeper insight into the lectures' use of gesture and space to shape student engagement in CEW classrooms.

Analytical Procedures

Technology opens the path to explore semiosis because static and dynamic visual images can be easily manipulated (O'Halloran, 2008). The ELAN (EUDICO Linguistic Annotator) software, an adaptable tool for analyzing media data, was developed at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen, Netherlands (Tacchetti, 2018). Drawing on the coding scheme identified by Zhang (2009), a coding annotation scheme for semiotic modes in CEW classrooms is developed in this part, as shown in Table 3, to annotate the video recordings. Then, the distribution of modes obtained from the ELAN annotator tool in CEW classrooms and the relation of realised modes are analyzed within O'Halloran & Lim's (2014) Systemic Functional Multimodal Discourse Analysis Framework.

Table 3. Coding scheme of modes

Modes		Code
Language	Declarative Mood	[DM]
	Interrogative Mood	[INM]
	Imperative Mood	[IMM]
	Exclamative Mood	[EM]
Gesture	Performative Gesture	[PG]
	Communicative Gesture	Language Independent Gesture [CGI]
		Language Correspondent Gesture [CGC]
		Language Dependent Gesture [CGD]
Positioning	Authoritative Space	[P-AS]
	Supervisory Space	[P-SS]
	Interpersonal Space	[P-IS]
	Personal Space	[P-PS]

The categories of meanings for Communicative Gestures and Performative Gestures are explained in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Meanings of gesture type

Gestures	Categories	Meanings
Communicative Gestures	Language Correspondent Gestures	Gestures which co-occur with speech, but their meanings can be accessed and interpreted without relying on the accompanying language
	Language Independent Gestures	Gestures that occur in the absence of language and make meaning on their own
	Language Dependent Gestures	Gestures which co-occur with language and require the accompanying language to fully access and interpret their meanings
Performative Gestures		Not to communicate

Lim et al. (2012) propose four types of space related to the teacher's position: Authoritative Space, Supervisory Space, Interactional Space, and Personal Space. The explanations of these types of spaces are listed in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Meanings of space type

Types of Space	Description	Meanings
Authoritative Space	The space in front of the teacher's desk and in the front center of the classroom	Formality, structure, and power
Supervisory Space	The space in which the teacher moves between the rows of the students' desks or moves amongst the clusters of students' desks primarily for supervision	Control and monitoring

Interactional Space	The space in which the teacher stands next to a student or a group of students	Solidarity and relatability
Personal Space	The space behind the teacher's desk where the teacher organises his/her materials and prepares for the next stage of the lesson	Authority

FINDINGS

In terms of language choices, the two lecturers exhibited distinct preferences in mood types that aligned closely with their pedagogical aims in teaching expository writing. During the 80-minute lessons, Lecturer A used a total of 134 imperative clauses (e.g., “Look at the screen,” “Underline the keywords,” “Let’s move on”), accounting for 48% of her overall clause types. Rather than simply reflecting a “teacher-led” style, this imperative-dominant register functioned as procedural scaffolding: it externalised the steps of expository writing (e.g., identifying key points, sequencing ideas, and building coherent paragraphs) and guided students through the task in a tightly organised manner. In learning terms, these clear commands likely reduced uncertainty and cognitive load, helping students focus attention on what to do next and enabling more efficient uptake of genre procedures—an effect Lecturer A also emphasised in the interview (“Using clear commands helps students focus on the writing process step by step”). From an SFL perspective, this mood pattern realises strong interpersonal control and task management, which can support outcomes such as accurate execution of writing steps, clearer paragraph organisation, and smoother task completion.

In contrast, Lecturer B favored interrogative clauses, using 109 questions (e.g., “What does this expression imply?” “Can anyone suggest a better title?”), making up 42% of her clause types. In the CEW context, these questions functioned as cognitive scaffolds that prompted students to make genre-relevant decisions rather than simply follow procedures. For example, implication questions guided students to unpack meaning and strengthen explanation, while questions about titles pushed them to bring the topic, controlling idea, and audience expectations. By requiring students to propose, justify, and compare alternatives, the interrogative pattern created opportunities for metalinguistic reflection and public reasoning about writing choices. As a result, this dialogic questioning was likely associated with learning outcomes in CEW, including clearer articulation of ideas, improved coherence through better organisational choices, and more purposeful revision based on peer and teacher feedback.

Interviews with both lecturers confirmed this: Lecturer A noted, “Using clear commands helps students focus on the writing process step by step,” whereas Lecturer B explained, “Questions help students to think critically and articulate their understanding of the expository text.” According to SFL, such mood choices shape interpersonal meanings; Lecturer A’s imperatives enacted authority and task management, while Lecturer B’s interrogatives promoted negotiation of meaning and interactive learning.

In terms of gestures, both lecturers made strategic use of multimodal resources, yet their gesture types and frequencies differed markedly, reflecting their teaching styles in expository writing instruction. Lecturer A performed a total of 87 gestures, as shown in Picture 1, with approximately 66.7% (58 gestures) being language-dependent gestures, such as pointing to specific sections of slides or mimicking writing motions, that required verbal accompaniment to convey meaning effectively. Functionally, this gesture supported a directive, form-focused teaching: by synchronising talk with deictic pointing and writing-related enactments, Lecturer A visually highlighted genre features and structural elements (e.g.,

topic focus, key points, paragraph moves), helping students locate what mattered and follow how to implement it. Such gestures likely contributed to learning outcomes such as more accurate uptake of text structure and clearer execution of step-by-step writing procedures by providing an additional visual “anchor” for abstract organisational concepts. Additionally, she used 21 language-correspondent gestures, which paralleled her spoken language to clarify meaning, and 8 language-independent gestures (e.g., raised palms to emphasise a point). Lecturer A explained in interviews that these gestures “help students connect abstract writing concepts with concrete visual cues”.



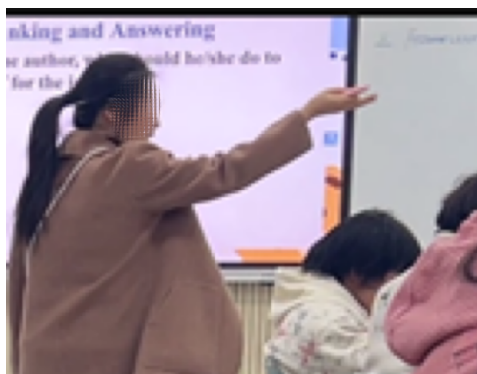
Picture 1. Lecturer A's frequent use of language-dependent gestures

Conversely, Lecturer B used 102 gestures in total, as shown in Picture 2, with a notably larger proportion—42.2% (43 gestures)—being language-independent, such as thumbs-up to encourage students, clapping to show approval, or illustrative movements to represent ideas visually. Her 38 language-correspondent and 21 language-dependent gestures complemented this variety. This diversity—and the relative autonomy of many gestures from concurrent speech—reflected in Lecturer B's dialogic orientation: non-verbal moves were frequently used to affirm response and sustain participation without interrupting the flow of discussion. Such affective and illustrative gestures likely supported learning outcomes related to engagement and risk-taking in expressing ideas, creating conditions in which students were more willing to propose and elaborate explanations during writing-related interaction.

In terms of spatial usage, the two lecturers showed contrasting patterns that revealed their differing teaching orientations and interactional strategies.

As shown in Picture 3, Lecturer A predominantly occupied the authoritative space—at the front center of the classroom—spending 71.3% of the lesson time (about 57 minutes) there, which reinforced her formal role as the central information provider in the expository writing process. She moved into supervisory space (among student desks for monitoring) only 10.5% of the time and rarely entered interactional space beside students, maintaining a clear teacher-student distance. Her use of personal space behind the desk accounted for 18.2% of class time, mostly during transitions between writing activities. This stable front-of-class positioning supported a directive pedagogical stance: it enabled

centralised control over pacing and attention and sustained whole-class focus on key procedural steps in the writing task. Lecturer A reflected in the interview that staying in front helped “maintain order and keep students focused on the writing tasks.”



Picture 2. Lecturer B's frequent use of language-independent gestures



Picture 3. Lecturer A's frequent use of spatial positioning

By contrast, as shown in Picture 4, Lecturer B occupied authoritative space for just 39.5% of the time and frequently moved through supervisory space (34.8%) to closely monitor students' writing progress and offer scaffolding. She also spent 20.2% of class time in interactional space beside students during discussions or feedback, facilitating more personal and immediate interaction. Her use of personal space was minimal (about 5.5%). This mobility shifted the instructional center from the front of the classroom to students' desks, creating more opportunities for formative feedback, on-the-spot clarification, and engagement during expository writing tasks. Lecturer B reflected in the interview that moving around the classroom helped her “see students' difficulties in time and give immediate support”.



Picture 4. Lecturer B's most frequent use of spatial positioning

DISCUSSION

The analysis of language, gesture, and spatial positioning shows how multimodal semiotic resources work in concert to shape distinct pedagogical approaches to teaching expository writing. Lecturer A's predominant use of imperative clauses reflects a more directive and highly structured teaching style, which aligns with the demands of expository writing for clarity, logical sequencing, and focus. Through these imperatives, she enacts strong interpersonal control and guides students through the complex processes of organising ideas and constructing paragraphs. Her preference for language-dependent gestures complements this approach by visually reinforcing key instructional points, making the content explicit and readily accessible. In addition, her sustained presence in authoritative space reinforces her role as the central organiser of classroom activity, supporting classroom management and facilitating focused knowledge transmission.

By contrast, Lecturer B's frequent use of interrogative clauses signals a more dialogic, student-centered pedagogy that encourages inquiry, critical thinking, and the co-construction of meaning—capacities closely tied to higher-order writing in expository genres. Her prominent use of language-independent gestures, such as thumbs-up and applause, contributes to a more supportive classroom climate in which non-verbal resources strengthen motivation and interpersonal connection. Moreover, her movement across authoritative, supervisory, and interactional spaces enables closer teacher–student rapport and provides real-time scaffolding. This spatial mobility can be particularly effective in helping students articulate, evaluate, and refine ideas during writing activities. Overall, her approach resonates with constructivist principles that view learning as interactive and situated.

Interview data further support the observation that both lecturers deploy language, gesture, and space strategically to achieve instructional goals. Lecturer A's emphasis on control and clarity—realised through directive language, reinforcing gestures, and stable positioning—supports a step-by-step, skill-building approach to expository writing. In contrast, Lecturer B's focus on interaction and engagement—enacted through questioning, affective gestures, and spatial mobility—cultivates a more exploratory and participatory learning environment. Taken together, these findings suggest that effective expository

writing instruction can be achieved through different yet complementary multimodal strategies, shaped by lecturers' interpersonal stances and teaching orientation.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how two lecturers teaching expository writing in a Chinese university CEW classroom employ multimodal resources—language choices, gesture, and spatial positioning—to enact distinct teaching and learning orientations and classroom dynamics. Lecturer A's directive approach (frequent imperatives, language-dependent gestures, and sustained use of authoritative space) emphasised clarity, control, and structured guidance aligned with the organisational demands of expository writing. Lecturer B's dialogic approach (frequent interrogatives, a wider range of language-independent gestures, and movement across supervisory and interactional spaces) cultivated a more participatory learning environment that supported inquiry and engagement.

The findings highlight that multimodal resources are integral to how writing pedagogy is enacted, shaping both instructional content and interpersonal relations in classroom interaction. Although the study is context-rich, the strategies identified here may be transferable to wider EFL and EMI writing classrooms where instructors similarly need to make abstract writing concepts visible and actionable. In such settings, teachers may adapt these insights by developing consistent gesture–language routines for genre organisation, using purposeful spatial positioning during explanation and feedback, and flexibly balancing directive and dialogic moves to match learners' needs. Future research could further investigate students' perceptions of these strategies and their relationship to engagement and writing performance, as well as how emerging digital tools (e.g., interactive whiteboards, educational apps, AI-supported platforms) mediate multimodal meaning-making in writing instruction.

Author contributions

Conceptualisation, D.W.; Methodology, D.W. and M.A.; Investigation, D.W.; Data Curation, D.W.; Formal Analysis, D.W.; Writing—Original Draft, D.W.; Writing—Review & Editing, M.A. and P.C.S.; Supervision, M.A.; Validation, P.C.S.; Project Administration, M.A.

Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Data availability statement

All data analyzed during this study are included in this published article and/or its supplementary materials.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article

Acknowledgement

The authors thank the two lecturers and all students who participated in this study. Their valuable input and cooperation were essential to the completion of this research.

REFERENCES

- Adami, E. (2016). *Introducing multimodality*. The Oxford handbook of language and society. Oxford University Press.
- Alyousef, H. S. (2020). A multimodal discourse analysis of English dentistry texts written by Saudi undergraduate students: A study of theme and information structure. *Open Linguistics*, 6(1), 267-283. <https://doi.org/10.1515/opli-2020-0103>
- Amundrud, T. (2018). Applying multimodal research to the tertiary foreign language classroom: Looking at gaze. In H. de Silva Joyce & S. Feez (Eds.), *Multimodality across classrooms* (pp. 160-177). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203701072>
- Baldry, A., & Thibault, P. J. (2006). *Multimodal transcription and text analysis: A multimodal toolkit and coursebook*. University of Toronto Press.
- Bateman, J. (2008). *Multimodality and genre: A foundation for the systematic analysis of multimodal documents*. Springer.
- Bateman, J. (2014). Using multimodal corpora for multimodal research. In C. Jewitt (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of multimodal analysis* (pp. 238-252). Routledge.
- Bezemer, J., & Jewitt, C. (2010). Multimodal analysis: Key issues. In L. Litosseliti (Ed.), *Research methods in linguistics* (pp. 180-197). Continuum.
- Bhatia, V. K., Flowerdew, J., & Jones, R. H. (2008). Approaches to discourse analysis. In *Advances in discourse studies* (pp. 11-28). Routledge.
- Björkvall, A., & Karlsson, A. M. (2011). The materiality of discourses and the semiotics of materials: A social perspective on the meaning potentials of written texts and furniture. *Semiotica*, 187(1/4), 141-165. <https://doi.org/10.1515/semi.2011.068>
- Broth, M., & Mondada, L. (2013). Walking away: The embodied achievement of activity closings in mobile interaction. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 47(1), 41-58. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2012.11.016>
- Cai, Q. (2025). Factors influencing engagement in EFL learning of higher education learners in blended learning environments. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 131, 102587. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2025.102587>
- Claman, F. L. (2015). The impact of multiuser virtual environments on student engagement. *Nurse education in practice*, 15(1), 13-16. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2014.11.006>
- Dagenais, D., Toohey, K., Bennett Fox, A., & Singh, A. (2017). Multilingual and multimodal composition at school: ScribJab in action. *Language and education*, 31(3), 263-282.
- Dai, K., & Liu, Q. (2024). Leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) in English as a foreign language (EFL) classes: Challenges and opportunities in the spotlight. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 159, 108354. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2024.108354>
- Erfanian Mohammadi, J., Elahi Shirvan, M., & Akbari, O. (2019). Systemic functional multimodal discourse analysis of teaching students developing classroom materials. *Teaching in higher Education*, 24(8), 964-986. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2018.1527763>
- Fraenkel, J., Wallen, N., & Hyun, H. (2023). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (11th ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Gillies, R. M., & Baffour, B. (2017). The effects of teacher-introduced multimodal representations and discourse on students' task engagement and scientific language during cooperative, inquiry-based science. *Instructional Science*, 45, 493-513.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). *Language as Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Harrigan, J. A. (2013). Methodology: Coding and studying nonverbal behavior. In J. A. Hall & M. L. Knapp (Eds.), *Nonverbal communication* (pp. 35-68). De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110238150.35>
- Hood, S. E. (2011). Body language in face-to-face teaching: A focus on textual and interpersonal meaning. In E. A. Thompson, M. Stenglin, & S. Dreyfus (Eds.), *Semiotic margins: Meaning in multimodalities* (pp. 31-52). Continuum.
- Jewitt, C. (2008). *Technology, literacy and learning: a multimodal approach*. Routledge.
- Jewitt, C. (2012). *Technology, literacy, learning: A multimodal approach*. Routledge.
- Jewitt, C. (2013). Multimodality and digital technologies in the classroom. In I. Saint-Georges & J. J. Weber (Eds.),

- Multilingualism and multimodality: The future of education research* (pp. 141–152). Sense Publishers. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6209-266-2_8
- Jewitt, C., Bezemer, J. & O'Halloran, K. L. (2016). *Introducing Multimodality*. Routledge.
- Jin, Y., & Yang, H. Z. (2018). A language testing system with distinctive Chinese characteristics: The College English Test. *Foreign Language World*, 02, 29-39.
- Karatsareas, P. (2022). Semi-structured interviews. *Research methods in language attitudes*, 99-113.
- Kress, G. (2010). *Multimodality—A social semiotic approach to contemporary communication*. Routledge.
- Kress, G. (2015). Semiotic work: Applied linguistics and a social semiotic account of multimodality. *Aila Review*, 28(1), 49-71. <https://doi.org/10.1075/aila.28.03kre>
- Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (1996). *The grammar of visual design*. Routledge.
- Kress, G., & Van Leeuwen, T. (2001). *Multimodal discourse: The modes and media of contemporary communication*. Arnold.
- Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading Images*. Routledge.
- Kress, G., Jewitt, C., Bourne, J., Franks, A., Hardcastle, J., Jones, K. and Reid, E. (2005). *English in Urban Classrooms: A Multimodal Perspective on Teaching and Learning*. Routledge.
- Kress, G., Jewitt, C., Ogborn, J., & Tsatsarelis, C. (2001). *Multimodal teaching and learning: The rhetorics of the science classroom*. Continuum.
- Kim, S. (2015). Demotivation and L2 Motivational Self of Korean College Students. *English teaching*, 70(1). <https://doi.org/10.15858/engtea.70.1.201503.29>
- Lemke, J. (2002). Travels in hypermodality. *Visual Communication*, 1(3), 299–325. <https://doi.org/10.1177/147035720200100303>
- Lim, F. V. (2018). Developing a systemic functional approach to teach multimodal literacy. *Functional Linguistics*, 5(1), 13. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40554-018-0066-8>
- Lim, V. F. (2021a). *Designing Learning with Embodied Teaching: Perspectives from Multimodality*. Routledge.
- Lim, F. V. (2021b). Investigating intersemiosis: A systemic functional multimodal discourse analysis of the relationship between language and gesture in classroom discourse. *Visual Communication*, 20(1), 34-58. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470357218820695>
- Lim, F. V., & Toh, W. (2022). Design considerations for digital learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. In S. Tan & K. L. Marissa (Eds.), *Discourses, modes, media and meaning in an era of pandemic: A multimodal discourse analysis approach* (pp. 69–88). Taylor & Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003168195-7>
- Lim, F. V., O'Halloran, K. L., & Podlasov, A. (2012). Spatial pedagogy: Mapping meanings in the use of classroom space. *Cambridge journal of education*, 42(2), 235-251. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2012.676629>
- Lim, V. F. (2011). *A systemic functional multimodal discourse analysis approach to pedagogic discourse* [Doctoral thesis, National University of Singapore].
- Lim, V. F. (2019). Analysing the teachers' use of gestures in the classroom: A systemic functional multimodal discourse analysis approach. *Social Semiotics*, 29(1), 83-111. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2017.1412168>
- Macken-Horarik, M. (2004). Interacting with the multimodal text: Reflections on image and verbiage in art express. *Visual communication*, 3(1), 5-26. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470357204039596>
- Martin, A. (2008). Digital literacy and the “digital society.” In C. Lankshear & M. Knobel (Eds.), *Digital literacies: Concepts, policies and practices* (Vol. 30, pp. 151–175). Peter Lang.
- Martin, J. R. (2002) Meaning beyond the clause: SFL perspectives. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 22, 52–74. <https://doi.org/10.1558/lhs.34711>
- Martinec, R. (2000). Types of process in action. *Semiotica*, 130, 243–268. <https://doi.org/10.1515/semi.2000.130.3-4.243>
- Martinec, R. (2001). Interpersonal resources in action. *Semiotica*, 135, 117–145. <https://doi.org/10.1515/semi.2001.056>
- Martinec, R. (2005). Topics in multimodality. In R. Hasan, C. M. Matthiessen, & J. J. Webster (Eds.), *Continuing discourse on language: A functional perspective* (pp. 157–181). University of Toronto Press.
- Mondada, L. (2019). Contemporary issues in conversation analysis: Embodiment and materiality, multimodality and multisensoriality in social interaction. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 145, 47-62. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2019.01.016>
- Morell, T. (2018). Multimodal competence and effective interactive lecturing. *System*, 77, 70-79. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2017.12.006>
- Norris, S. (2004). *Analyzing multimodal interaction: A methodological framework*. Routledge.
- O'Halloran, K. L. (1996). *The discourse of secondary school mathematics* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Murdoch University.
- O'Halloran, K. L. (2004). Discourse in secondary school Mathematics classrooms according to social class and gender. In J. A. Foley (Ed.), *Language, education and discourse: Functional approaches* (191-225). London & New York: Continuum.
- O'Halloran, K. L. (2008). Systemic functional-multimodal discourse analysis (SF-MDA): Constructing ideational meaning using language and visual imagery. *Visual Communication*, 7(4), 443–475.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1470357208096210>

- O'Halloran, K. L., & Lim, F. (2014). Systemic functional multimodal discourse analysis. In S. Norris & C. D. Maier (Eds.), *Interactions, images and texts: A reader in multimodality* (pp. 137–153). Mouton de Gruyter.
- O'Toole, M. (1994). *The language of displayed art*. Fairleigh Dickinson Univ Press.
- Peng, J. E. (2019). The roles of multimodal pedagogic effects and classroom environment in willingness to communicate in English. *System*, 82, 161-173. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2019.04.006a>
- Qin, Y., & Wang, P. (2021). How EFL teachers engage students: a multimodal analysis of pedagogic discourse during classroom lead-ins. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 793495. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.793495>
- Salamanti, E., Park, D., Ali, N., & Brown, S. (2023). The efficacy of collaborative and multimodal learning strategies in enhancing English language proficiency among ESL/EFL Learners: a quantitative analysis. *Research Studies in English Language Teaching and Learning*, 1(2), 78-89. <https://doi.org/10.62583/rseltl.v1i2.11>
- Tacchetti, M. (2018). *User Guide for ELAN Linguistic Annotator*. Available at: <https://www.mpi.nl/corpus/html/elan Ug/> (accessed 1 March 2020)
- Taljaard, J. (2016). A review of multi-sensory technologies in a science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) classroom. *Journal of learning Design*, 9(2), 46-55.
- Unsworth, L. (2001). *Teaching multiliteracies across the curriculum*. Open University Press.
- van Leeuwen, T. (1999). *Speech, music, sound*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- van Leeuwen, T. (2015). Multimodality. In D. Tannen, H. E. Hamilton, & D. Schiffrin (Eds.), *The handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 447–465). John Wiley & Sons.
- Ventola, E., Charles, C., & Kaltenbacher, M. (Eds.). (2004). *Perspectives on multimodality*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Vunghong, S., Djonov, E., & Torr, J. (2017). Images as a resource for supporting vocabulary learning: A multimodal analysis of Thai EFL tablet apps for primary school children. *Tesol Quarterly*, 51(1), 32-58. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.274>
- Widiatmoko, P., & Endarto, I. T. (2018, July). *Enhancing learning multimodality: A reflection of audio-visual media use in EFL classes*. In International Conference on Language Phenomena in Multimodal Communication (KLUA 2018) (pp. 116-122). Atlantis Press. <https://doi.org/10.2991/klua-18.2018.17>
- Yang, C., & Xu, D. (2023). Predicting student and instructor e-readiness and promoting e-learning success in online EFL class during the COVID-19 pandemic: A case from China. *Plos one*, 18(5), e0284334. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0284334>
- Zhang, D. L. (2009). On A Synthetic Theoretical Framework for Multimodal Discourse Analysis. *Foreign Languages in China*, 6(1), 24-30.
- Zhang, D. L. (2015). *Multimodal Discourse Analysis: Theory and Application in EFL Classroom Teaching*. Higher Education Press.



© 2026 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY-NC-ND) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Gender and the Punchline: Humour Types in Stand-Up Performance

Nurul Nadiah Dewi Faizul Ganapathy¹, Maizura Mohd. Noor²,
Sofea Azlena Tung Adib Vincent Tung³, Amirah Ahmad^{4*}

^{1,2,3,4} *Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam, Malaysia*

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 10 January 2026

Revised 10 January 2026

Accepted 22 May 2026

Online first 01 July 2026

Published 01 July 2026

Keywords:

humour types, gender differences,
stand-up comedy, cultural values

DOI:

10.24191/ijmal.v10i2.10824

ABSTRACT

Despite extensive research on humour and gender, limited studies have systematically compared the diversity and distribution of humour types across male and female stand-up comedians. Consequently, it remains unclear whether and how gender influences the selection and variation of humour types in contemporary stand-up comedy discourse. This study addresses this gap by examining gender differences in the use of humour types in stand-up comedy. The analysis is grounded in a conceptual framework synthesising 22 humour types identified in the literature, including anecdotal comedy, dark comedy, observational comedy, satire, and self-deprecating humour. Adopting a qualitative approach with purposive sampling, the data consist of the first 30 minutes of two American stand-up performances: *A Speck of Dust* (2017) by Sarah Silverman and *Louis C.K.: 2017* (2017) by Louis C.K. Both performers are established American comedians representing different genders. Importantly, the video recordings sourced from *YouTube* provide observable audience responses, particularly laughter, which serve as indicators for identifying humour occurrences. Content analysis of utterances reveals notable gender-based variation in humour production. The female comedian demonstrates a wider range of humour types, employing 12 different types across 27 humorous utterances, compared to the male comedian, who employs only 6 humour types across 23 humorous utterances. Anecdotal comedy predominates in the female performance, while dark comedy is most prominent in the male performance. These findings suggest that gender may influence not only the frequency but also the diversity and thematic orientation of humour in stand-up comedy discourse.

^{3*}Corresponding author. *E-mail address*: amirah1275@uitm.edu.my

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Humour has long been embedded in social life across cultures and historical periods. The term itself evolved from the Latin *umor*, originally referring to bodily fluids, before developing into its modern association with mood and comic sensibility (Davis, 2013). Ancient Greek society institutionalised humour through theatrical performances, jesters, and philosophical reflections on laughter, particularly in accounts linked to Democritus (Bremmer, 1997; Cartwright, 2013). Similarly, Russian jokes or *anekdoty* functioned as brief, satirical oral narratives within everyday interaction (Cheauré & Nohejl, 2014). Over time, humour shifted from folklore expression to a global cultural practice that shapes public commentary and social critique. In modern contexts, humour extends beyond entertainment and increasingly addresses social realities. Contemporary comedians often engage with political, cultural, and personal issues, reframing them through satire and irony. As noted by Mbau (2017), modern humour frequently exposes uncomfortable truths that may otherwise remain unspoken in ordinary discourse. This development reflects how humour has evolved from simple amusement into a communicative resource for negotiating power, identity, and collective experience. Therefore, humour today functions as both artistic expression and social commentary, particularly within performance genres such as stand-up comedy.

Stand-up comedy represents one of the most direct and interactive forms of humorous performance. It centres on a single performer who delivers self-authored material while engaging directly with an audience, receiving immediate feedback in the form of laughter or silence (Greengross & Miller, 2009). Scholars describe stand-up as grounded in personality, direct communication, and responsiveness to the immediate setting (Double, 2014). Historically, its roots can be traced to traditions such as *Commedia dell'Arte*, music hall, vaudeville, and humorous lecturing (McIlvenny et al., 1992; Katayama, 2006). Over time, the genre has become more flexible in style and content, allowing performers to experiment with varied humour types and themes. Stand-up comedy in America has been established since the mid-1960s and gradually gained mainstream recognition through influential figures such as Lenny Bruce, Richard Pryor, and George Carlin, who openly addressed themes of sex, race, politics, and popular culture (Manwell, 2008). In recent years, however, the genre has evolved within a climate of increased social sensitivity, where comedians are expected to navigate issues of political correctness carefully, as audience expectations and public accountability increasingly shape what is considered acceptable humour (Nwankwo, 2022).

Given this historical and performative evolution, stand-up comedy provides a rich site for examining how humour types are strategically produced. The interactive nature of the genre, combined with its flexibility, enables comedians to construct distinct comedic identities through language choices and thematic framing. Consequently, analysing humour within stand-up performances offers insight into how gender may shape the selection, variation, and distribution of humour types in contemporary discourse.

Problem Statement

Research on humour has expanded across disciplines, particularly in psychology, discourse studies, and media communication. Recent studies have examined humour as a structured communicative practice in digital and mediated contexts (Dyner, 2021), while empirical investigations in social psychology have explored gender differences in humour production and appreciation (Mickes et al., 2020). However, much

of this work has focused on humour perception, stereotype endorsement, or general humour styles rather than on the systematic categorisation of humour types within live performance discourse. In particular, stand-up comedy, despite being one of the most visible and influential forms of contemporary humour, has received limited attention in terms of detailed linguistic analysis of humour distribution across genders. Existing research often discusses gendered humour in broad terms, without identifying specific humour types or examining how these types are deployed within comparable performance contexts. As a result, there remains insufficient empirical evidence on whether male and female comedians differ in the diversity and concentration of humour types used during live stand-up performances.

Furthermore, while stand-up comedy is recognised as an interactive genre shaped by audience response and performer identity (Double, 2014; Greengross & Miller, 2009), prior studies have rarely integrated audience feedback as an analytical indicator for identifying humour occurrences. This creates a methodological gap in linking humour production to observable audience reaction, particularly laughter, within natural performance settings. In addition, earlier discussions of humour evolution and cultural practice (Davis, 2013; Mbau, 2017) highlight humour's role in addressing social realities, yet they do not examine how gender may influence the strategic selection of humour types in contemporary American stand-up comedy. Consequently, there is a need for a qualitative, performance-based investigation that systematically categorises humour types and compares their distribution across male and female comedians within the same temporal frame. Addressing this gap will clarify whether gender differences manifest not only in humour frequency but also in the range and dominance of humour types employed in stand-up comedy discourse. Hence, this study aims to identify humour types according to gender and analyse the distribution and variation of humour types across genders in selected stand-up comedy performances.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Humour research has expanded significantly in recent years, particularly across linguistics, psychology, and cultural studies. Contemporary scholars recognise humour not merely as amusement but as a structured communicative practice embedded in discourse. Attardo (2020) emphasises that humour in performance genres such as stand-up comedy is fundamentally pragmatic and relies on audience co-interpretation, while Martin and Ford (2021) argue that humour should be treated as a multidimensional construct involving social, cognitive, and linguistic elements. These perspectives position stand-up comedy as a rich site for analysing how humour types are strategically constructed and interpreted in real-time interaction. Within performance-based contexts, stand-up comedy has been increasingly examined as a discursive arena where identity, ideology, and social norms are negotiated. Weaver and Lockyer (2024) demonstrate that contemporary stand-up performances can reinforce or challenge dominant hierarchies through specific humour strategies. Similarly, Bernabéu (2019, 2023) highlights how female comedians co-construct humour with audiences through interactional flexibility and strategic timing. These studies collectively establish that humour type selection in stand-up is neither accidental nor purely stylistic, but embedded within broader social positioning and performer identity.

A central concern in recent literature is the relationship between gender and humour production. Hofmann et al. (2023), in a systematic review, report consistent patterns linking men with aggressive humour styles, while other humour traits appear more context-dependent. Gaspar and Methasani (2024) further argue that humour type determines the social and professional outcomes of humour use,

particularly for women. Studies focusing specifically on female comedians provide additional insight into stylistic diversity. Cook et al. (2024) observe that women in stand-up comedy adapt their humour strategies depending on performance context, often employing relational and observational humour more flexibly. Tomsett (2023) similarly contends that female comedians who deploy varied humour types such as satire, anecdotal narratives, and self-deprecation are better positioned to resist restrictive gender norms. These findings resonate with the present study's observation that the female comedian demonstrates a wider range of humour types.

Cross-cultural research also reinforces the patterned nature of humour selection. Adekunle (2023) shows that male comedians tend to adopt more confrontational and satirical strategies in addressing gender conflict, whereas female comedians rely more heavily on experiential and anecdotal humour. Chen and Guo (2024) document similar tendencies in online feminist stand-up comedy, where personal narrative becomes a vehicle for social critique. Such patterns provide comparative grounding for interpreting anecdotal dominance in female performance and dark humour concentration in male performance within the present data. However, both studies are situated within culturally specific contexts which are Nigerian/African American settings and Chinese digital platforms respectively, which may limit the generalisability of their findings to Western mainstream stand-up comedy. In addition, while these studies foreground thematic strategies, they do not systematically map humour type distribution through a structured typological framework, thereby leaving room for more fine-grained discourse-level comparison as undertaken in the present study.

The classification of humour types has also received methodological attention. Al-Sawaer et al. (2022) identify multiple coexisting humour categories within a single comedy show, demonstrating that humour diversity is a defining characteristic of performance discourse. Wawrzyniuk (2021) further argues that stand-up comedy frequently combines overlapping humour scripts within the same segment, supporting the analytical validity of multi-type categorisation. These studies substantiate the present study's typological framework of 22 humour types and its qualitative content analysis approach. Importantly, several studies indicate that humour in stand-up comedy must be analysed in relation to audience response. Attardo (2020) underscores that laughter serves as primary evidence of humorous intent in live discourse. This methodological stance supports the present study's reliance on observable audience laughter in identifying humour occurrences in the selected stand-up comedy. By grounding humour identification in audience feedback, the study strengthens the reliability of its occurrence-based comparison across genders.

Bernab   (2019) identifies patterned tendencies in humour orientation, noting that male performers frequently employ darker or more confrontational humour, whereas female performers tend to adopt anecdotal and relational strategies. Nevertheless, systematic comparative analyses that examine humour type distribution across male and female stand-up comedians within equivalent performance contexts remain limited, thus underscoring the need for focused empirical investigation. Furthermore, existing research often treats gendered humour styles, feminist performance strategies, and humour typologies as separate lines of inquiry, with few studies integrating these dimensions within a unified comparative framework. Much of the prior work relies on survey-based humour style inventories or broad thematic discourse analysis without systematically mapping humour type variation within comparable performance segments. Accordingly, the present study addresses this gap by combining qualitative content analysis, a structured typological framework, and gender-based comparison within the same temporal scope, thereby

providing empirical evidence on how humour range, dominance, and occurrence differ across genders in contemporary American stand-up comedy.

Theoretical Framework

The classification of humour types in this study draws upon five key scholars which are Blatchford (2017), Bhalla (2017), Satyal (2016), Dhar (2016), and Nichol (2011). Their frameworks collectively illustrate the breadth and complexity of humour as a communicative phenomenon (Refer Figure 1). Although each scholar proposes distinct terminologies and emphases, their typologies converge on the idea that humour is multidimensional, encompassing cognitive, stylistic, thematic, and performative elements. Rather than treating humour as a single stylistic category, these scholars conceptualise it as a cluster of identifiable strategies that vary in tone, intention, and audience effect. This theoretical plurality provides the foundation for synthesising a consolidated list of humour types relevant to stand-up comedy discourse.

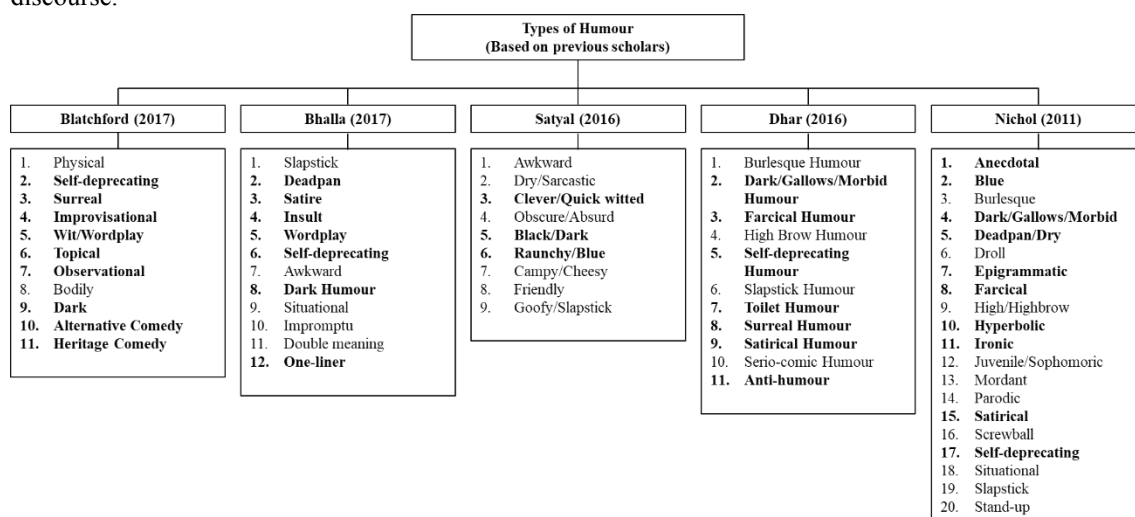


Figure 1. Types of humour based on previous scholars

Several humour types centre on narrative and experiential framing. Nichol (2011) foregrounds anecdotal humour as storytelling grounded in personal or situational experience, while Blatchford (2017) and Dhar (2016) similarly recognise observational and situational elements as central comedic resources. These forms rely on shared social knowledge and everyday recognisability to produce laughter. Heritage comedy extends this narrative orientation by drawing upon cultural identity and collective memory. Together, anecdotal comedy, observational comedy, and heritage comedy emphasise relational and context-driven humour, often inviting audience identification through lived experience. A second cluster focuses on linguistic and rhetorical mechanisms. Wit, wordplay, and epigrammatic humour are identified by Blatchford (2017) and Nichol (2011) which highlight brevity, clever phrasing, and semantic manipulation. Double meaning or entendre similarly depends on layered interpretation and ambiguity, while one-line jokes condense humour into structurally compact forms. Deadpan or dry humour, discussed by Bhalla (2017) and Nichol (2011), functions through restrained delivery and tonal contrast,

often enhancing serio-comic effects. These types demonstrate that humour frequently emerges from linguistic economy and stylistic precision rather than overt exaggeration.

Other categories foreground thematic intensity and boundary-testing. Black or dark comedy, emphasised by Satyal (2016) and Dhar (2016), involves humour derived from morbid or socially sensitive topics. Blue comedy or ribaldry, sophomoric humour, and toilet or potty humour rely on taboo, bodily, or juvenile references to provoke laughter. Mordant comedy and sarcastic or insult humour adopt sharper tones, often blending aggression with irony. Anti-humour and ironic humour destabilise conventional punchline expectations by deliberately subverting comedic structure. These types illustrate humour's capacity to challenge norms, disrupt comfort zones, and renegotiate moral boundaries. Performance-oriented and stylistic exaggeration also form a significant theoretical strand. Hyperbolic humour relies on overstatement to amplify incongruity, while surreal comedy draws on absurdity and illogical juxtapositions. Burlesque humour and parodic humour (parody) mimic or exaggerate existing genres, characters, or conventions to generate comic contrast. Cringe or awkward comedy derives its effect from social discomfort and violated expectations. Satire or topical comedy, frequently cited across the scholars, critiques political or cultural issues through irony and exaggeration, blending social commentary with entertainment.

By synthesising these overlapping frameworks, the present study consolidates twenty-two humour types as follows:

1. anecdotal comedy (HT1)
2. anti-humour/ ironic (HT2)
3. black comedy/ dark comedy (HT3)
4. blue comedy/ ribaldry (HT4)
5. burlesque humour (HT5)
6. cringe/ awkward comedy (HT6)
7. Deadpan comedy/ dry humour/ serio-comic humour (HT7)
8. double meaning/ entendre (HT8)
9. heritage comedy (HT9)
10. highbrow humour (HT10)
11. hyperbolic humour (HT11)
12. mordant comedy (HT12)
13. observational comedy (HT13)
14. one-line joke (HT14)
15. sarcastic/ insult comedy (HT15)
16. satire/ topical comedy (HT16)
17. self-deprecating humour (HT17)

18. parodic humour (parody) (HT18)
19. sophomoric/ juvenile humour (HT19)
20. surreal comedy (HT20)
21. toilet/ potty humour (HT21)
22. wit/ wordplay/ epigrammatic humour (HT22)

This integrative typology accommodates narrative, linguistic, thematic, and performative dimensions of humour, thereby providing a comprehensive analytical framework for examining gender differences in humour production in stand-up comedy.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research design to examine gender differences in the use of humour types in stand-up comedy. A qualitative approach is appropriate as the research seeks to interpret meaning, categorise humour types, and analyse patterns within naturally occurring discourse rather than to test statistical hypotheses. Qualitative research emphasises contextualised understanding and interpretive depth, particularly in discourse-based inquiry (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Since humour in stand-up comedy is embedded within performance, tone, and audience interaction, it requires close textual and contextual examination. Accordingly, the study employs qualitative content analysis as its primary analytical method. Content analysis allows researchers to systematically code, classify, and interpret patterns within textual and audiovisual data (Schreier, 2012; Krippendorff, 2018). In this study, humour occurrences are identified through observable audience responses, particularly laughter, and subsequently categorised into predefined humour types based on the established typological framework of twenty-two humour categories. This design ensures that both occurrence frequency and typological diversity are examined in a structured and replicable manner.

The research utilises purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique commonly employed in qualitative studies to select information-rich cases relevant to the research objectives (Patton, 2015). Two stand-up comedy performances were selected based on specific criteria: gender (one female and one male comedian), nationality (American), professional status, and availability of full-length recorded performances with audible audience feedback. The data comprise the first thirty minutes of *A Speck of Dust* (2017) by Sarah Silverman and *Louis C.K.: 2017* (2017) by Louis C.K., sourced from publicly accessible platform which is YouTube. The thirty-minute segment was chosen to ensure equivalence in temporal scope and performance context. By analysing comparable segments from both comedians, the study maintains methodological consistency and enables systematic comparison of humour occurrences and humour types across genders within the same performance framework.

Distribution of Humour Occurrences by Gender

Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of humour occurrences identified in the first 30 minutes of the selected stand-up performances. The female comedian, Sarah Silverman, accounts for 54.0% of the total humour occurrences, whereas the male comedian, Louis C.K., represents 46.0%. Although the difference is not substantial, the data indicate that the female performer produced a slightly higher proportion of humour

instances within the analysed timeframe. This quantitative variation suggests a modest but observable gender difference in the frequency of humour occurrence in the sampled performances.

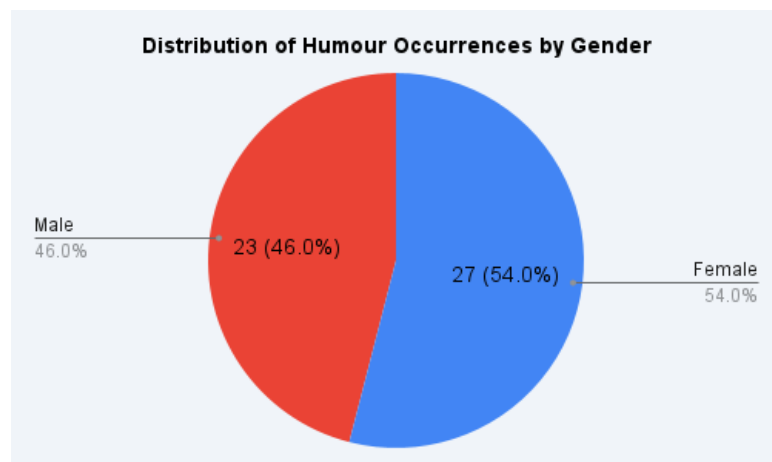


Figure 2. Distribution of humour occurrences by gender

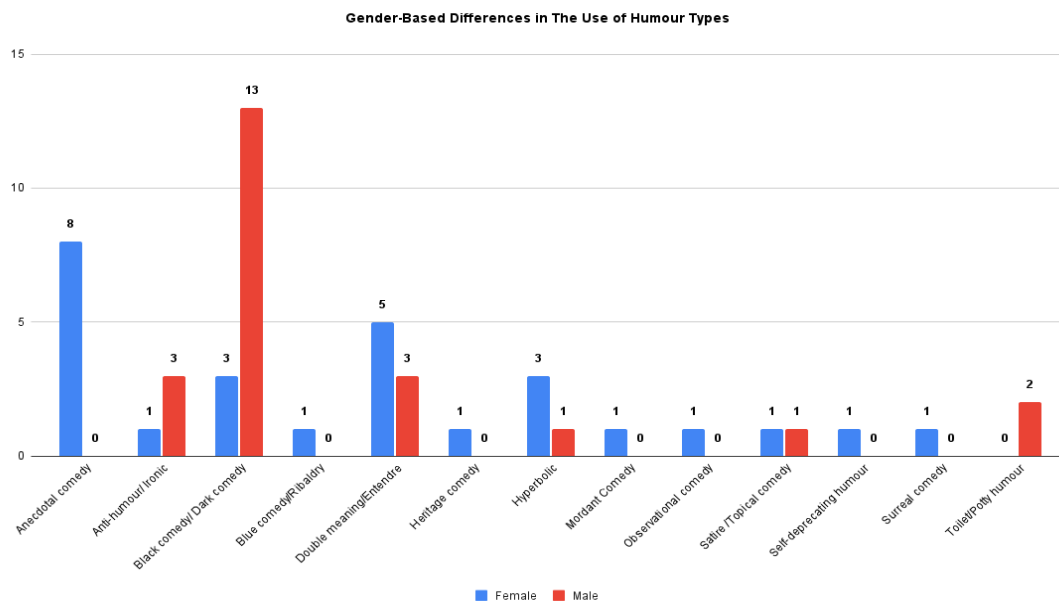
Within the context of Sarah Silverman's *A Speck of Dust* (2017) and Louis C.K.: 2017 (2017), this difference may reflect distinct comedic delivery styles and humour structuring strategies. Silverman's performance appears to incorporate more segmented narrative constructions and rapid punchline transitions, potentially leading to a higher count of identifiable humour utterances based on audience laughter responses. In contrast, Louis C.K. often develops extended premises before arriving at comedic climaxes, which may result in fewer but thematically concentrated humour occurrences. Overall, the chart provides preliminary evidence that gender may influence not only the diversity of humour types but also the frequency of humour production in stand-up comedy discourse.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE USE OF HUMOUR TYPES

This section presents the findings on gender differences in the use of humour types in stand-up comedy. Drawing on the qualitative analysis of the selected performances, the discussion highlights variations in dominant humour types as well as differences in the range and distribution of humour across the two comedians. The analysis aims to demonstrate how gender may shape both humour production in stand-up comedy discourse. Figure 3 illustrates the types of humour used by Sarah Silverman and Louis C.K.

The figure indicates clear differences in the dominant humour types employed by each comedian. For the female comedian, anecdotal comedy emerges as the most dominant category, with eight (8) recorded occurrences. This suggests a strong reliance on personal storytelling and experience-based narratives as a primary comedic strategy. Anecdotal humour typically involves constructing relatable situations drawn from lived experiences, which can create intimacy with the audience and generate laughter through recognition and shared social realities. The prominence of this type aligns with a narrative-driven performance style, where humour unfolds through structured storytelling rather than isolated punchlines.

In contrast, the male comedian's dominant humour type is dark comedy, with thirteen (13) occurrences substantially higher than any other category in his performance. Dark comedy often engages with morally sensitive, controversial, or uncomfortable themes, reframing them through irony or



exaggeration to provoke laughter. The dominance of this type indicates a preference for boundary-testing humour that derives its effect from shock, discomfort, or moral ambiguity. This pattern reflects a stylistic orientation toward thematic intensity and provocation, where humour is generated through the subversion of social norms rather than through personal narrative construction.

Figure 3. Gender differences in the use of humour types in stand-up comedy

Beyond dominant categories, the chart also reveals notable differences in the breadth of humour usage. The female comedian employs a wider range of humour types which are anecdotal comedy, anti-humour/ironic, black comedy/dark comedy, blue comedy/ribaldry, double meaning/entendre, heritage comedy, hyperbolic, mordant comedy, observational comedy, satire/topical comedy, self-deprecating humour, and surreal comedy. However, humour types like burlesque humour, cringe/awkward comedy, deadpan/serio-comic humour/dry humour, highbrow humour, one-line joke, sarcastic/insult comedy, parodic humour (Parody), sophomoric/juvenile and wit/wordplay/epigrammatic were not used. This distribution demonstrates stylistic versatility and suggests an adaptive comedic strategy that shifts across themes and rhetorical techniques. The diversity of categories indicates not merely frequent humour deployment but varied mechanisms for generating audience response.

By comparison, the male comedian utilises a narrower range of humour types, primarily concentrated in black/dark comedy, with limited representation in anti-humour/ironic, double meaning/ entendre, hyperbolic, satire/topical comedy, and toilet/potty humour. In contrast, humour types such as anecdotal comedy, burlesque humour, blue comedy/ribaldry, burlesque humour, cringe/awkward comedy, deadpan/serio-comic humour/dry humour, heritage comedy, highbrow humour, mordant comedy,

observational comedy, one-line joke, sarcastic/insult comedy, self-deprecating humour, parodic humour (Parody), sophomoric/juvenile, surreal comedy and wit/wordplay/epigrammatic were not used. The clustering around fewer categories suggests thematic consistency rather than stylistic dispersion. Collectively, the findings highlight that gender differences in stand-up comedy may manifest not only in dominant humour preferences but also in the range and strategic distribution of humour types within performance discourse.

The analysis revealed several humour types that were not employed by either Sarah Silverman or Louis C.K. within the selected performance segments. These humour types include:

1. Burlesque humour
2. Cringe or awkward comedy
3. Deadpan / serio-comic / dry humour
4. Highbrow humour
5. One-line joke humour
6. Parodic humour (parody)
7. Sophomoric or juvenile humour
8. Wit / wordplay / epigrammatic humour

These humour types did not occur in either comedian's performance, indicating that both performers prioritised humour forms aligned with narrative storytelling, exaggeration, and thematic discourse rather than humour dependent on impersonation, linguistic cleverness, or highly stylised performance techniques. The absence of these humour types suggests that humour selection is shaped by the comedian's narrative structure, performance identity, and communicative intent (Attardo, 2020; Double, 2014; Lockyer, 2021). Specifically, both performers relied more heavily on humour types that allowed for extended narrative development and audience engagement, such as anecdotal humour, hyperbolic humour, and dark humour, rather than humour types requiring concise punchlines, intellectual references, or performative imitation. This finding reinforces the view that humour production in stand-up comedy is strategic and identity-driven, with comedians selectively employing humour types that best support their comedic persona and performance goals.

The analysis identified six humour types as the most outstanding due to their prominence and strategic use in the performances of both comedians. Four humour types were shared by both performers, namely anti-humour or irony, black or dark comedy, double meaning or *entendre*, and hyperbolic humour. These humour types reflect common comedic strategies that rely on incongruity, exaggeration, and layered interpretation to generate humour and engage audience expectations. In addition to these shared humour types, only the female comedian employed anecdotal comedy, reflecting a narrative-driven style grounded in personal experience and audience relatability (Attardo, 2020; Cook et al., 2024; Double, 2014). Whereas the male comedian relied on toilet or potty humour, indicating a greater emphasis on taboo and socially sensitive themes (Attardo, 2020; Adekunle, 2023; Double, 2014). Furthermore, the highest frequency humour type for each comedian differed significantly, with anecdotal humour emerging as the most dominant in the female comedian's performance and black or dark comedy as the most frequent in the male comedian's routine. This distribution highlights both shared comedic mechanisms

and gender-specific humour dominance, illustrating how humour type selection reflects individual narrative focus, thematic orientation, and gendered performance strategies (Attardo, 2020; Cook et al., 2024; Lockyer, 2021).

Anecdotal Comedy

Anecdotal humour refers to personal narratives that recount lived experiences, often intensified through selective framing or subtle exaggeration to generate comic effect (Nichol, 2011). Excerpt [SS, H13] illustrates the use of anecdotal humour in Sarah Silverman’s performance.

Female I was walking back to my car after the second session. I actually can remember exactly, like, the words I was saying to myself as I was walking to my car. I was like, “What you just went through was trauma.” [SS, H13]
--

In this segment, Silverman recounts walking back to her car after a therapy session, narrating her internal monologue: “I was walking back to my car after the second session... I was like, ‘What you just went through was trauma.’” The humour emerges from the reflective and self-directed framing of what appears to be a serious personal moment. Rather than presenting an overt punchline, Silverman reconstructs a private thought in a candid and understated manner. Linguistically, the repeated use of the first-person pronoun “I” foregrounds personal experience, reinforcing the autobiographical tone typical of anecdotal comedy. The phrase “I can remember exactly” signals authenticity and immediacy, drawing the audience into the narrated moment. At the same time, the declarative statement “What you just went through was trauma” introduces a disproportion between the anticipated seriousness of trauma and the relatively mundane setting of walking to a car after therapy. This incongruity generates humour through controlled exaggeration and ironic self-awareness. Audience laughter, which marks the humour occurrence (H13), confirms the recognition of this narrative as comic rather than purely confessional. The excerpt therefore demonstrates how Silverman employs anecdotal humour as a relational strategy, inviting the audience to engage with vulnerability and self-reflection. This supports the broader finding that the female comedian relies heavily on experiential storytelling, using personal narrative as a primary mechanism for humour construction within her performance.

Anti-Humour/Irony

Anti-humour refers to a type of humour in which the speaker deliberately subverts conventional joke structure by delivering an unexpected, flat, or incomplete statement that appears to lack intrinsic comic payoff (Bhalla & Blatchford, 2017). Excerpt [SS, H11] illustrates the use of anti-humour in Sarah Silverman’s performance, meanwhile excerpt [LCK, H1] is taken from Louis C.K. ’s performance.

Female	Male
--------	------

I think most women have a high pain threshold. I've been punched in the face thrice. And that's another story for another time. [SS, H11]	Here's what I think. I... I think you should not get an abortion unless you need one. [LCK, H1]
--	--

In Excerpt [SS, H11], Sarah Silverman states, "I think most women have a high pain threshold. I've been punched in the face thrice. And that's another story for another time." The humour arises not from a detailed narrative but from the abrupt withholding of information. After introducing a provocative personal claim, she denies the audience the expected elaboration by deferring the story. This deliberate anti-climax disrupts the anticipated punchline structure. Linguistically, the short declarative sentences and the metadiscursive closure "another story for another time" function as humour markers, signalling intentional incompleteness. The audience laughter suggests recognition of this withheld narrative as comic through frustration and surprise rather than content.

Similarly, in Excerpt [LCK, H1], Louis C.K. remarks, "Here's what I think. I... I think you should not get an abortion unless you need one." The statement appears tautological and semantically redundant, offering an obvious conclusion disguised as a controversial opinion. The initial hesitations ("I... I think") build anticipation of a bold claim, yet the eventual statement collapses into circular logic. The humour thus lies in the anti-climactic resolution of tension. In both excerpts, anti-humour operates through strategic deflation of expectation; however, Silverman employs narrative withholding, whereas Louis C.K. utilises semantic redundancy. These examples demonstrate that anti-humour functions as an ironic strategy that plays with audience expectation, reinforcing the study's finding that both comedians deploy structurally subversive humour, albeit through distinct discursive techniques.

Black Comedy/Dark Comedy

Black comedy, also recognised as dark comedy or gallows humour, is a type of humour that focuses on a style of comic that scorns taboo subject matters, especially those considered serious or hurtful to discuss (Dhar & Satyal, 2016). Excerpt [SS, H17] illustrates the use of dark comedy in Sarah Silverman's performance, meanwhile excerpt [LCK, H9] is taken from Louis C.K.'s performance.

Female	Male
Aw, I just heard my sister laughing. She's dead. No, she's here. I'm kidding. [SS, H17]	You should talk about it. The whole world is just made of people who didn't kill themselves today. That's who's here. It's all of us that went, "Okay, fuck it, keep doing it." It's... It's an interesting thing about life. Life can get very difficult, very sad, very upsetting. But you don't have to do it. You don't have to do it. You don't have to do anything. You never have to do anything because you can kill yourself.

	[LCK, H9]
--	-----------

In Excerpt [SS, H17], Sarah Silverman states, “Aw, I just heard my sister laughing. She’s dead. No, she’s here. I’m kidding.” The humour emerges from the abrupt juxtaposition of death with playful correction. The declarative statement “She’s dead” momentarily introduces a serious and potentially tragic premise. However, the immediate reversal, “No, she’s here. I’m kidding.” This creates a rapid oscillation between morbidity and reassurance. Linguistically, the short, clipped sentences heighten the shock value before deflating it. The humour is constructed through sudden script opposition between life and death, where the tension is resolved through self-correction. Audience laughter signals recognition of the exaggeration and intentional provocation. Silverman’s use of black comedy here is brief and self-contained, employing shock as a momentary device rather than sustained thematic exploration.

In contrast, Excerpt [LCK, H9] presents a more extended engagement with dark subject matter. Louis C.K. reflects, “The whole world is just made of people who didn’t kill themselves today... You don’t have to do anything because you can kill yourself.” The humour arises from sustained contemplation of suicide, framed as a philosophical observation. Unlike Silverman’s rapid reversal, Louis C.K. prolongs the taboo topic through repetition and escalating emphasis (“You don’t have to do it”). The repetition intensifies discomfort while simultaneously normalising the absurd framing of survival as an active choice. Linguistically, the oscillation between reflective tone and explicit profanity reinforces the confrontational nature of the humour. Audience laughter confirms the comic framing despite the gravity of the topic. This example illustrates that black comedy in the male performance is more dominant and thematically sustained, aligning with the broader finding that dark humour constitutes the primary humour type in Louis C.K. 's set, whereas Silverman deploys it more sparingly and episodically.

Double Meaning/Entendre

Double meaning or entendre refers to a form of humour in which an expression carries layered or ambiguous meanings, often inviting the audience to interpret an utterance beyond its surface structure (Bhalla, 2017). The humour typically arises from semantic play, lexical ambiguity, or implied meanings that disrupt straightforward interpretation. Excerpt [SS, H19] illustrates the use of double meaning/entendre in Sarah Silverman’s performance, meanwhile excerpt [LCK, H11] is taken from Louis C.K. ‘s performance.

Female	Male
So I have a new dog, Mary. I rescued her. Or I like to think she rescued me. I don’t know which is a less cunt-y way of putting it. [SS, H19]	Have you ever seen somebody, you’re like, “He should kill himself. Why did he not... that dude...” Ever been driving and you look in the next car, you’re like, “Ugh, shit.” I wish I hadn’t looked in that car. That was difficult to glance at... “let alone being it.” Just a guy in a... In a tan car. Nobody chooses tan. Nobody picks tan for their car. They give you tan. “Is that mine?”

	“Yeah, it’s yours, fucking loser. Made it tan.” [LCK, H11]
--	--

In Excerpt [SS, H19], Sarah Silverman states, “So I have a new dog, Mary. I rescued her. Or I like to think she rescued me. I don’t know which is a less cunt-y way of putting it.” The first two sentences establish a sentimental narrative frame, invoking the common trope of mutual emotional rescue between pet and owner. However, the closing remark introduces a sudden tonal shift through the evaluative phrase “less cunt-y way of putting it.” The humour lies in the layered meaning of self-positioning: Silverman simultaneously critiques the performative altruism implied in “I rescued her” and the self-indulgent humility in “she rescued me.” The lexical choice disrupts the sentimental script and reframes the utterance as ironic self-awareness. Audience laughter signals recognition of this semantic layering, where the joke operates through tension between sincerity and vulgar self-critique.

In contrast, Excerpt [LCK, H11] demonstrates double meaning through extended evaluative commentary. Louis C.K. begins with a seemingly observational scenario about seeing someone in a tan car, gradually escalating into insult. The humour culminates in the line, “Nobody chooses tan... ‘Is that mine?’ ‘Yeah, it’s yours, fucking loser. Made it tan.’” The surface meaning concerns car colour preference, yet the implied meaning equates “tan” with mediocrity and lack of agency. The repetition and imagined dialogue construct a mock interaction in which the tan car symbolises personal failure. The humour operates through implied association rather than explicit statement, allowing the audience to infer the insult beneath the mundane description. Unlike Silverman’s brief semantic twist, Louis C.K.’s double meaning unfolds through narrative build-up and characterisation. These examples illustrate that both comedians employ *entendre* differently: Silverman uses compact lexical inversion, while Louis C.K. constructs layered implication through extended framing, reinforcing stylistic differences in humour execution.

Hyperbolic

Hyperbolic humour refers to comic exaggeration in which reality is deliberately overstated to highlight absurdity or contradiction (Nichol, 2011). It operates by amplifying characteristics, emotions, or situations beyond plausibility, thereby creating incongruity between expectation and representation. Excerpt [SS, H16] illustrates the use of hyperbolic humour in Sarah Silverman’s performance, meanwhile excerpt [LCK, H12] is taken from Louis C.K.’s performance.

Female	Male
We’re breathing egos, acting like we aren’t a speck of dust on a speck of dust on a speck of dust hurtling through outer space. We’re nothing. And then in the very next moment I’ll be like “I want my face on money.” [SS, H16]	What is holding up his suicide? What is delaying it? What is keeping him from stopping being that? And what would it take? What would it take? What would it take? Both windows are garbage bags? Is that...? Seriously, do you know how much

	misery is involved in a garbage bag for a window? [LCK, H12]
--	--

In Excerpt [SS, H16], Sarah Silverman states, “We’re breathing egos, acting like we aren’t a speck of dust on a speck of dust on a speck of dust hurtling through outer space. We’re nothing. And then in the very next moment I’ll be like ‘I want my face on money.’” The humour arises from the cosmic scale exaggeration of human insignificance—“a speck of dust on a speck of dust”—which dramatically minimises human importance. This grand philosophical framing is then abruptly contrasted with the trivial and narcissistic desire to have “my face on money.” The repetition of “speck of dust” intensifies the hyperbole, while the sudden shift to personal ambition generates comic incongruity. Audience laughter marks recognition of this exaggerated oscillation between existential humility and inflated ego. Silverman’s hyperbole is reflective and self-directed, using cosmic imagery to mock human self-importance.

In contrast, Excerpt [LCK, H12] employs hyperbole through escalating rhetorical questioning. Louis C.K. repeatedly asks, “What is holding up his suicide? What would it take?” before exaggerating the misery symbolised by “garbage bags for a window.” The repeated questions amplify the situation, suggesting extreme hopelessness through overstatement. The hyperbole lies not only in the depiction of despair but in the obsessive build-up that magnifies the trivial detail of window coverings into a symbol of unbearable suffering. Linguistically, repetition functions as intensification, stretching the premise beyond ordinary observation. Audience laughter signals recognition of the exaggerated framing rather than endorsement of the literal content. Unlike Silverman’s cosmic self-irony, Louis C.K.’s hyperbole intensifies bleak imagery, reinforcing the study’s broader finding that the male performance leans toward darker and more extreme exaggerative constructions, whereas the female performance utilises hyperbole for reflective and satirical self-commentary.

Toilet/Potty Humour

Toilet or potty humour refers to a type of humour that derives comic effect from references to bodily functions, particularly those considered socially crude or inappropriate, such as defecation (Nichol, 2011). This form of humour often relies on shock, vulgar comparison, or the violation of social decorum to provoke laughter. Excerpt [LCK, H3] illustrates the use of toilet/ potty humour in Louis C.K.’s performance.

Male I think abortion is exactly like taking a shit. I think it is 100% the exact same thing as taking a shit. Or it isn’t. [LCK, H3]

In Excerpt [LCK, H3], Louis C.K. states, “I think abortion is exactly like taking a shit. I think it is 100% the exact same thing as taking a shit. Or it isn’t.” The humour emerges from the deliberate

comparison between a highly controversial moral issue and an ordinary bodily function. Linguistically, the repeated assertion “100% the exact same thing” intensifies the equivalence before it is abruptly destabilised by the final clause, “Or it isn’t.” This oscillation between absolute certainty and immediate retraction creates comic tension. The toilet reference functions as both shock device and reductive analogy, collapsing a complex ethical debate into a crude bodily act. Audience laughter indicates recognition of the provocative incongruity rather than literal agreement with the statement.

This example illustrates how toilet humour in the male performance operates not merely as juvenile reference but as a rhetorical strategy to trivialise and destabilise serious discourse. By equating abortion with defecation, Louis C.K. amplifies absurdity through blunt corporeal imagery. The humour is sustained through repetition and tonal seriousness, which contrasts sharply with the vulgar metaphor. In relation to the broader findings of this study, this instance reinforces the observation that the male comedian frequently integrates boundary-testing humour types, particularly those involving taboo subjects and bodily imagery, thereby contributing to the thematic concentration observed in his overall humour profile.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that gender differences in stand-up comedy are evident not only in the frequency of humour occurrences but more distinctly in the diversity and dominance of humour types. While both comedians employed multiple humour strategies, the female performer demonstrated a wider range of humour types, with anecdotal humour emerging as her dominant form, whereas the male performer’s set was heavily concentrated in dark and boundary-testing humour categories. This pattern aligns with previous research suggesting that female comedians often utilise relational and experiential humour, while male comedians show greater tendency toward confrontational or darker humour orientations. The present findings therefore support earlier theoretical claims that humour type selection reflects broader gendered performance strategies rather than merely individual stylistic preference.

From a theoretical standpoint, the results resonate with the constructionist view of gender articulated in humour discourse studies. Linares Bernabéu’s perspective that humour functions as a sociopragmatic tool for enacting and negotiating gender identity is reflected in the data. The female comedian’s reliance on anecdotal, hyperbolic, and double-meaning humour suggests a discursive strategy grounded in self-reflection and audience alignment. In contrast, the male comedian’s dominance in dark, toilet, and hyperbolic humour illustrates a more confrontational and provocative framing. This distinction corresponds with findings from Hofmann et al. (2023) and Gaspar and Methasani (2024), which indicate that humour type rather than frequency alone, plays a significant role in shaping gendered humour expression and audience perception.

Importantly, the study addresses the gap identified in the problem statement by integrating humour typology, discourse analysis, and gender comparison within comparable performance segments. Previous literature often examined humour styles through psychological inventories or thematic discourse analysis without systematically mapping humour type distribution in live performance contexts. By employing qualitative content analysis grounded in a twenty-two-type humour framework and identifying humour occurrences through audience laughter, this research provides empirical evidence that gender influences both the range and concentration of humour types in contemporary American stand-up comedy. The findings therefore extend existing scholarship by demonstrating that humour in stand-up comedy is not

only performative and interactive but also patterned in ways that reflect gendered communicative orientations.

The distribution of humour types across Sarah Silverman's and Louis C.K.'s performances demonstrates that humour selection in stand-up comedy is highly selective and closely aligned with each performer's comedic persona, narrative orientation, and communicative goals. The absence of certain humour types indicates that both comedians prioritised humour strategies that supported their established performance styles rather than employing a comprehensive range of humour categories (Attardo, 2020; Double, 2014). Silverman's broader use of humour types, particularly anecdotal humour, reflects a narrative-driven approach grounded in personal experience, allowing her to construct humour through self-reflection and audience relatability (Cook et al., 2024; Tomsett, 2023). The limited use of observational humour, which appeared only once in her performance, suggests that while she occasionally drew on shared everyday observations, her primary focus remained on personal storytelling rather than external social commentary. In contrast, Louis C.K.'s dominant use of dark, toilet, and hyperbolic humour reflects a more provocative and exaggerated comedic style, relying on transgressive themes and amplification to generate humour and audience reaction (Adekunle, 2023; Mickes et al., 2020). The absence of anecdotal diversity and observational humour in his performance suggests a preference for humour types that emphasise shock value and exaggeration rather than reflective narrative. Overall, these findings indicate that humour type selection is shaped by performer identity, gendered performance style, and narrative focus, influencing which humour types are prioritised, used minimally, or excluded entirely within stand-up comedy discourse.

The non-occurrence of certain humour types highlights the strategic and identity-driven nature of humour selection in stand-up comedy. The female comedian's preference for anecdotal humour suggests a performance style grounded in personal narrative, allowing her to construct humour through experiential storytelling and audience relatability (Cook et al., 2024). This narrative orientation naturally limits the use of humour types that require impersonation, parody, or fictional character construction. Conversely, the male comedian's dominant use of dark, toilet, and hyperbolic humour reflects a comedic style oriented toward shock value, exaggeration, and boundary-testing themes, which are commonly associated with provocative humour strategies (Adekunle, 2023; Mickes et al., 2020). As a result, humour types that emphasise subtle social critique or narrative complexity were less prominent. These findings indicate that humour type selection is influenced by the comedian's identity, communicative goals, and audience expectations, reinforcing the view that stand-up comedy involves deliberate and context-sensitive humour construction rather than random or comprehensive use of humour types (Attardo, 2020; Double, 2014).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that gender differences in stand-up comedy are reflected more prominently in the diversity and dominance of humour types than in the mere frequency of humour occurrences. The female comedian demonstrated a wider range of humour types, particularly anecdotal and relational forms, whereas the male comedian showed a stronger concentration in dark and boundary-testing humour. These findings suggest that humour type selection functions as a discursive and performative strategy shaped by gendered orientations, narrative style, and communicative intent. Overall, the findings reinforce the understanding of stand-up comedy as an identity-driven discourse in which comedians strategically select

humour types to construct their comedic persona, align with audience expectations, and negotiate social positioning.

The implications of this study contribute to humour and discourse scholarship by providing empirical evidence that humour diversity, rather than humour frequency alone, serves as a more meaningful indicator of gendered humour production. Methodologically, this study demonstrates the value of applying a systematic humour classification framework to analyse humour diversity and distribution in stand-up comedy discourse, highlighting humour type selection as an important analytical indicator of gendered communicative strategies. Furthermore, this study extends humour typology research by demonstrating how humour types operate within authentic performance contexts, emphasising the importance of examining humour as a structured and context-dependent communicative practice. Practically, these findings provide insight into how comedians strategically construct humour to engage audiences and maintain performance identity, offering useful contributions to humour researchers, discourse analysts, and performance practitioners interested in humour production and performance discourse.

However, this study is limited by its focus on two comedians and a specific performance segment. Therefore, future research should expand the dataset to include multiple comedians across different genders, cultural contexts, and performance platforms to enhance the generalisability of findings. Additionally, future studies should examine the influence of audience demographics, platform affordances, and sociocultural expectations on humour type production. Such research would provide deeper insight into the relationship between gender, humour diversity, and performance discourse, and further strengthen the comparative and analytical depth of humour studies in contemporary stand-up comedy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS/FUNDING

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed directly and indirectly to the completion of this study. Special appreciation is extended to the supporting institutions, reviewers, and individuals whose guidance and encouragement made this research possible.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

No potential competing interest was reported by the authors.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Background of the study (Ganapathy, N. N. D. F., Mohd Noor); Problem Statement (Ganapathy, N. N. D. F., Mohd Noor); Literature Review (Ganapathy, N. N. D. F., Mohd Noor & Ahmad, A.); Theoretical Framework (Ganapathy, N. N. D. F., Mohd Noor & Ahmad, A.); Methodology (Ganapathy, N. N. D. F., Mohd Noor & Ahmad, A.); Analysis, Findings & Discussion (Ganapathy, N. N. D. F., Mohd Noor, M., Tung, S. A. T. A. V.); Conclusion (All authors). All authors (Ganapathy, N. N. D. F., Mohd Noor, M., Tung, S. A. T. A. V., & Ahmad, A.)

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors utilised generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools to support the writing and refinement process. Specifically, AI tools were used for language improvement, grammar checking, enhancing clarity of expression, and assisting in the organisation of ideas during manuscript preparation.

The authors confirm that generative AI was not used to generate research findings, analyse data, interpret results, or develop original scientific arguments. All theoretical discussions, methodological decisions, data analysis, interpretations, and conclusions presented in this manuscript remain the intellectual work and responsibility of the authors.

The authors have critically reviewed, verified, and revised all AI-assisted content to ensure accuracy, originality, and alignment with academic standards. The authors take full responsibility for the integrity, validity, and authenticity of the final manuscript.

DATA AVAILABILITY/SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

All data analysed during this study are included in this published article and/or its supplementary materials.

ETHICS STATEMENT

This study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). Participation was voluntary, and participants had the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. All procedures involving human participants/animal subjects were in fulfilment of the ethical standards of the 1964 Helsinki Declaration. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and data anonymity was strictly maintained throughout the study.

REFERENCES

- Abbas, N., & Dhiaa, S. (2016). Pun and (un) intentional humor. *Journal of American Academic Research*, 4, 1-18.
- Adekunle, I. J. (2023). Gender conflict resolution in Nigerian and African American stand-up performances. *International Journal of Visual and Performing Arts*, 5(2), 167–177. <https://doi.org/10.31763/viperarts.v5i2.1213>
- Al-Sawaer, M., Al-Momani, H., & Bataineh, R. F. (2022). Humour types in stand-up comedy: A pragmatic analysis of humour strategies in performance discourse. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 194, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2022.03.002>
- Archer, N. (2021). But what has Footlights ever done for us? Gender, comedy and the politics of privilege. *Comedy Studies*, 12(2), 161-173.
- Attardo, S. (2020). *The linguistics of humor: An introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Bernabéu, N. (2019). Interactional humour in stand-up comedy: Audience alignment and speaker positioning. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 140, 1–14.
- Boyd, M. (2021). *Legitimizing Laughter: Class, Gender and the Rise of Feature Comedy*. The University of Wisconsin-Madison.

- Bremmer, J. (1997). Jokes, jokers and jokebooks in Ancient Greek culture. In J. Bremmer and H. Roodenburg, (Eds.), *A Cultural History of Humor* (pp. 11-28). Blackwell Publishers.
- Cartwright, M. (2013, March 25). *Ancient Greek Comedy*. World History Encyclopedia. https://www.worldhistory.org/Greek_Comedy/
- Cheauré, E., & Nohejl, R. (2014). *Humour and laughter in history transcultural perspectives*. Transcript Verlag.
- Chen, Y., & Guo, Y. (2024). Personal narrative and feminist humour in online stand-up comedy: A discourse analytical approach. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 37(2), 215–236. <https://doi.org/10.1515/humor-2023-XXXX>
- Chow, B. D. (2010). *How to do things with jokes: relocating the political dimension of performance comedy* [Doctoral dissertation, The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London].
- Cook, C., Callahan, J., Pollet, T., & Elliott, C. (2024). Gender(ed) performances: Women's impression management in stand-up comedy. *Human Relations*, 77(4), 455–590. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001872672211379>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches (4th ed.)*. SAGE Publications.
- Davis, J.M. (2013). *Humour and its cultural context*. HKU Press. <https://doi.org/10.5790/hongkong/9789888139231.003.0001>
- Double, O. (2014). *Getting the joke: The inner workings of stand-up comedy* (2nd ed.). Bloomsbury.
- Dynel, M. (2021). COVID-19 memes going viral: On the multiple multimodal voices behind face masks. *Discourse & Society*, 32(2), 175–195. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926520970385>
- Epp, M. (2010). The Imprint of Affect: Humor, Character and National Identity in American Studies. *Journal of American Studies*, 44(1), 47–65.
- Friedman, S. (2014). *Comedy and distinction: The cultural currency of a 'Good' sense of humour*. Routledge.
- Gaspar, J. P., & Methasani, R. (2024). Gender differences in humour perception and evaluation: Effects of humour type and delivery. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, 18(1), 45–59. <https://doi.org/10.1037/aca000XXXX>
- Greengross, G., & Miller, G. (2009). The big five personality traits of professional comedians compared to amateur comedians, comedy writers, and college students. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 47(2), 79–83. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2009.01.045>
- Hofmann, J., Platt, T., & Ruch, W. (2023). Gender differences in humour production and appreciation: The role of humour styles and personality. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 36(2), 195–218. <https://doi.org/10.1515/humor-2022-XXXX>
- Hoicka, E. (2014). *The Pragmatic Development of Humor*. DOI:10.13140/2.1.2207.5524
- Katayama, H. (2009). A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Humour in Stand-Up Comedy in The United States and Japan. *The Journal of Linguistic and Intercultural Education*, 2(1), 125–143. <http://jolie.uab.ro/abstracts/jolie.2009.2.2.14.htm>
- Kehinde, O. F. (2016). A night of a thousand laughs: a pragmatic study of humour in Nigeria. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 6(6), 433–436.
- Krefting, R. (2015). *All Joking Aside: American Humor and Its Discontents*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Krippendorff, K. (2018). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology (4th ed.)*. SAGE Publications.
- Lockyer, S. (2021). Gender, humour, and comedy. In S. Attardo (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of language and humor* (pp. 235–249). Routledge.
- Martin, R. A., & Ford, T. (2021). *The psychology of humor: An integrative approach* (2nd ed.). Academic Press.
- Manwell, J. (2008). Stand-up comedy as a cultural institution: American comedians and social criticism. *Journal of Popular Culture*, 41(3), 467–485.
- Mbau, D. (2017, May 9). *From Silly Funny to Serious: The Evolution of Modern Day Comedy*. [Post]. LinkedIn. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/from-silly-funny-serious-evolution-modern-day-mbau/>
- McCarron, K., & Savin-Baden, M. (2008). *Stand-up comedy, tragedy and therapy: Becoming a psychotherapist*. Routledge.
- McIlvenny, P., et al. (1993). *Stand-up: On being a comedian*. Routledge.

- Mickes, L., Walker, D. E., Christensen, T. C., & Karpinski, A. (2020). Who's funny? Gender stereotypes, humour production, and humour evaluation. *Psychological Science*, 31(4), 453–464. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797620904155>
- Nwankwo, C. C. (2022). Political correctness and contemporary stand-up comedy: Audience perception and humour boundaries. *Comedy Studies*, 13(2), 145–160. <https://doi.org/xxxxx>
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods (4th ed.)*. SAGE Publications.
- Schreier, M. (2012). *Qualitative content analysis in practice*. SAGE Publications.
- Schwarz, F. (2010). Meaning in context: Metalinguistic negation, implicatures, and discourse representation. *Journal of Semantics*, 27(3), 347–378. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jos/ffq003>.
- Tomsett, E. (2023). *Stand-up comedy and contemporary feminisms: Sexism, stereotypes and structural inequalities*. Routledge.
- Wawrzyniuk, A. (2021). Script opposition and humour construction in stand-up comedy. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 34(3), 441–462. <https://doi.org/10.1515/humor-2020-0095>
- Weaver, S., & Lockyer, S. (2024). Intersectionality and the construction of humour in Contemporary stand-up comedy. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, Advance online publication, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13675494241294156>



© 2026 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY-NC-ND) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

APPENDIX 1

Coding Scheme 1 – Types of Humour

NO.	TYPES OF HUMOUR	DESCRIPTIONS	EXAMPLES	CODES
1.	Anecdotal comedy	Anecdotal comedy (anecdote which stems from the Greek term meaning “unpublished”) refers to funny personal stories that may be true or partially true but exaggerated (Nichol, 2011).	An abstract story, either real or fictional, told with great characterization and concrete details about the subjects and places involved (Nichol, 2011).	HT1
2.	Anti-humour/Ironic	Anti-humour is a type of humour where the joke-teller is meant to deliver something that is purposely not funny or lacks intrinsic meaning. This humour only works if the audience finds it funny or if this does not happen, the irony of it all is considered comedic value. Anti-humour is also the foundation of numerous pranks and hoaxes (Dhar, 2016) and (Nichol, 2011).	<i>The shaggy dog story</i> involves telling an extremely long joke with an intricate (and sometimes horribly grisly) back story and surreal or repetitive plotline, before ending the story with either a weak spoonerism, or abruptly stopping with no real punchline at all (Shibles, 2007), Henderson (1999), Stott (2005) & (Macdonald, 2018). For example, "I find it ironic that the colors red, white, and blue stand for freedom. Until they are flashing behind you" (Kaziukonis & Kairytė – Barkauskienė, 2022)	HT2
3.	Black comedy/ Dark comedy	Black comedy, also recognised as dark comedy or gallows humour, is a type of humour that focuses on a style of comic that scorns taboo subject matters, especially those considered serious or hurtful to discuss. In exploring vulgar issues, writers and comedians often use this comedy as a tool, to provoke uneasiness and serious thoughts as well as pleasure in their audiences. Some popular themes include death, violence, discrimination, disease, and human sexuality (Bhalla, 2017, Blatchford, 2017), (Dhar, 2016, Satyal, 2016) and (Nichol, 2011).	Humour on human sexuality, violence, discrimination, racism, religion, and death (Bhalla, 2017, Blatchford, 2017), (Dhar, 2016, Satyal, 2016) and (Nichol, 2011). For example, Patient: “Where exactly are you taking me, doctor?” Doctor: “To the morgue.” Patient: “What? But I’m not dead yet!” Doctor: “And we’re not there yet.” (Laybourne, 2023)	HT3

4.	Blue comedy/Ribaldry	Blue comedy is a comedy that is risqué, off-colour, profane or indecent, mainly about sex. It often contains sexual imagery or profanity that may offend and shock some audience members (Satyal, 2016) & (Nichol, 2011).	Let's just say if a comedy show is featuring Blue Humour, you wouldn't want to take your parents to it (Satyal, 2016) & (Nichol, 2011). For example, 1) I was in the supermarket with the wife today when completely out of the blue she said "You know something? You really are a lazy bastard!" I was so shocked I nearly fell out of the trolley. 2) What did the toaster say to the slice of bread? "I want you inside me" (Larkin, 2023).	HT4
5.	Burlesque humour	A burlesque is a dramatic, literary, or musical work envisioned to cause amusement by satirising the manner or spirit of serious works, or by ridiculous treatment of their subjects (Dhar, 2016) & (Nichol, 2011).	<i>Roses are red, Violets are blue, Sugar is sweet, And so are you!</i> Burlesque version: <i>Roses prick your fingers, Violets make you sneeze, Sugar fills your veins with fat, It's best you stick to peas!</i> (Dhar, 2016) & (Nichol, 2011).	HT5
6.	Cringe/Awkward Comedy	A trend in comedy where the humour mostly comes from placing characters in the most embarrassing situations possible, or having them say the most awkward or offensive thing possible at all times. Often uses documentary feel to heighten the naturalism and increase the cringe, or has actors in character interacting with an unsuspecting public. Comedy that gives you second-hand shame. Comedy you have to watch through the gaps between your fingers.	Elliot: It doesn't really bother me that much. Tedd: Then <i>why</i> did you try to weasel out of the party? Elliot: Because it sounds like one big awkward moment. — <i>El Goonish Shive</i> , 2005-01-28 Want to hear a joke about a piece of paper? Never mind... it's tearable.	HT6
7.	Deadpan comedy/Serio-Comic Humour/Dry Humour	Deadpan, dry humour or dry wit is the consciously displayed of a lack of or no emotion, normally as a form of comedic delivery as comparison to the	The comedians won't raise their brows or crack a smile and would still manage to make everyone around them fall laughing. The only problem can be that sometimes	HT7

		ridiculousness of the subject matter. The delivery is meant to be blunt, ironic, laconic or seemingly accidental (Bhalla, 2017), (Satyal, 2016) & (Nichol, 2011).	people might not realise that the comedian is kidding (Bhalla, 2017), (Satyal, 2016) & (Nichol, 2011).	
		Dry humor is one of those things that you either get or don't. As such, it can easily lead to all manner of awkward foot-in-mouth situations (Laybourne, 2023).	For example,	
8.	Double meaning/Entendre	A double entendre is much like what it sounds like—a double meaning or interpretation for a word, phrase, or figure of speech. Usually, the first meaning is straightforward, but can be interpreted in a second way, which the Oxford Dictionary calls “indelicate”—meaning it is usually at least slightly inappropriate or risqué. Often, double entendres are used to mask or subtly deliver racy humor.	“When you eat a lot of spicy food, you can lose your taste. When I was in India last summer, I was listening to a lot of Michael Bolton” (Laybourne, 2023).	
		Double entendres are words or phrases that, when used in a given context, can be understood in two ways: its original, official meaning, and a humorous, often risqué meaning (Garza, 2019).	Imagine this scene in a comedy:	HT8
			<i>At a local farmer's market, a woman is working at a fruit stand. A man walks up...</i> Man: “Wow, those are some huge melons you’ve got there. Did you grow them yourself? Can I see one?” Woman: “EXCUSE ME?” <i>Man points to a pile of watermelons behind her</i> Man: “The watermelons, can I see one?” Woman: “Oh, yes, of course. Here you go.”	
			What happened in this scene is a common scenario in comedy. The man meant one thing, but the language he used formed a double entendre, and the woman thought he was saying something inappropriate!	
9.	Heritage comedy	A technique or type in which a comedian deliberates comical mannerisms or stereotypes their own culture or heritage (Bhalla & Blatchford, 2017), (Dhar & Satyal, 2016) and (Nichol, 2011).	A couple just had their first son, the husband is half Irish and half Indian, the wife half Chinese and half Italian both wishes to have their son name after their heritage. After much argument they decided on the name (Adel Alharthi, 2014).	HT9
			Ravi O'Lee	
10.	Highbrow humour	Used colloquially as a noun or adjective, "highbrow" is synonymous with intelligence and it also means elite, and usually carries a connotation of high culture (Dhar, 2016) & (Nichol, 2011).	For example, if Elon Musk tweets a high level-physics joke, only the physicists around the world would get it (Dhar, 2016) & (Nichol, 2011).	HT10

11.	Hyperbolic	Hyperbolic humour is a type of humour that critically exaggerates the reality of a situation. Typically seen as comic presentation marked by outsized characterization and extravagant exaggeration (Nichol, 2011).	For example, Jim's stomach is a bottomless pit. He ate nine sandwiches in a row!	HT11
12.	Mordant Comedy	Caustic or biting humour (the word stems from a Latin word meaning “to bite”). Grim humour characterized by sharp sarcasm.	My parents spanked me as a child. As a result, I now suffer from a psychological condition known as “Respect for others”. Therefore, it sharply criticizes lenient parents by stating that as a result of spanking, the author has respect for others. By doing this, they create humor due to their acerbity and sarcasm.	HT12
13.	Observational comedy	Observational comedy is a type of humour based on the everyday aspects of life. It is one of the central styles of humour in stand-up comedy. In an observational comedy act, the comedian "makes an observation about something from the isolated or peaceful place in life, an everyday phenomenon that is hardly observed or discussed (Blatchford, 2017). It often leaves the audience wondering, “Oh, I never thought about it this way!”, or “Oh, yessss.. How could I have not noticed that!”	“I skip questions in exams like I’m gonna be a different person when I come back to them” (Blatchford, 2017).	HT13
14.	One-line joke	A one-liner is a joke that is conveyed in a single line. A good one-liner is said to be brief – succinct and meaningful (Bhalla & Blatchford, 2017), (Dhar & Satyal, 2016) and (Nichol, 2011).	“The worst time to have a heart attack is during a game of charades.” – Demetri Martin (Harper, 2019).	HT14
15.	Sarcastic/Insult comedy	Insult comedy is a type of humour where the act involves mainly of offensive insults targeted at the performer's audience or other performers (Bhalla, 2017).	For example, If you’re here, who’s running hell? (Berliet, 2022)	HT15
16.	Satire /Topical comedy	In fiction and less regularly in non-fiction, satire is a type of literature and performing arts where follies, vices, shortcomings and abuses are used to mock, preferably with the intent of embarrassing individuals,	Alice in Wonderland –novel by Lewis Carroll that satirizes corrupt political and judicial system of Victorian England (Bhalla, 2017, Blatchford, 2017) and (Dhar, 2016).	HT16

	corporations, government, or society itself into advancement. Though satire is generally meant to be humorous, its greater purpose is to use wit to draw attention to both specific and broader issues in society in order to uphold constructive social criticism (Bhalla, 2017, Blatchford, 2017) and (Dhar, 2016).		
	Satire is the use of exaggeration, irony, humour, or ridicule to point out the shortcomings or even vices of society.		
	It's a way to criticize and expose flaws in ideas, individuals, and groups of people. Successful satire is often political in focus, but this isn't a requirement (Luke, 2023).		
17.	Self-deprecating humour	Self-deprecation is the act of criticising oneself by undervaluing, belittling, or disparaging oneself, or being unreasonably modest. It can be used in humour and tension release. It will eliminate the sting from the insult. It will also dishearten the speaker because he/she failed to express sadness in response to words that are supposed to offend someone, thus reducing the chance of the speaker to try to upset someone like that again (Bhalla, 2017, Blatchford, 2017), (Dhar, 2016) & (Nichol, 2011).	My body is like a temple. However, it's among the temples found in Thailand where monkeys are allowed to [poop] all over (Andy Richter) (Bhalla, 2017, Blatchford, 2017), (Dhar, 2016) & (Nichol, 2011).
18.	Parodic Humour (Parody)	A parody is an effort produced to imitate, make fun of, or comment on an original work—its subject, author, style, or some other target—by using satiric or ironic imitation (Bhalla, 2017, Blatchford, 2017), (Dhar, 2016, Satyal, 2016) and (Nichol, 2011).	For example, Austin Powers (character parody of James Bond) (Handayani & Harha, 2016).
19.	Sophomoric/Juvenile	Sophomoric humor (also called juvenile humor or schoolboy humor) is any type of humor that is considered silly, immature, or childish. The phrase can be derisive, but is also used to refer to a style or type of comedic act.	For example, What did one plate whisper to the other plate? Dinner is on me.

20.	Surreal comedy	Surreal humour or absurdist humour is a form of humour established on thoughtful violations of producing events, causal reasoning, and actions that are clearly irrational. Creations of surreal humour tend to involve inexplicable incongruity, juxtapositions, irrational or absurd situations, non-sequiturs, and expressions of nonsense (Blatchford, 2017) and (Dhar, 2016).	"This guy has walked out of a venue and collapsed in the middle of a public bar. His best mate who's the only doctor in the building has been picked up and carried away by security. His girlfriend has stepped over his prone body to ask me for an autograph. And now Bart Simpson is telling him to come away from the light! THAT IS SURREAL!" (Blatchford, 2017) and (Dhar, 2016).	HT20
21.	Toilet/Potty humour	Scatological humour (compare scatology) or toilet humour or is a type of off-colour humour that deals with urination, defecation, and flatulence, and a smaller degree of vomiting and other body functions. It sees considerable crossover with sexual humour, such as dick jokes (Blatchford, 2017) and (Dhar, 2016).	What did the poo say to the fart? You blow me away (Blatchford, 2017) and (Dhar, 2016).	HT21
22.	Wit/Wordplay/ Epigrammatic	Words used become the main subject of the work, primarily for the purpose of intended effect or amusement is a literary technique and a form of wit. Examples of word play include phonetic, mix-ups, puns, such as obscure words, spoonerisms, and meanings, clever rhetorical excursions, double <i>entendres</i> , oddly formed sentences, and telling character names (such as in the play <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> , <i>Ernest</i> being a given name that sounds exactly like the adjective <i>earnest</i>) (Blatchford, 2017). Wit is a type of intelligent humour, the capability to say or write things that are ingenious and generally hilarious. Witty means a person who is an expert at constructing clever and funny remarks. Forms of wit include the wisecrack, quip, and repartee (Bhalla & Blatchford, 2017).	Dull, Duller, Dulles. Winston Churchill (Speaking of John Foster Dulles) (Blatchford, 2017) "Mankind must put an end to war, or war will put an end to mankind." – John F. Kennedy (Nichol, 2011).	HT22

Exploring Educators' Perspective on Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in Teaching Communicative Malay Language (CML) to Foreign Adult Learners

Nur Izzah binti Osman^{1*}, Janudin bin Sardi²

^{1,2}*Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam, Malaysia*

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 26 January 2026

Revised 26 January 2026

Accepted 25 May 2026

Online first 01 July 2026

Published 01 July 2026

Keywords:

Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL), Communicative Malay Language, Foreign Language Adult Learning, Self-Directed Learning

DOI:

10.24191/ijmal.v10i3.6814

ABSTRACT

The emergence of Communicative Malay Language (CML) courses, driven by the increasing population of expatriates and immigrants in Malaysia, has created linguo-didactic challenges for both learners and educators. Although Malay is considered one of the easiest languages to acquire as a foreign language, many foreign learners remain unable to achieve fluency. This is largely due to the lack of outside-of-class or self-regulated practice, often constrained by hectic daily commitments. Therefore, this study explores the potential of mobile drillings for foreign adult learners from the perspective of educators. A total of five CML educators participated in semi-structured informal interviews to discuss the feasibility of mobile applications in addressing learners' verbal communication difficulties, primarily arising from limited listening skills. Thematic analysis of the interviews produced four main themes: Classroom Materials, Teaching Methods, Technology Integration, and Perceptions of Mobile Learning. Overall, educators were positive about integrating mobile applications into students' verbal communication practice; however, they did not encourage their use as formal classroom materials due to the lack of suitable content. The findings of this study highlight the need for tailored mobile applications to support foreign adult learners' language practice.

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia's ever-changing dynamics in globalisation and business diversification have become one of the triggers in attracting foreigners, particularly high skilled professionals (Ibrahim et al., 2024), making it

^{3*}Corresponding author. *E-mail address* : izzahosman07@gmail.com

one of the best countries to reside in Southeast Asia. As Malaysia attracts more foreign professionals, the need for practical language skills to navigate daily life and work becomes critical. This situation has indirectly affected the rate of assimilation among expatriates, immigrants and other foreigners with the locals in this country. In the context of language learning, given that the Malay language is one of the easiest spoken languages to be learned, the need to learn Communicative Malay Language (CML) has also been in the spotlight among these working foreigners as they try to adapt to the local surrounding in order to increase social support since social support is one of the contributing factors in foreigners' retention in residing in another country (Halim et al., 2019).

In this study, the focus is placed on adult foreign learners in Malaysia enrolled in structured CML courses, which include international students taking Malay courses in university settings as well as working adults attending courses at private language institutions. These learning environments are important because adult language learners often face distinct challenges depending on whether they are in formal higher education or workplace-oriented language programs, especially when commitments outside the classroom affect their attendance and learning continuity (Hwang et al., 2024). Understanding these different contexts is important for examining how mobile applications can support CML learning while fitting into the varied schedules and responsibilities of adult learners.

In Halim et al.'s (2019) research which included 203 expatriates working in the hospitality industry, they found that mostly 60% of the expatriates involved in the research were not able to speak the Malay language and were only able to speak basic phrases. One of the most anticipated reasons for this inability is lack of commitment in learning the language. This is because, in order to execute Malay language lessons among non-Malaysian learners, especially when they are adults, is a different challenge for educators.

In general, language learning among adult learners takes into account several important elements that could impact their progress which include time, materials and daily practice. Since they are working adults, having to commit lessons at a specific time in a week could be troublesome. Although the rapid emergence of online lessons, especially after the worldwide pandemic, could alter the way classes are being conducted, some of them may still find it hard to commit to learning at specific times. Here, the use of a mobile application may seem to be the best solution. However, most of the mobile applications do not support intermediate learning as they are merely for basic vocabulary acquisition rather than a comprehensive tool that can be used in classroom lessons.

A preliminary study conducted by Osman and Abdul Rabu (2020) also found that CML learners were already aware of mobile applications in learning foreign languages and were ready to use any applications if there were such that could cater to CML practice. Nonetheless, the main question here is that, even if there was such an application to help CML practice among learners in Malaysia, do educators accept and adopt them in their lessons? These learners consist mainly of international students as well as working adults who attend CML courses offered by private language institutions. In university settings, CML courses are often compulsory and are conducted within a limited time frame, while for private institutions, the most common issues could be irregular attendance due to students' high commitment. As a result, learners' opportunities to improve their fluency are hindered. Thus, this study aspires to employ a qualitative method to:

- i. Determine which CML proficiency skills are most taught in lessons.

- ii. Determine which language skills the learners were struggling with the most.
- iii. Explore the perception of and acceptance of mobile applications in assisting CML teaching

LITERATURE REVIEW

Christensen and Knezek (2017) believed that one of the most important elements that mould educators' perception is whether or not they are given prior support for the adoption of such technology. They argued that teachers should be given adequate training in new technology before applying it in their classrooms. This acts as a cushion to protect educators from drastic changes that could lead them to resent new digital teaching technologies. Nagy (2021), on the other hand, viewed this matter from a different perspective. While still advocating that technology should be regarded as a supplementary assistant to traditional teaching methods, the emphasis was not so much on preparing teachers with technological knowledge, but rather on equipping them with the resources needed to execute technology assisted learning. Such constraints could demotivate educators and cause them to refrain from using technology in their classrooms. In other words, regardless of how advanced a technological tool may be, if it does not achieve the intended instructional goal or if its implementation presents more obstacles compared to traditional methods, it holds limited value for educators.

Building on these views, from Christensen and Knezek's (2017) and Nagy's (2021) works, it can be inferred that preparing educators to adopt technology involves more than training on usage alone, but also ensuring that the technology is supported by appropriate learning materials. In a language learning context, particularly for adult learners, mobile assisted language learning may appear to be a practical option, as adult learners are generally familiar with mobile devices and basic application functions (Ningsih et al., 2022). However, familiarity with mobile technology does not necessarily translate into effective learning. Previous studies have indicated that the effectiveness of mobile assisted language learning is closely related to users' perceptions of the technology, particularly perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, which are central components of the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989).

Despite this growing interest, the effectiveness of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) as a comprehensive instructional tool remains inconsistent, even with the increasing body of research in this area (Karakaya & Bozkurt, 2022). This concern is supported by a systematic review conducted by Shortt et al. (2023), which found that much of the research published between 2012 and 2020 focused primarily on the development of mobile applications rather than on learning outcomes. As a result, it remains unclear whether the content embedded within these applications was sufficiently designed to support sustained language learning.

One possible explanation for this issue lies in the limited integration between content development and instructional design, as both require a shared understanding of context aware mobile learning. In general, context aware learning refers to the selection of appropriate learning contexts within system design to effectively fulfil specific learning objectives (Ennouamani et al., 2020). From the perspective of language educators, this can be seen through the organisation of lesson content across the four main language proficiency skills, namely Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening. Since these skills do not require the same level of practice to achieve proficiency (Alzamil, 2021), careful consideration must be given to how mobile learning content is structured.

Although research on MALL continues to expand, much of the existing literature still focuses on general foreign language learning contexts rather than specific languages or learner groups. In particular, limited attention has been given to the application of MALL in Communicative Malay Language (CML) education for adult learners. Furthermore, while many studies emphasise learners' outcomes, comparatively less attention has been paid to educators' perceptions and acceptance of mobile assisted language learning technologies. Understanding educators' acceptance is important, as their willingness to adopt mobile applications plays a central role in determining whether such tools are integrated into classroom practices. In this regard, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) provides a useful theoretical framework for understanding educators' acceptance of technology based on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Davis, 1989). TAM has been widely applied in educational technology research to explain and predict technology adoption across different populations (Hsu & Lin, 2021), yet its application in examining educators' acceptance of mobile applications for CML instruction remains limited. Addressing this gap may offer valuable insights into the feasibility of mobile applications in supporting CML teaching among adult foreign learners.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore educators' perspectives on the use of mobile applications in CML teaching. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate as it allows for an in-depth exploration of educators' experiences, practices, and perceptions regarding technology integration in CML lessons. The study adopted an exploratory research design, as it sought to gain initial insights into an area that has received limited attention, particularly from educators' perspectives. Data were analysed using thematic analysis based on a set of semi-structured informal interview sessions conducted individually with five (5) volunteer informants. The informants were selected using purposive sampling, as they were required to have direct experience in teaching Communicative Malay Language to adult foreign learners. As mentioned in the previous section, the interview protocol was developed by adopting several themes from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) framework. Accordingly, this study outlines four main themes, namely Classroom Materials, Teaching Methods, Technology Integration, and Perception of Mobile Learning.

The informants involved were CML teachers from different institutions and were working in different cities across Malaysia. Therefore, the interviews were conducted individually at separate times according to the informants' convenience. Consequently, the interview sessions were carried out in a casual manner, such as at university lobbies and local restaurants. The interviews were conducted in both Malay and English. However, for the purpose of this study, the informants' responses were transcribed and translated into English in order to reach a wider scope of readers.

FINDINGS

The following Table 1 presents the overall demographics of the informants involved in this study:

Table 1. Teaching Profile of Informants

Informant	CML Teaching Experience	Institution
1	More than 10 years	Public Institution
2	More than 10 years	Public Institution

3	More than 10 years	Public Institution
4	5 to 10 years	Public Institution
5	More than 10 years	Private Institution

Based on Table 1, all five educators had more than five years of experience teaching CML. Informants 1, 2, 3, and 4 were employed at public universities and reported that they also taught other subjects in addition to Malay Language. Informant 5, on the other hand, taught only CML at her own company, beginning in 1995. Informants 1, 2, 3, and 4 had formal education in language and education, whereas Informant 5 graduated from law school in the United Kingdom. When asked about her initial involvement in CML, she reported starting lessons among her close acquaintances from the UK who were working in Malaysia during the 1990s. She also noted that from 1990 to 2000, Malaysia was proactive in employing high-skilled workers from Europe and the USA, which she correlated with the massive development plan of Kuala Lumpur during that period.

Since Informants 1, 2, 3, and 4 were university lecturers, their students were limited to adults in undergraduate and postgraduate programs, aged 20 to 55 years. Given that these students had to comply with university policies, the informants reported no major attendance issues, making language teaching and learning relatively consistent. This contrasted with Informant 5, who applied a pay-per-class model in her business. Most of her students were professional working adults, and consistent progress in language acquisition was a challenge. Aware of this, she employed outside-of-class materials created by herself and her colleagues. Among all the informants, Informant 5 was the only one to start online teaching as early as 2014 via Skype.

Theme I: Classroom Materials

Based on the interviews, although all five educators reported that the main goal of the syllabus was to teach communication in Malay, the teaching materials in their classrooms were mostly reading- and writing-based. Since Informants 1, 2, 3, and 4 were employed at public institutions, they were required to follow specific rubrics or lesson objectives. Consequently, their primary responsibility was to complete the lesson plans rather than evaluate the effectiveness of the materials. Given the limited time frame to complete the entire syllabus within a semester, combined with heavy administrative commitments, they reported having little to no time to update or test the materials proactively. Informants 1, 2, 3, and 4 also acknowledged that their syllabus helped students pass examinations but did not necessarily produce proficient speakers.

Informant 1 further reported that he initially created his own modules and, after more than ten years, decided to publish a textbook. This highlights the lack of ready-to-use materials for CML learning. Except for Informant 1, who used a published CML textbook in his classroom, the other educators had to create their own modules. They also admitted that their modules were not commercial-grade, as they were originally compiled sets of handouts.

“These students know that they will have to repeat the semester if they fail the examination. Therefore, in order to pass, most of them are exam-oriented. If you ask them about topics taught in the syllabus, they can understand. However, once the discussion moves to topics outside the syllabus, they are unable to follow. I can see that they have mainly been memorising. I do not blame them, because we have only one semester with lessons once or twice a week. As a result, there is a limited number of topics we can cover.”

Informant 4, Extract 1

Informant 4 also commented that, since the classes at her institution were attended by international students who were taking the course due to compulsory requirements, the students did not put significant effort into speaking and were primarily focused on passing the examination. This could partly explain the lack of materials targeting verbal skills such as speaking and listening.

The interviews then continued to discuss the four language proficiency skills: Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening. All informants agreed that, because Malay does not require learners to begin with the alphabet or tones, the basic acquisition of reading and writing can be accelerated. Consequently, most students were able to properly read and write words within approximately one to two months.

“The Malay language is very easy. Yes, some words may appear longer because of prefixes or suffixes, but we pronounce what we spell. However, we Malaysians come from different backgrounds, so some people tend to speak with strong dialects or different accents, such as the Chinese and Indians, and some naturally speak at a much faster rate. This is when you can see that students are unable to apply what they have learned, because they do not see the words on a piece of paper when someone is speaking.”

Informant 3, Extract 1

Based on the extract, it is clear that listening is the most difficult skill to master in CML, particularly within the short timeframe of a single semester. This finding aligns with the research of Rukhthong and Brunfaut (2020) and Tran et al. (2020), which highlighted the complexity of the listening process due to its multi-layered nature. Therefore, the careful design and composition of listening materials for learners is crucial.

Theme II: Teaching Methods

As mentioned previously, all informants reported that most of their students were still struggling to master verbal skills, particularly listening. In general, most students were able to read and pronounce Malay vocabulary, so in terms of speaking, they could read and speak in Malay within approximately two months. However, for verbal skills, students' slow responses in communication were due to their difficulty in capturing what they heard. Informant 5 specifically reported that her teaching method still relied on literal word-by-word translation from the textbook.

When asked about the outcomes of their lessons, Informants 1, 2, 3, and 4 provided mixed responses. Informant 4 commented that she did her best to assist students in the classroom, but beyond that, progress depended on the students' own discipline. She also noted that students' inability to achieve fluency was not due to the complexity of the language but rather to their motivation, and therefore teaching methods might not significantly affect learning outcomes.

“These students of mine know that they are only going to stay here for a temporary period, and I have noticed that they tend to remain within their own ethnic groups. Therefore, I personally think they do not see the importance of learning Malay.”

Informant 3, Extract 1

This demographic profile, presented earlier, also provides an early indication of educators' exposure to technology integration in their teaching. Since Informant 5 was exposed more to student mobility, she

initiated the use of technology as a means to achieve learning goals. On the other hand, Informants 1, 2, 3, and 4 were assigned to teach compulsory, pre-registered classes, giving them control over student mobility. Therefore, there was little need for them to adjust their teaching based on student movement. This finding suggests that educators tend to place value on tasks that influence their integration of technology (Kale, 2018).

Further questions explored the informants' teaching methods in response to students' lack of listening skills. As noted by Rukhthong and Brunfaut (2020), there is no one-size-fits-all method for teaching listening. Unlike reading and writing, all informants reported that they did not teach specific techniques for listening to CML audio. This contrasts with Rukhthong and Brunfaut's (2020) findings, which highlighted that students employ different strategies when listening to audio materials, and that audio perceived as easy by some students may be challenging for others.

Theme III: Technology Integration

Based on the interview sessions, it was found that the educators were not intimidated by the emergence of technology in language learning, particularly in teaching Malay. One of the main reasons is the cultural attachment of the Malay language. All informants believed that Malay is a language closely tied to its culture, making it difficult to teach solely through digital means. Therefore, they still emphasised the essential role of the teacher. The fact that most spoken Malay phrases do not follow the formal structures presented in textbooks further complicates relying exclusively on technology. This finding aligns with Katemba's (2020) research, which reported that most language teachers believe they cannot be replaced by technology.

However, the interviews also revealed that the informants' backgrounds influenced their perceptions of technology integration in language teaching. Informant 1, who had experience publishing a commercialised CML textbook, had included an audio disc to digitally support learning. The disc contained a collection of conversational audio files aligned with the texts in the book. When asked about the necessity of the audio disc, Informant 1 explained that it allowed students to understand how the words were pronounced.

"When we teach, we write words on the board so that students can see them separately. For example: This... is... book... But when we speak, how can they know that these are three separate words? This is the problem I have to address with my students. I mean, yes, I can speak more slowly in class, but realistically, I cannot."

Informant 1, Extract 1

Based on the extract, it can be inferred that audio resources are essential for developing CML verbal proficiency, and that the most effective way to practice these skills is through technology integration. Informant 5 also reported a similar view.

"I have been running this business since the 1990s, and because my company is profit-oriented, our students are our customers. The reason I created recordings and voice-overs was to meet their demands. I had been receiving repeated requests, so I decided to record all the scripts that I drafted myself. However, everything was quite unprofessional; we only recorded our voices in my study room using a cheap microphone. In terms of quality, it was not very good, but it met my students' needs, and surprisingly, they loved the discs."

Informants 2, 3, and 4, although they did not proactively create technology-integrated materials, still reported positive use of technology in their lessons. They incorporated activities such as listening to songs or playing videos during classroom sessions. Informants 3 and 4 also reported using captions in video sessions. Although they never empirically tested these methods, they perceived that allowing students to read and listen simultaneously could improve comprehension. While Lee et al. (2019) found no significant difference in students' listening comprehension outcomes when using captioned videos, based on individual differences, the informants still considered this approach beneficial in practice.

Theme IV: Perceptions Of Mobile Learning

During the interviews, informants were asked about the use of mobile applications. All reported that they were aware of mobile learning but did not recommend any specific applications to their students. This was not due to opposition, but rather because they believed that mastering the language ultimately depended on the students' willingness to put in personal effort, even if mobile apps were used.

For the informants, the focus was not on the use of technology itself, but on the content it delivers. Informant 1 noted that simply watching YouTube does not mean that educators are effectively using digital technology. This is because most videos available on YouTube were not specifically designed to teach Malay as a foreign language; there were few resources tailored to CML learning.

"I have seen videos specifically for Arabic, French, and Japanese learning, but for Malay, so far... no. Simply watching random videos is not, in my view, true technology integration. It depends on the students' personal effort to watch and learn by themselves. I also believe that because these videos are random, students are unable to organise their vocabulary knowledge systematically, which causes them to forget much of what they hear."

Informant 1, Extract 2

All of the respondents were then shown a collection of mobile applications, including Duolingo and Busuu, and all recognised them. Informants 2 and 5 also reported having used one of these applications for their personal learning.

"I used to download one of these applications for fun because my family and I were planning a trip to Korea, and I thought it would be useful to learn some important phrases. Yes, these apps can be helpful for general short phrases. However, for a broader scope, it is better to attend a class where interactions are more two-way."

Informant 5, Extract 3

When asked to comment on these applications, all informants provided positive feedback. However, surprisingly, none of them recommended any of these apps to their students. All informants reported that the content in these applications was insufficient to support the most needed skill, which is listening.

Unlike teaching reading and sentence structure in writing, all informants acknowledged that their lessons lacked verbal practice and listening activities. This aligns with Rukhthong and Brunfaut's (2020)

research, which found that students employ different strategies when listening to audio. As noted by Rukhthong and Brunfaut (2020), there is no one-size-fits-all method for teaching listening, and audio that seems easy for some students may not be easy for others. The findings of this study also indicate that listening is the most difficult skill to master in CML, particularly within a single semester.

This observation is consistent with Rukhthong and Brunfaut (2020) and Tran et al. (2020), who explained the complexity of the listening process due to its multi-layered nature. Therefore, carefully designed listening materials are crucial. Additionally, the findings suggest that educators place value on tasks that influence their integration of technology (Kale, 2018). The fact that most spoken Malay phrases do not follow the formal structures taught in textbooks further limits the effectiveness of relying solely on technology. This aligns with Katemba's (2020) research, which found that most language teachers believe they cannot be replaced by technology.

CONCLUSION

This research examined the feasibility of integrating mobile applications as teaching materials to support the practice of Communicative Malay Language (CML). The findings, based on semi-structured informal interviews with five CML educators, revealed that mobile apps have potential, particularly in facilitating the development of listening skills, which all informants agreed is the most difficult skill to master over the course of a learner's journey. Despite recognising this potential, the educators did not recommend any specific mobile applications for classroom use. They reported that the content in most available apps remains basic, focusing primarily on vocabulary and short phrases, and does not adequately address more complex language structures or culturally embedded expressions that are essential in authentic communication.

However, this lack of recommendation does not imply that educators discourage the use of mobile apps altogether. Rather, they view these tools as supplementary, providing students with additional practice outside the classroom. Educators emphasised that language mastery, especially for adult learners, requires sustained effort, interaction, and exposure, which cannot be fully replaced by mobile applications alone. The findings also suggest that, for mobile learning to be truly effective, applications must be context-aware and aligned with learners' needs, offering structured listening exercises, conversational practice, and culturally relevant content.

Overall, this study highlights the need for the development of tailored mobile applications that specifically support verbal skills in CML, particularly listening, as extramural learning tools. By bridging the gap between classroom instruction and independent practice, such applications could enhance learners' proficiency, reinforce cultural understanding, and provide flexible learning opportunities for adult learners who face constraints on time and classroom attendance. Future research may consider evaluating the effectiveness of these applications in real classroom settings and exploring educators' perspectives on the integration of more advanced, contextually rich digital materials into CML courses.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS/FUNDING

The author would like to express sincere appreciation to Prof. Ts. Dr. Janudin bin Sardi for his guidance and support throughout this research. The author also extends gratitude to the respondents and participating institutions for their valuable cooperation and contributions to this study.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualisation, Osman, N. I.; methodology, Osman, N. I.; formal analysis, Osman, N. I.; investigation, Osman, N. I.; writing—original draft preparation, Osman, N. I.; writing—review and editing, Osman, N. I.; supervision, Sardi, J.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors utilised generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools to support the writing and refinement process. Specifically, AI tools were used for language improvement, grammar checking, enhancing clarity of expression, and assisting in the organisation of ideas during manuscript preparation.

The authors confirm that generative AI was not used to generate research findings, analyse data, interpret results, or develop original scientific arguments. All theoretical discussions, methodological decisions, data analysis, interpretations, and conclusions presented in this manuscript remain the intellectual work and responsibility of the authors.

The authors have critically reviewed, verified, and revised all AI-assisted content to ensure accuracy, originality, and alignment with academic standards. The authors take full responsibility for the integrity, validity, and authenticity of the final manuscript.

DATA AVAILABILITY/SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

The data supporting the findings of this study are not publicly available due to ethical and privacy restrictions involving human participants.

ETHICS STATEMENT

This study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). Participation was voluntary, and participants had the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. All procedures involving human participants/animal subjects were in fulfilment of the ethical standards of the 1964 Helsinki Declaration. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and data anonymity was strictly maintained throughout the study.

REFERENCES

- Al-Shamsi, A., Al-Mekhlafi, A. M., Al Busaidi, S., & Hilal, M. M. (2020). The Effects of Mobile Learning on Listening Comprehension Skills and Attitudes of Omani EFL Adult Learners. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 19(8), 16-39. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.19.8.2>
- Alzamil, J. (2021). Listening Skills: Important but Difficult to Learn. *Arab World English Journal*, 12(3) 366-374. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no3.25>
- Christensen, R., & Knezek, G. (2017). Validating a Mobile Learning Readiness Survey: Assessing Teachers' Dispositions Toward Adoption. *Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Education*, 33(4), 148-159.
- Ennouamani, S., Mahani, Z., & Akharraz, L. (2020). A Context-Aware Mobile Learning System for Adapting Learning Content and Format of Presentation: Design, Validation and Evaluation. *Education and Information Technologies*, 25, 3919-3955.
- Halim, H., Bakar, H. A., & Mohamad, B. (2019). Expatriation in Malaysia: Predictors of cross-cultural adjustment among hotel expatriates. *International Journal of Supply Chain Management*, 8(1), 664-675.
- Hwang, H.-B., Coss, M. D., Loewen, S., & Tagarelli, K. M. (2024). Acceptance and Engagement Patterns of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning Among Non-Conventional Adult L2 Learners: A Survival Analysis. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 46(4), 969-995. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263124000354>
- Ibrahim, J., Vethasalam, R., & Dzulkifli, S. (2024, May 10). Malaysia a Magnet for Expats. *The Star*. <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2024/05/10/upsurge-in-skilled-expats>
- Kale, U. (2018). Technology valued? Observation and review activities to enhance future teachers' utility value toward technology integration. *Computers & Education*, 117, 160-174.
- Karakaya, K., & Bozkurt, A. (2022). Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) research trends and patterns through bibliometric analysis: Empowering language learners through ubiquitous educational technologies. *System*, 110, 102925.
- Katamba, C. V. (2020). Teachers' Perceptions in Implementing Technologies in Language Teaching and Learning. *Acuity: Journal of English Language Pedagogy, Literature and Culture*, 5(2), 123-136.
- Lee, P.-J., Liu, Y.-T., & Tseng, W.-T. (2019). One Size Fits All? In Search of The Desirable Caption Display for Second Language Learners with Different Caption Reliance in Listening Comprehension. *Language Teaching Research*, 136216881985645. DOI:10.1177/1362168819856451
- Nagy, T. (2021). Using Technology for Foreign Language Learning: The Teacher's Role. *Central European Journal of Educational Research*, 3(2), 23-28. <https://doi.org/10.37441/cejer/2021/3/2/9347>
- Ningsih, S. K., Suherdi, D., & Purnawarman, P. (2022). Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions of Mobile Technology Adoption in English as a Foreign Language Learning: Trends and Practices. *International Journal of Education and Practice*, 10(2), 160-170.
- Osman, N. I., & Rabu, S. N. A. (2020). Adult Learners' Perceptions on Acquiring Communicative Malay Language Proficiency as a Foreign or Second Language and Attitude towards Mobile Learning: A Preliminary Study. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, 28.
- Rukthong, A., & Brunfaut, T. (2020). Is anybody listening? The nature of second language listening in integrated listening-to-summarize tasks. *Language Testing*, 37(1), 31-53. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532219871470>
- Shortt, M., Tilak, S., Kuznetcova, I., Martens, B., & Akinkuolie, B. (2023). Gamification in Mobile-Assisted Language Learning: A systematic review of Duolingo literature from Public Release of 2012 to early 2020. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 36(3), 517-554.
- Tran, Thao Quoc and Duong, Tham My (2020) Insights into Listening Comprehension Problems: A Case Study in Vietnam. *PASAA*, 59(1). <https://doi.org/10.58837/CHULA.PASAA.59.1.4>



© 2026 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY-NC-ND) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

