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Decoding Implicatures: Cultivating Robust Linguistic Reasoning through Political Discourse in EFL Education

martina mulyani

martinamulyani@gmail.com

STKIP Pasundan

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Abstract

Political discourse offers a valuable opportunity for developing linguistic reasoning skills. This study examines how students engage with implicatures in political texts and assesses the impact on their reasoning abilities. Using qualitative design, the study involved third-year English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students and collected data through observations and interviews. The findings indicate that most students recognized implicatures using marking and translation strategies. Those who provided deeper interpretations made connections between text parts and personal experiences. This reflective process enhances their ability to evaluate linguistic ideas and draw meaningful conclusions, underscoring the importance of meaning-making in cultivating reasoning skills.

1. Introduction

Acquiring critical thinking skills is essential for students in educational contexts (Murawski, 2014; Rott et al., 2024). Utilizing political discourse as reading material is an effective way to develop these skills, as the intricacies of political language provide a rich environment for engagement. Navigating such material requires students to use persuasion, justification, and negotiation of meaning. Through this process, they can identify and analyze implicatures—implied meanings that are crucial for uncovering the true intentions behind political language (Ghawaidi & Alsmari, 2025; Rabaab et al., 2022).

However, in recent years, student engagement with political issues has noticeably declined (Ballard et al., 2020; Sparks, 2023). Political discourse, especially in the form of speeches, is often viewed as complex due to the prevalence of jargon and readability issues (Atlas, 2005). This complexity can contribute to a loss of interest among students in reading and discussing political topics.

To address the decline in student engagement with political issues, educators can implement various strategies to make political discourse more accessible and relevant. One effective approach is to simplify the language used in political materials, stripping away excessive jargon while maintaining core messages. The complexity in political discourse is intrinsically linked to its exploration of power, ideology, and language, making it a compelling subject for academic research. Political discourse often employs nuanced language, rhetorical strategies, and implicit meanings that reflect and shape societal power dynamics and ideological stances. Researchers like Chilton (2025), Randour et al. (2020), and van Dijk (2006) delve into these themes, revealing how language is wielded to persuade, manipulate, and convey ideologies. However, this complexity can also hinder student engagement, as the multifaceted nature of discourse may be difficult for learners to navigate. Thus, understanding how to break down the complexity of political discourse not only improves the analysis of political language but also shows the need for teaching methods that help students engage with and understand these layered messages. This leads to the research question: How do students work with implicatures in political discourse, and how do these activities help them develop their language reasoning skills? Exploring this question can provide insights into how students handle the complexities of political language, which may enhance their critical thinking and ability to grasp underlying meanings.

2. Literature Review

Implicature is a key concept for understanding how meaning in language extends beyond the literal words, focusing on how speakers convey ideas and intentions indirectly.

2.1 Implicature and Meaning Construction

Implicature is a concept in pragmatics that explains how speakers convey meaning beyond the literal interpretation of words (Konkar & Gaur, 2023; Mazzaggio & Surian, 2018). Initially introduced by Grice (1975) through his cooperative principle and conversational maxims, implicature emphasizes the difference between what is explicitly stated and what is implicitly communicated. Implicature can be broadly categorized into two types: conversational implicature and conventional implicature (Atlas, 2005). Conversational implicature occurs when a speaker hints at more than what they say directly, relying on context, shared knowledge, and cultural and language factors that act as cues. This means that meaning is often suggested rather than stated clearly (Decressac, 2024; Samaie & Arianmanesh, 2018).On the other hand, conventional implicature refers to meanings that are tied to particular words or expressions, regardless of the context in which they appear (Atlas, 2005; Decressac, 2024)

Understanding implicature is crucial for effective communication, as it allows listeners to infer meanings, intentions, and attitudes that are not explicitly articulated, enriching the interaction and enhancing mutual understanding (Nordquist, 2025). The ability to recognize implicature reflects students' pragmatic competence —their skill in interpreting intended meanings in real communication. Implicature connects understanding language with thinking skills, pushing students to understand deeper meanings (Atlas, 2005) .Thus, implicature serves as a bridge between linguistic comprehension and higher-order reasoning, encouraging students to think beyond surface-level meanings.

2.2 Linguistic Reasoning

Linguistic reasoning is the ability to grasp how language generates meaning via structure, inference, and context, encompassing three key processes (Dielemans & Coppen, 2020). First, learners ask questions about form and meaning instead of simply accepting language as it is. Second, learners analyze real examples from written or spoken texts to see how specific language forms express meaning. Third, learners interpret language within its context. Detail description of those three main processes can be found in the following table.

Table 1
Overview of the components, types, individual and sociocultural resources of linguistic reasoning

Linguistic Reasoning	
Component	1. Asking linguistic questions 2. Linguistic argumentation 3. Linguistic contextualization 1. Using linguistic sources 2. Using linguistic concepts 3. Using linguistic repertoire
Type	• Form and meaning • Language in context • Variation and change
Individual resources	• Linguistic skill (critical thinking, strategies an multiple perspectives) • Language awareness (epistemology beliefs) • Attitude (interest, motivation, and reflection)
Sociocultural resources	• Disciplinary linguistics • Folk linguistics/ popular language beliefs
Adapted from (Dielemans & Coppen, 2020)	

The table describes that linguistic reasoning begins when learners question how and why language works in certain ways, such as why a speaker chooses specific words or how a sentence conveys implied meaning. This inquiry leads to linguistic argumentation, in which learners justify their interpretations using evidence from linguistic features such as grammar, vocabulary, tone, discourse structure, or pragmatic cues. Linguistic contextualization further strengthens this process by situating language within its social, cultural, and communicative setting. Learners consider who is speaking, to whom, for what purpose, and in what situation. This reasoning draws on several resources. Learners use linguistic sources like textbooks or research, apply key concepts such as implicature or speech acts, and rely on their own linguistic repertoire and experiences. Their analysis may focus on form and meaning, language in context, or variation and change. The process is supported by individual factors such as critical thinking skills, language awareness, and motivation, as well as sociocultural influences including academic linguistic knowledge and everyday beliefs about language. Together, these elements shape how learners engage in thoughtful and informed language analysis.

Through the table, it is evident that learners who develop linguistic reasoning view language as more than just a static set of rules; they recognize it as a dynamic system shaped by social, historical, and cognitive influences (Dielemans & Coppen, 2020; Van Rijt & Jimmy H. M., 2024). This perspective is reinforced by the fact that linguistic reasoning underscores the mental processes involved in language use, including how the brain processes grammar and meaning, as well as how memory and problem-solving contribute to effective communication. Understanding these processes can help learners plan and monitor their speaking and writing

more effectively (EBSCO Knowledge Advantage, 2024). To illustrate how the components of linguistic reasoning actually appear in students' work, Dielemans & Coppen, (2020) present this following table.

Table 2
Model components, codes and quotations

Model Component	Code	Example of quotation
1. Asking linguistic questions	Asking questions	What kind of word groups are these? (asking aloud a linguistic question)
2.Linguistic argumentation	Classifying	But, it is at the same time also a kind of idiom.' (classifying a phrase)
	Drawing conclusion	We see here this impersonal it again, which you also find in it rains, which shows that a subject is needed' (drawing a conclusion about the properties of a sentence)
	Linguistic inferring	Some would analyse this as a prepositional element. There are others who would analyse this as a kind of particle. (referring to linguistic inference by others)
	Providing argument	That we have a predicate, you can see from the fact that it has to precede the verb in the subordinate clause, that Jan wet rains not that Jan rains wet'. (referring to the Dutch word order in subordinate clauses)
3.Linguistic contextualization	Comparing	So actually, then this (points to the word 'Jan') is indeed a, er, grammatically seen, the subject, see, 'Jan ráíns wet' but 'the people ráín wet' (comparing singular and plural variant of a sentence)
	Repeating aloud	That comes as a surprise' (reading aloud the sentence to be analysed)
4. Using linguistic sources Referring to Language reality	Referring to Language reality	That kind of construction typically has no external argument, so no Agens, somebody who does it.' (referring to typical use of a construction)
	Probing intuition	'whereas it is terribly common in Dutch' (referring to frequency of use)
	Referring to language norm	That is a word order that is prescribed in written Dutch, but it is not in accordance with the intuitions of most speakers' (Expert V, referring to language prescription)
5.Using linguistic concepts	Using linguistic concepts	'Let's call it a small clause construction.' (Expert VI, introducing a linguistic concept)
6.Using linguistic repertoire	Deleting	'It is an obligatory element, you cannot just delete it' (considering deleting an element)
	Inserting	If you add another adverb That comes probably as a surprise' (inserting the adverb 'probably' in the target sentence)
	Sustituting	The nice thing here is that the subordinate clause can't be replaced by some NP, nominal phrase' (Expert IV, considering replacing a subordinate clause by a noun phrase)

Model Component	Code	Example of quotation
	Transforming	'The boys rain wet becomes plural and you could replace it by a pronoun appearing in a nominative form' (transforming a sentence by performing multiple operations)
	Applying standardized linguistic tests	'Because you have the eenzinsdeelproef, that works well' (referring to a well-known Dutch test for constituents, which consists of topicalizing a phrase which causes inversion of the subject and the finite verb)
Attitude	Showing Interest	'Yes, that is also fun' (someone enjoys the target sentences)
Types	Focusing on form	'I could not put that in any other word order' (focusing on word order rather than meaning aspects)
	Focusing on Meaning	'Look like, I think that's the meaning here' (focusing on meaning rather than form aspects)

With refer to the table, making meaning activity can be seen as the activity supporting linguistics reasoning ability. Therefore, integrating implicature analysis into language learning can strengthen students' linguistic reasoning. Engaging in deeper meaning-making processes, students can identify what is implied rather than directly stated and develop stronger skills in interpreting language and reasoning (Murray, 2010; Yang, 2022). In this way, implicature is not only a language feature but also a tool for reflection and critical thinking.

2.3 Implicature in political Speech

Political discourse is a rich context for developing linguistic reasoning because it involves persuasion, argumentation, and the construction of meaning (Gursel Bilgin, 2020; Hlail, 2025; Sanacore, 2021). To analyze a political speech effectively, it is useful to combine ideas from several key frameworks. The first is context including historical and cultural backgrounds, and examining language use such as word choice, metaphors, and key themes Chilton, (2004). Next is the speaker's purpose, audience engagement, and overall organization of the speech (Dlugan, 2008). The last is a rhetorical perspective by highlighting clear structure, effective delivery, and building a connection with the audience (Lucas, 2011). Together, these approaches form a coherent method for evaluating both the effectiveness of a speech and the rhetorical strategies used to influence audiences.

This approach fits well with linguistic reasoning frameworks proposed by Dielemans & Coppen, (2020) and Van Rijt, (2024) which emphasize the importance of context in shaping meaning and audience interpretation. Context affects how messages are understood, while knowing the speaker's purpose and audience explains why particular language and rhetorical choices are used.

Moreover, examining word choice and metaphors helps learners identify deeper meanings and ideologies, since language can influence emotions and interpretation. By combining these ideas, this study focuses on context,

the purpose of the speech, and implicature to explore how students construct meaning and develop their linguistic reasoning when working with political texts.

2.4. Interpreting Text

Students' interpretations of the text can reveal their reasoning skills, such as making inferences, evaluating ideas, and providing justifications, when viewed through levels of reading comprehension. Initially, students often operate at a surface level, focusing on the explicit meaning of the text and identifying key details related to reasoning (Jose, 2022)

As they engage more deeply, they move to a deeper level of interpretation. At this stage, they build meaning by combining information from the text with their prior knowledge and cultural background. According to Dooley & Levinsohn, (2000), this process involves both bottom-up processing, which starts from details and builds general understanding, and top-down processing, which uses existing knowledge to interpret new information.

Text coherence and cohesion also play an important role. Coherence helps ideas connect meaningfully, while cohesion provides language clues that guide understanding. Together, these elements support students in forming a clear mental representation of the discourse by linking the text itself with the speaker’s intended meaning.

3. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design with a focus on discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is a research method that explores the organization, function, and context of language in communication, highlighting how vocabulary, phrases, and interactions shape meaning and examines how these linguistic selections connect to larger social, cultural, or political contexts (Fairclough, 1995). Employing discourse analysis, the study aims to find out how students identify implicature in political texts and construct meaning through it (Johnstone, 2018). Additionally, it seeks to explore how this engagement contributes to the development of students' linguistic reasoning.

3.1 Participants

The participants of this study are third-year tertiary-level EFL students, who are at the stage of developing both language proficiency and critical awareness. They were selected purposively based on their ability to engage with English texts and their exposure to discussions on social and political issues. The sample size consists of approximately 20–25 students enrolled in an English for Academic Purposes or Discourse Studies course.

3.2. Data Collection

This study analyzes Prabowo's speech before the United Nations General Assembly. The choice of this speaker is significant because, as a non-native English speaker, his language is likely to be less complex than that of native speakers. Moreover, his thought process may reflect the perspectives of many Indonesians. Students were asked to identify the implicatures within the text. The primary data consists of students' written interpretations and responses to selected political texts. These texts were chosen for their relevance, accessibility, and the presence of implicatures—such as indirect criticism, persuasion, or irony—that require inferential understanding. Data collection involved three stages:

1. **Reading Session**: Students read a political text or excerpt.
2. **Interpretation Task**: Students were asked to explain the intended meaning, focusing on implied ideas or unstated assumptions.
3. **Reflection Task**: Students provided short reflections on how they understood the language choices and how these influenced their interpretation.

Additional data were gathered through semi-structured interviews to gain insights into students' reasoning processes and the strategies they used to interpret implicatures.

3.3. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using discourse analysis that combined pragmatic analysis and thematic interpretation. The analysis followed the framework discussed in the literature review, focusing on **context**, **speaker's purpose**, and **implicature** in political discourse (Chilton, 2004; Dlugan, 2008; Lucas, 2011). The aim was to examine how students identified and interpreted implicatures and how this process reflected their linguistic reasoning.

The first step was **coding**, which involved labeling students' responses based on meaning, implied messages, and contextual clues (Analyzer, 2024). The coding process paid attention to communicative intent, especially whether students recognized the speaker's purpose, such as persuading or influencing the audience (Dooley & Levinsohn, 2000).

Next, students' responses were classified according to the **type of implicature**. Responses showing **conventional implicature** identified meanings linked to specific words or phrases and explained the values implied in the speech. Responses showing **conversational implicature** inferred meaning from the context and from assumptions about the audience's shared knowledge.

Students' explanations were then analyzed to understand their **linguistic reasoning**. Some responses showed **surface-level interpretation**, focusing on information that was directly stated in the text (Butterfuss et al., 2020; Jose, 2022). Others showed **deeper-level interpretation**, where students combined the text with their background knowledge and cultural understanding.

This meaning-making process involved both **bottom-up** and **top-down processing** (Dooley & Levinsohn, 2000). Bottom-up processing focused on language details, while top-down processing relied on prior knowledge to interpret implied meanings. Text coherence and cohesion helped students connect ideas, while context and speaker intention guided their interpretation.

Finally, the analysis examined how students **drew conclusions**, which is an important part of linguistic reasoning. Drawing conclusions involved integrating the text, implicature, prior knowledge, and context to reach a clear understanding of the speaker's intended message.

4. Results/Findings

The findings are organized in a segmented manner corresponding to three different types of data collections: observation notes, students' works, and interviews.

4.1.1. Data from observation notes

The participants of the study were 20 third-year students of teacher college majoring in English. Out of 20 students, it was only 16 students who were able to submit the task punctually. Observation notes described the students' engagement with the text, the comment given by the students, the challenges, and the interpretation of the researcher regarding the students' works. The result of observation revealed that all 16 students seemed to engage with the text. They were able to identify conventional and conversational implicature. They gave the mark of the implicature by highlighting, circling, and underlining the phrase or sentences. They also put some brackets as border between topic and arrow to show the connections and put the translation of the target phrase or sentences. In addition, since the lesson in class focused its material on differentiating conventional to conversational implicature, the students paid more attention to recognizing implicatures rather than identify the meaning of the them by examining and understanding each sentence carefully and interpreting the meaning based on the translation. As the result there are only 6 students who were able to not only identify the implicature but also recognize the meaning of the highlighted implicature.

The study involved 20 third-year students from a teacher college majoring in English. Out of these, 16 students submitted their tasks punctually, demonstrating a commitment to the assignment. Observation notes revealed that all 16 students engaged effectively with the text, showcasing their ability to identify both conventional and conversational implicature. They employed various marking techniques to indicate implicatures, such as highlighting, circling, and underlining significant phrases or sentences. Additionally, they used brackets to delineate topics and arrows to illustrate connections between ideas, often including translations for target phrases or sentences to aid their understanding.

The classroom instruction had a specific focus on differentiating between conventional and conversational implicature, which influenced the students' approach. As a result, they prioritized recognizing implicatures over deeply examining each sentence for meaning. This focus led to a situation where, despite their ability to identify implicatures accurately, only 6 out of the 16 students were able to go further and comprehend the meanings of the highlighted implicatures. This finding underscores a gap between recognition and understanding, highlighting the need for instructional strategies that promote deeper analysis and interpretation of implicatures in texts.

4.1.2. Data from Students' Works

The analysis indicated that students' comprehension of political texts was significantly influenced by their ability to recognize and interpret implicatures. Among the 25 students who participated in the research, only 16 submitted their tasks on time. Of these 16 students, just 6 were able to interpret the implicatures they identified, while the remaining 10 students failed to grasp the implied meanings of the implicatures they highlighted.

All students attempted to infer meaning by translating the main words in their underlined sentences into Indonesian. Although the target word seemed straightforward, they felt the need to ensure accuracy in their translations. To aid their understanding, they also drew arrows in the margins to indicate the connections between the targeted words and the broader context of the texts. The followings are some findings documented from students' work

Conventional Implicature

1. Expression:

"We are of **different race, religion and nationality**, *but we gather as a human family".*

- **Responses**

S#6: It implies that the world is divided and the speech encourage unity

S#8: It talks about the divided world

- **Interpretation (S#6 & S#8)**: Both students related the phrase "different races, religions, and nationalities" to the reality that the world is often divided.

2. Expression:

"...where peace, prosperity and progress are not the privilege of a handful..."

- **Responses**

S#16: Currently, peace is enjoyed mostly by wealthy and powerful states

- **Interpretation (S#16)**: S#16 highlighted the phrase "...are not the privilege of a handful..." and noted that it has a similar meaning to the notion of inequality, indicating that not everyone experiences peace, prosperity, and progress.

3. Expression:

"The strong do what they can, the weak bear what they have to bear".

- **Responses**

S#9: The world is under influence of some powerful countries

S#8 : The world is still ruled by unjust power

- **Interpretation (S#9 & S#8)**:

Both students focus on *the strong …..and the weak… .* believing that the world is governed by unjust power structures that favor the few over the many, creating systems of inequality and oppression.

4. Expression :
"We believe that in the next few years, Indonesia will become the world's food barn".

- **Responses**

S#14: Indonesia has a good achievement concerning food supply

- **Interpretation**

Based on the phrase *Indonesia will become the world's food barn*, the student thinks that could greatly increase its food production and supply to the world.

5. **Expression** :

We remain committed to internationalism, multilateralism, and on every effort that strengthens this great institution

- **Responses**

S#14: "Indonesia remains dedicated to global peace. In contrast, some other countries have shifted their focus to self-interest.

- **Interpretation**

S#14 focuses the phrase …remains dedicated….He pointed out the Indonesia's commitment to international cooperation and global peace.

Conversational Implicature

1. Expression:

"Our World is driven by conflict, injustice, and deepening uncertainty..."

- **Responses** :

S#6: Critique of the country that triggered the war without mentioning the name

- **Interpretation (S#6)**:

S#6 points out that the sentence critiques those in power who have created problems that lead to instability and suffering

2. Expression:

"Human carelessness, fuelled by fear, racism, hatred..."

- **Responses** :

S#16: There are some countries who contributed to conflict and wars

S#6 : Major countries are partly to blame for creating war, racism, and oppression

- **Interpretation (S#16 & S#6)**:

Both students believe that certain countries play a significant role in causing global problems such as conflict, war, racism, and oppression, and should be held responsible for these issues.

3. Expression:

"Our children are paying attention..."

Responses :

S#8 : The world's leader should set good examples

S#15: We have to choose a good leader

- **Interpretation (S#8, S#14)**:

Both students may think that the world leaders should set a good example. When they act responsibly, people are more likely to follow their lead and build an ethical society. Additionally, they think that citizens need to take part in politics and choose leaders who show these positive qualities.

4. Expression:

"The use of violence will give birth to violence."

- **Responses**

S#8 : The speaker invited all countries to unite against injustice

S#16: Critique of Israel military aggression and other major conflict

- **Interpretation (S#8 & S#16)**:
- Both students think that the sentence is a call for unity against injustice, critiquing ongoing violence.

5. Expression:

"Currently, the disaster situation in Gaza is still spreading..."

- **Responses**

S#6: The speaker put emphasis on problem in Gaza. The repetition creates urgency and empathy

S#16: UN is slow. UN cannot make proper decision as it is blocked by big- power interest

- **Interpretation (S#6 & S#16)**:

The student thinks that the sentence emphasizes urgency of the situation in Gaza and critiques UN inaction.

6. Expression:

" We will continue to serve where peace requires guards not only with words, but with troops on the ground".

- **Responses**

S#15: *Indonesia will support UN with all the risk*

- **Interpretation**

The student may think that sentence shows the commitment of Indonesia to participate in peacekeeping efforts

In summary, the students' responses highlight a range of understanding regarding the implications of Prabowo's speech. The analysis indicates that they occasionally hold varying interpretations, while also sharing some similarities in their understanding of the underlying messages in political discussions. This variation may arise from the students viewing the speech from different perspectives, including those of the speaker, the audience's context, cultural backgrounds, and personal experiences (Hall, 1980; Hamston, 2006).

4.1.3. Data from interview
Following the completion of the students' assignments, four students were interviewed to gain insights into their interpretations of Prabowo's speech before the United Nations. The four students were selected as they successfully identified the implicatures and grasp the underlying meanings intended in the speech.

The interviews focused on understanding the context of the speech, identifying specific words, phrases, or sentences that the students recognized as implicature, and exploring how they constructed their meanings. The data collected from these interviews were analyzed verbatim, allowing for an in-depth examination of the students' perceptions and interpretations. The following sections detail the key findings from these discussions.

1. Context of the Speech

- **S#15**: Highlighting *Prabowo as the President of Indonesia*. It emphasizes his authority and responsibility in representing the nation at the UN.

The speech was given by Prabowo, the president of Indonesia. It was carried out before United Nation General Assembly

- **S#14**: Noted that the *veto power* held by the permanent members of the UN Security Council significantly influences multilateral affairs. While it can enable prompt actions to preserve peace, it can also hinder timely interventions during crises

"Indonesia remains dedicated to global peace. In contrast, some other countries have shifted their focus to self-interest. Their opposition to the UN's efforts to maintain peace is evident in how they use their veto power."

- **S#6**: Noted the division in the world. The world consisted of different race, religion and nationality

" You know Maam. I come from Medan and I study in Cimahi, West Java. The first time I came here. I often felt alienated as many people greeted me with my race Hi. Batak. So at that time I felt hurt. Bu now I have got used to it. So, I realized that the world is different.

- **S#16**: Highlighted the significance of the UN setting: Speaking at the UN was an important choice. The UN is a place where many countries pay attention. By speaking there, Indonesia could share its ideas and goals with an international audience.

Prabowo is the president of Indonesia, and he got the chance to speak at the UN. He talked about the pain Indonesia went through during colonial times. He used that story to remind other countries to show empathy for Palestine. He also asked nations to support the UN and Indonesia in pushing for peace in Gaza

2. Recognized Implicatures

- **S#14**: Identified the phrase **"We remain committed to internationalism, multilateralism…""** and explained, " *Indonesia remains dedicated to global peace. In contrast, some other countries have shifted their focus to self-interest"*
- **S#15**: Pointed out "We **will continue to serve where peace requires guards not only with words, but with troops on the ground"**. " This clearly shows that Indonesia is ready to stand with the UN, even if it means facing real risks for our own people."."
- **S#6**: Noted "**We are of different race, religion and nationality…**":

That part really stood out to me because I feel that myself. I'm Sumatran, and most of my friends are Sundanese, so I get what it means to be different. It reminds me that we really need to accept those differences and stick together.

- **S#16**: Mentioned a rhetorical question used in the speech: **"…Who will save them…"**

The sentence was meant to make the audience think about their own role in international affairs.

3. Interpretation of Meanings

- **S#14**: Pointed out the consistency of Indonesia in supporting global cooperation and peace, while other countries are moving away from those shared goals and choosing to prioritize themselves instead.
- **S#15**: Suggested words reinforced patriotism: "His choice of language invoked strong feelings of pride, resonating with what many Indonesians value—self-sufficiency."
- **S#6**: Stated that implicature reflected political dynamics: "The way he spoke made me feel he was cautious, wanting to portray harmony while brushing over serious issues."
- **S#16**: Concluded that rhetorical elements provoked engagement: "It felt like he was inviting other nations to step up, which positions Indonesia as an assertive player on the world stage."

The interviews revealed that the students actively engaged with Prabowo's speech by decoding its contextual meanings and implicatures. Their varied responses showcased the complexity of political discourse and the importance of understanding both explicit statements and underlying messages.

5. Discussion

This section presents the findings to address the research question

5.1 Students' Meaning Construction Processes

Observation notes showed that all sixteen students participated actively with the text. To make sense of the material, they used a range of strategies such as marking key points, translating words or phrases, linking ideas, and drawing inferences. Even so, not all of them were able to move from simple recognition to deeper interpretation. While most students construct the meaning based on the translation of particular phrase, only a few connect meanings to the broader context of the text and relate them to their own knowledge and experiences (Dooley & Levinsohn, 2000; Jose, 2022)

5.1.1 Identifying and Marking implicatures

Students used highlighting, circling, and underlining to mark expressions they thought contained implicature. They also drew arrows and used brackets to illustrate connections between ideas. These behaviours demonstrate that their initial approach to constructing meaning involved visually isolating phrases deemed significant or indicative of underlying meanings. These activities reveal that, in identifying implicatures, students aimed to analyze the context (Chilton, 2004; Dielemans & Coppen, 2020), the purpose of the speech (Dlugan, 2008), organizational structures (Lucas, 2011), as well as word choice and rhetorical strategies (Chilton, 2004; Dielemans & Coppen, 2020).

5.1.2 Using translation as a comprehension scaffold

Many students wrote Indonesian translations in the margins. Translation helped them secure the literal meaning before attempting interpretation. While this strategy facilitated basic comprehension, it also showed that some students remained dependent on surface-level processing - focusing only on the literal meaning of the text, showing limited awareness of underlying implications (Butterfuss et al., 2020; Jose, 2022)

5.1.3 Connecting the text to global context

Students such as S#14, S#15, and S#16 relied on their knowledge of the UN, geopolitical power, and Indonesia's diplomatic position to interpret meaning. For example, S#14 linked the mention of veto power to global inequality, and S#15 recognized Prabowo's role as head of state. This indicates that meaning construction required students to integrate textual cues with contextual knowledge (Chilton, 2004; Dielemans & Coppen, 2020b).

5.1.4 Inferring the speaker's intention

Students attempted to uncover what the speaker wanted to achieve by using specific expressions. S#16 realized that the rhetorical question "Who will save them?" was intended to make the audience reflect. S#15 inferred that the phrase "troops on the ground" signaled Indonesia's readiness for real action. These responses show the emergence of inferential reasoning (Dielemans & Coppen, 2020b; Dlugan, 2008).

5.1.5 Relating the text to personal experience

Interpretation was also shaped by personal background. S#6 related the speech's message on diversity to personal feelings of alienation when moving from Medan to West Java. This demonstrates that meaning was also constructed through emotional and experiential understanding (Van Rijt, 2024).

5.1.6 Evaluating ideas expressed in the speech

Some students showed evaluative reasoning by judging the speaker's stance or critiquing global issues. S#16 critiqued the UN's slow response due to big-power interests, while others commented on the moral responsibilities of leaders. This reflects a higher level of engagement with the text (Chilton, 2004; Van Rijt & Jimmy H. M., 2024).

In sum, students constructed meaning through a combination of noticing, translating, connecting, inferring, relating, and evaluating.

5.2 Contribution of Making Meaning activity to Linguistic Reasoning

The findings illustrate that students' activities in constructing meaning can contribute to linguistics reasoning.

Table 3
The Interplay between Meaning-Making Processes and Linguistic Reasoning

Meaning -Making Process		**Linguistic Reasoning**		
Component	**Activites**	**Model Component**	**Code**	**Example**
Marking Key points	Marking implicature	Using linguistic concept	Identifying conventional and conversational implicature	Contohnya, paragraf 1, Adelin tentuin dulu ya (0:49) Pertama, kan Adelin bilang seperti sebelumnya mis ya, Adelin liat dulu ya terjemahnya gitu kan, Adelin liat dulu, baca (0:56) Terus kalau udah tau, ini maksudnya kemana sih, konversional atau konvensional gitu ya mis ya (1:01) Nah gitu, kalau udah, baru Adelin ngapain mis, garisin gitu *"For example paragraph 1. I examine it first. As I have told you, I translate it, check the context and figure out if the phrase is conventional or conversational implicature. The I underlined the phrase*"
Translating words/ phrase	Translating the implicature	Focusing on meaning	Translating the targeted word/ phrase/sentence	*"...Adelin liat dulu ya terjemahnya gitu kan,..."* *Adelin translate first and check it*
Linking Ideas	Connecting to the global context	Linguistic Contextualization	Synthesizing information from different parts of the text.	*Our world is driven by conflict*, ...the sentence connects with other sentence in the text "*we need a strong united nation juga dengan* *Indonesia remains dedicated to global peace. In contrast, some other countries have shifted their focus to self-interest.*
	Relating the text to personal experience	Linguistic argument	Applying understanding to make connections with what the speaker tries to convey	• *A student intended to reinforced patriotism among the audience. That is the reason why Prabowo's choice of language invoked strong feelings of pride, resonating with what many Indonesians value* • *Prabowo used rethorical elements that provoked engagement. He wanted other nations also to step up*

Meaning -Making Process		Linguistic Reasoning		
Drawing Inferences	Inferring the speaker's intention	Using linguistic sources Referring to Language reality	Applying understanding to make connections with personal experience .	…We are of different race, religion and nationality.. the sentence shows that people are divide. Just like ethnic, or race. For example I am a Bataknese which is different from Sundanese
	Evaluating ideas	Using Linguistic Repertoire	Examining their understandings and arguments by considering their strengths, weaknesses, and implications.	"I am proud of Prabowo for seizing the opportunity to speak his mind on stage. He truly made the most of it. Personally, I find myself hesitant to speak out, fearing the possibility of making mistakes.".

The table presents the key components of meaning-making and their impact on linguistic reasoning. The contributions of the meaning-making process to linguistic reasoning are evident in several key areas. First, marking key points in this case the implicature enables students to identify and emphasize essential concept. Translating words and phrases focuses on capturing intended meanings. Linking ideas involves creating connections between different parts of the text and relating content to personal experiences allows students to grasp nuances and intended meanings more effectively as well as articulate their reasoning logically. Drawing inferences which involve interpreting the speaker's intentions and the deeper implications of their words, challenges students to interpret underlying meanings and societal implications, which is crucial for critical thinking. Lastly, evaluating linguistic ideas encourages a reflective approach, prompting students to assess the strengths and weaknesses of arguments critically. Together, these contributions underscore the essential role of meaning-making in developing robust linguistic reasoning skills.

In order to get better picture of the interplay between meaning making process and linguistic reasoning, the following picture highlights its connection.

The diagram cycle illustrates the dynamic interaction between meaning-making processes and linguistic reasoning. At its core, this relationship emphasizes how various components of meaning-making contribute to the development of robust linguistic reasoning skills. Each element—such as marking key points, translating words and phrases, linking ideas, relating content to personal experiences, drawing inferences, and evaluating linguistic ideas (Dooley & Levinsohn, 2000; Jose, 2022)— goes parallel with the core component in linguistic reasoning proposed by Dielemans & Coppen, (2020). For instance, marking key points or identifying implicature is in adjacent to using linguistic concept in this case the concept of implicature, translating phrases captures is similar to focus on meaning in the component of linguistic reasoning. Linking ideas have something to do with linguistic connection and argument and drawing inferences which require students to use their linguistic resource and linguistic repertoire challenge students to interpret underlying meanings and encourage a reflective assessment of arguments, require students to use their linguistic resource and linguistic repertoire . (Van Rijt & Jimmy H. M., 2024).

In summary, the table and cyclical diagram illustrating the connection between meaning-making processes and linguistic reasoning portray the integral role of the meaning making components play in developing linguistic

reasoning skill. By engaging in activities such as marking key points, translating phrases, linking ideas, and drawing inferences, students not only enhance their comprehension of the text but also deepen their linguistic abilities. This interaction fosters critical thinking, enabling learners to analyze and evaluate arguments more effectively. Recognizing these relationships guides educators in designing learning experiences that nurture both meaning-making and linguistic reasoning. Ultimately, the study suggests that to develop critical thinking can begin with understanding political discourse, which often involves navigating complex layers of meaning. Starting with simpler political texts allows students to grasp fundamental concepts and language without becoming overwhelmed. This foundational understanding equips them with the necessary tools to tackle more intricate political language later on. By analyzing accessible political texts, learners can practice the skills of interpretation, evaluation, and argumentation in contexts that are relevant to their lives.

6. Limitations and Future Research

The study has several shortcomings and limitations. Future research could include more political discourse, both oral and written, since different types of political texts might engage students in various ways. Additionally, this study was conducted within a limited timeframe, which may have impacted how deeply students could analyze the texts. Allowing more time for engagement with political material could lead to a better understanding of the content.

7. Conclusion

This study underscores the pivotal role of implicature in cultivating students' linguistic reasoning when engaging with political texts. Students who actively interpret implicatures not only demonstrate stronger comprehension of language and intended messages but also develop the ability to reason more systematically. The meaning-making process—identifying implicatures, translating them, connecting ideas across the text, and relating content to real-world contexts—enables students to discern subtle nuances and articulate their interpretations with clarity- allow students to discern subtle differences between conventional and conversational implicature and articulate their interpretations with clarity. Furthermore, drawing inferences by analyzing speakers' intentions and the broader implications of their words challenges students to uncover deeper societal meanings, thereby strengthening critical thinking. Evaluating linguistic concepts adds a reflective dimension, encouraging students to critically assess arguments and their validity. Taken together, these practices highlight how the construction of meaning through implicature shapes and fosters the development of robust linguistic reasoning skills.

8. About the Author

Martina Mulyani is a lecturer in English Education Department at a higher education institution in Indonesia, with research interests in teaching English as a foreign language, pragmatics, and discourse analysis, while Citra Lisnawati is an English Education student who is studying discourse analysis and has a strong interest in researching implicature.

Declarations

This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of STKIP Pasundan. Written informed consent was obtained from all adult participants prior to interviews and observations. The participation is voluntary and they may withdraw at any time. All procedures complied with institutional and national ethical guidelines

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10. Declaration of AI Use

I declare that AI tools, specifically ChatGPT, POE, and QuiltBolt, were used in the preparation of the manuscript. These tools were utilized for checking spelling and grammar, paraphrasing, and providing style suggestions.:

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Figures

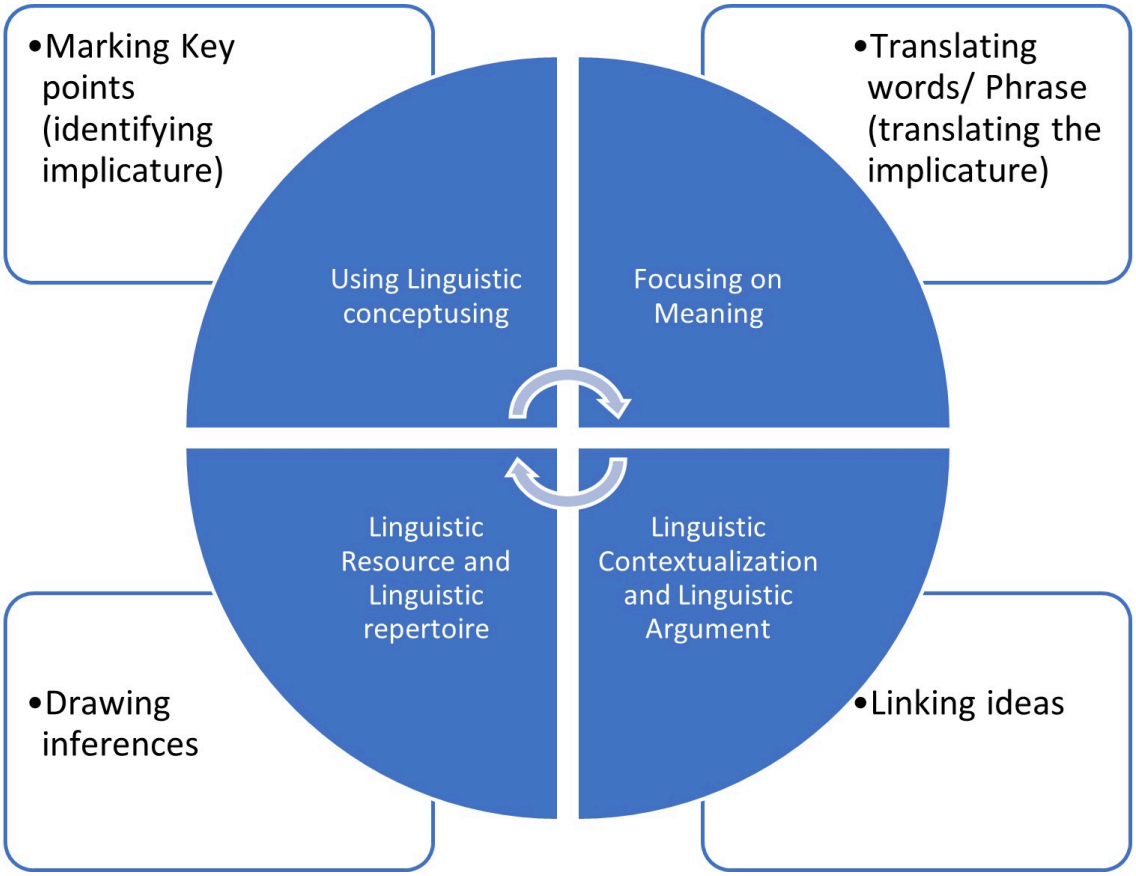

Figure 1

The interaction between meaning making process and linguistic reasoning

Supplementary Files

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- Appendix.docx