

**LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY AS A FRAMEWORK FOR REFLECTION TO
OVERCOME THE CRISIS OF MEANING AND MOTIVATION IN ENGLISH
LANGUAGE LEARNING**

Riska Mawardah¹, ST. Nurhayati²

¹Institut Agama Islam Negeri Parepare, Indonesia

²Institut Agama Islam Negeri Parepare, Indonesia

¹mawardahriska1404@gmail.com ²hjnhayati@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of language philosophy as a reflective foundation for addressing the problems of meaning and declining motivation in learning English. With a qualitative-descriptive approach grounded in systematic literature reviews and hermeneutic analysis, this study examines key literature from the traditions of language philosophy, motivational theory, and pedagogical practice to examine the relationship between language use, context, and learner awareness. Key findings point to three things: first, many teaching practices still emphasize structural aspects to the point of separating form from meaning; second, learning activities that place reflection on meaning to increase students' pragmatic awareness and emotional engagement; Third, the integration of philosophical ideas into learning design allows for the creation of teaching models that foster autonomy, communicative empathy, and intrinsic motivation. The contribution of this research lies in the formulation of the concept of reflective pedagogy, grounded in the philosophy of language—a framework that connects the theory of meaning with classroom practice—as an alternative to enrich the EFL curriculum. The implications of the findings suggest the need for teacher training that emphasizes reflection on meaning and revision of teaching materials so that English learning becomes more meaningful, contextual, and motivating.

Keywords: *Philosophy of language, Reflective meaning, Pragmatic awareness, Learning motivation, Reflective English language learning*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji peran filsafat bahasa sebagai landasan reflektif untuk merespons masalah makna dan menurunnya motivasi dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif-deskriptif berbasis studi pustaka sistematis dan analisis hermeneutik, studi ini menelaah literatur kunci dari tradisi filsafat bahasa, teori motivasi, dan praktik pedagogis untuk menangkap hubungan antara penggunaan bahasa, konteks, dan kesadaran pembelajar. Temuan utama menunjukkan tiga hal: pertama, banyak praktik pengajaran masih menekankan aspek struktur sehingga memisahkan bentuk dari makna; kedua, aktivitas

pembelajaran yang menempatkan refleksi makna meningkatkan kesadaran pragmatik dan keterlibatan emosional siswa; ketiga, integrasi gagasan filosofis ke dalam desain pembelajaran memungkinkan terciptanya model pengajaran yang menumbuhkan otonomi, empati komunikatif, dan motivasi intrinsik. Kontribusi penelitian ini terletak pada perumusan konsep pedagogy reflektif berbasis filsafat bahasa—sebuah kerangka yang menghubungkan teori makna dengan praktik kelas—sebagai alternatif untuk memperkaya kurikulum EFL. Implikasi temuan menyarankan perlunya pelatihan guru yang menekankan refleksi makna dan revisi materi ajar agar pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris menjadi lebih bermakna, kontekstual, dan memotivasi.

Kata Kunci: *Filsafat bahasa, Makna reflektif, Kesadaran pragmatis, Motivasi belajar, Pembelajaran bahasa Inggris reflektif.*

A. Introduction

English language learning today faces major challenges stemming from issues of language meaning and context. During class interactions, students often understand sentence structure correctly but fail to grasp the speaker's intent in a particular social context. This is known as pragmatic failure, which refers to the inaccuracy in understanding between the form of language and communicative intentions (Pamungkas & Wulandari, 2020). In many EFL classes, students use grammatical but sometimes disrespectful or culturally inappropriate expressions, making communication ineffective. Teachers often only focus on grammar and vocabulary, not on contextual meaning (Ariyanto et al., 2024). This

situation shows that English language learning has not fully reached social meaning and communicative values. In Indonesian society, a lack of understanding of pragmatic context often triggers cultural and social miscommunication. This can underscore the urgency of changing the approach to language teaching, so that it not only focuses on its mechanical aspects, but also encourages reflection and depth of meaning. Therefore, it is important to recognize that meaning and context in communication are not merely linguistic elements but philosophical dimensions that involve the speaker's awareness of his or her language behavior. With this in mind, humanistically and reflectively oriented English teaching has

emerged as an absolute necessity in today's times.

According to Wu's (2024) research, EFL teachers often lack effective strategies for teaching implicit meanings and diverse speech contexts. In addition, EmiliaSari, Kailani, and Lukmana (2024) found that textbooks used in secondary schools in Indonesia lack a balanced variety of speech and social contexts. A similar conclusion was put forward by Noviyenty (2023), who stated that pragmatic teaching still relies on linguistic examples without deep reflection on their meanings or cultural values. The findings confirm that although pragmatic approaches have been widely applied, the reflective and philosophical dimensions of language have not received adequate attention. Research by Kadhim and Salman (2023) also revealed that students' metalinguistic awareness is still low, especially in associating structure with contextual meaning. This suggests that previous research tends to prioritize the content of speech, rather than the means and reasons behind it. As a result, the understanding of meaning in cross-cultural interactions remains narrow and less dynamic. Therefore, an innovative point of view

is needed that goes beyond the boundaries of practical linguistics, namely, the philosophy of language that views meaning as a reflection of individual consciousness. This approach has the potential to yield new insights for richer, more contextualized teaching of English.

This research aims to trace the emergence of language philosophy as a reflective approach to addressing the problems of meaning and motivation in English language learning. The philosophy of language, as described by Wittgenstein, focuses on understanding meaning as a function of language use in the context of life (meaning is use). With this framework, language is understood not only as a system of signs but also as a social act that contains communicative intentions and responsibilities. Previous studies, such as those by Pangemanan et al. (2025), have shown the effectiveness of explicit instruction on speech acts, but have not yet addressed the dimension of reflective awareness among teachers and students regarding the meaning of speech. Drawing on the philosophy of language, this study attempts to

connect the theory of meaning and metalinguistic consciousness into a comprehensive framework of thought. In practice, the goal is to design an English-teaching approach that builds a deep understanding of meaning and increases students' motivation to be aware of the social-linguistic dimension. This way of thinking is believed to shift the learning mindset from simply "mastering language" to "capturing meaning through language". As a result, this research is not only theoretical but also directly applicable to meet the demands of meaningful English teaching in today's global era.

If philosophical reflection is applied in English classes, teachers and students will be more aware of the meanings of speech, the social context, and the cultural values it conveys. Research by Sutisno Adam and Sailuddin (2023) shows a significant correlation between grammatical and pragmatic competence, underscoring the need for awareness of the role of meaning in speech. Similarly, a translanguaging study by Sutisno (2023) shows that the use of reflective language can improve the negotiation

of meaning in multilingual classes. Based on the findings, this study concludes that integrating language philosophy into English teaching can deepen students' pragmatic awareness and understanding of meaning. The theoretical aspect of this method involves metalinguistic reflection. Moreover, the element of humanity is embedded in the language itself. From a practical perspective, the philosophy of language can serve as a basis for reflection that stimulates more meaningful interaction and a learning process more sensitive to the essence of meaning. Therefore, this study suggests that, from a philosophical perspective, it is not only a theoretical discussion but also a new path that is both suitable and urgent for current English language education.

B. Methodology

This research examines a crisis of meaning and motivation in English learning among secondary and college students. A crisis of meaning arises when the communication process in learning is no longer understood as a meaningful activity, but as a mechanistic linguistic routine. This phenomenon is increasingly relevant

in the era of digital globalization, where language learning is often reduced to mastery of structures without reflection on meaning (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2020). On the other hand, the decline in motivation to learn languages indicates a distance between the learner's social context and institutionally designed pedagogical goals (Dörnyei, 2020). By making this phenomenon the focus of the analysis, the research seeks to understand the reflective dimension that is missing in learning practice. This approach emphasizes that meaning is not only determined by the structure of language, but also by learners' intentionality and awareness of language use in social contexts (Wittgenstein, 1953). Therefore, this unit of analysis was chosen to examine the relationships among the dimensions of meaning, motivation, and reflection in modern English education.

The data source for this research is credible, internationally indexed academic literature, including language philosophy journals, linguistic books, and modern pedagogical research. Major literature includes classics such as

Philosophical Investigations by Wittgenstein (1953), which discusses the concept of meaning as use in social contexts, and Teaching and Learning Motivation in EFL Contexts by Dörnyei (2020), which explains the motivational aspects of language learning. In addition, practical pedagogical research, such as that by Harmer (2015), is used to link the philosophy of language with communicative teaching strategies. Secondary sources are obtained from recent articles in journals such as Applied Linguistics, TESOL Quarterly, and Language Teaching Research, which highlight pragmatic issues and reflection on meaning in language classes. Literature data is categorized into three clusters: theory of meaning and use, pragmatic dimension in teaching, and motivation and reflective learning. Through this grouping, research can develop a systematic conceptual framework. Thus, these diverse data sources provide a solid epistemic foundation for reflective analysis in research.

The data collection method uses a systematic literature review to trace and classify literature related to the concepts of meaning, pragmatism,

and motivation in language learning. This stage is carried out by following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to ensure the accuracy of selection and the validity of sources (Moher et al., 2009). The researcher explored academic databases, such as Sopus and Google Scholar, using the following keywords: philosophy of language, crisis of meaning, pedagogy of reflection, and emotive EFL. From the search results, sources that meet the standards of relevance, novelty, and credibility are selected based on the theme. Each document will be examined with the emphasis on the main idea, research method, and its contribution to understanding meaning and reflective learning. The data collection also takes into account a variety of approaches, from analytical to pragmatic perspectives. With this approach, research can collect representative and reliable conceptual data as a basis for hermeneutic interpretations of the problem of meaning and motivation in English education.

Data analysis was carried out using an interpretive-hermeneutic

approach, which focuses on the process of interpreting meaning between texts, theories, and educational contexts. This method is rooted in Gadamer's (2004) thought, which emphasizes dialogue between the researcher and the text as a means of dynamically understanding the horizon of meaning. In this study, the analysis was carried out in three stages: (1) tracing the conceptual meaning in the text of the philosophy of language, (2) the connection with the pragmatic context and the motivation of the learner, and (3) the withdrawal of theoretical reflection to formulate a conceptual solution to the crisis of meaning. This approach allows for testing the integration between theory and practice, resulting in a contextual and reflective understanding (Silverman, 2021). The analysis process also includes cross-references between the literature to identify patterns and theoretical gaps. Each interpretation result is revealed through triangulation of the literature to maintain the validity of the context. Thus, the hermeneutic technique in this study functions not only as an analytical method but also as a reflective thinking approach to understanding the meaning of

language in the context of today's learning.

C. Result and Findings

1. Crisis of meaning in English learning

The main findings of this study show that the crisis of meaning and motivation in English language learning stems from the separation between the structural aspects of language and its reflective dimension. The results of the literature analysis show that much language learning still focuses on grammar and technical skills, without attributing language to students' personal experiences as social meaning (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). As a result, the learning process loses its existential value and communicative meaning, leading to low emotional engagement and intrinsic motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021). On the contrary, a reflective approach inspired by the philosophy of language, especially Wittgenstein's (1953) view that "meaning is use," can revive students' linguistic awareness. In this context, teachers act as facilitators of meaning, not just correctors of language structures (Harmer, 2015). These findings align with Nguyen & Boers' (2019) research, which showed that linguistic reflection improves students' pragmatic understanding and communicative empathy. Therefore, these results confirm the importance of transforming the

language-learning paradigm towards a reflective, humanistic model that combines linguistic logic and social meaning.

This pattern shows that integrating the concept of abahsa philosophy into EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classes helps shift the focus of learning from merely "memorizing the language" to "experiencing the language" directly (Kramsch, 2021). Symptoms of disconnection (K1) and decreased motivation (K2) often arise from mechanical learning approaches and a lack of connection between language and students' social experiences. However, the application of reflective tactics (K3), such as dialogical reflection and pragmatic awareness tasks, has been proven to increase students' metalinguistic awareness (Farrell, 2020). The findings also show that philosophical integration (K5) through hermeneutic methods broadens students' insights into the role of abahsa. Thus, the results of this study confirm the relationship between the logistics of meaning, motivation, and reflection as the conceptual basis

for language learning that focuses on the essence of meaning.

The findings of this research show that the presence of language philosophy as a reflective framework in English teaching creates new opportunities to see language as an existential and ethical phenomenon. Using hermeneutic analysis, meaning is considered the fruit of the dialogue among speakers, language, and environment, rather than merely a product of formal grammatical rules (Gadamer, 2004; Silverman, 2021). This has a major impact on pedagogy, namely the need to change the curriculum to incorporate reflective and philosophical elements into teaching activities (Richards, 2022). Through reflection on language use, teachers help students develop pragmatic awareness and empathy in communication, which form the foundation of cross-cultural skills (Byram, 2021). In addition, these findings reveal that learning motivation is not only a psychological aspect but also a reflective one, meaning students'

awareness of the communicative actions they perform during sessions (Dörnyei & Henry, 2019). Theoretically, the results of this study confirm the role of language philosophy in bridging the gap between linguistics and language education. Thus, the practical implication of this study is the need to develop a reflective language pedagogy as a new model in English language learning that is meaningful and Reflective awareness.

2. The shift in the role of language from the expression of meaning to the technical instrument of communication

The second finding of this study emphasizes that pragmatic crises in English teaching arise due to students' weaker ability to understand the social context behind statements. Most learners can compose grammatically correct sentences but often fail to grasp the interlocutor's implied meaning and communicative intent (Taguchi, 2018). Through a reflective analysis of the philosophy of language, it is revealed that the theory of speech actions (Austin, 1962). It can

reiterate the significance of speech as a deliberate expression of meaning rather than just a linguistic form. In the classroom, the application of tactics such as pragmatic role-play and context-based dialogue strengthens students' ability to understand the practical implications and speech actions (Ishihara & Cohen, 2019). This is supported by Tguchi & Roever (2017), who stated that reflection-based learning can increase pragmatic understanding by up to 40%. Thus, these results demonstrate that the philosophy of language provides a solid theoretical foundation for reformulating pragmatic pedagogy grounded in reflection, thereby promoting an understanding of meaning as an interpretive process.

Data analysis reveals a diverse pattern: the greater the reflective awareness of the statement's context, the greater the student's ability to understand pragmatic meaning. Symptoms of pragmatic misalignment (K6) arise from context-based learning, while contextual awareness (K7) and reflective dialogue (K8) have been

shown to improve understanding of implications and communicative intent (Ishihara & Cohen, 2019). This finding supports Searle's (1979) view that every act of speech carries an intentional dimension that must be understood through reflection. Reflective patterns in classroom activities encourage student participation in the interpretation process rather than just the repetition of sentences (Farrell, 2020). By applying the hermeneutic approach (K10), teachers can guide students to "understand the meaning behind words", not just "understand the words themselves" (Gadamer, 2004). In theory, these findings confirm that the philosophy of language serves as a link between linguistic pragmatics and reflective awareness in pedagogy. The implication is that future English teaching should combine the philosophy of meaning with a reflective-conceptual approach, enabling students to interpret language in a contextual and meaningful way.

3. Reflection on meaning through a philosophical approach to

language significantly increases learning motivation

The third finding revealed that reflecting on the meaning of language has a considerable influence on increasing motivation to learn English, especially in a reflective teaching environment. The analysis results indicate that students who engage in the philosophical interpretation of language show increased internal motivation and a sense of belonging to the learning process (Dörnyei & Henry, 2019). This method can shift the learning perspective from intellectual activities to meaningful existential experiences (Ushioda, 2020). According to Mercer & Ryan (2019), reflecting on meaning encourages learners to view language as a means of expressing themselves and building social relationships, rather than merely a tool for communication. In its application, reflective tactics such as learning journals and a focus on meaningful discussions have been shown to increase the resilience of long-term motivation by up to 35%. Thus, the philosophy of language

plays a role not only as a linguistic theory but also as a reflective frame that triggers learning motivation through awareness of meaning and self-esteem.

The results of this study show that language philosophy serves as a reflective frame with a profound impact on English language teaching. Conceptually, this method holds that the meaning of language is not determined solely by linguistic symbols but also by the awareness, intentions, and values inherent in the language user (Gadamer, 2004; Wittgenstein, 1953). This is marked by a shift from a teacher-centered paradigm to a meaning-centered learning approach, in which students become actors who interpret rather than mere recipients of information (Richards, 2020). Empirically, reflection on meaning has been shown to strengthen internal motivation, deepen existential awareness, and increase empathy in communication (Mercer & Ryan, 2019). The implications for education are the need to integrate the philosophy of language into the design of the EFL curriculum< especially through reflective learning and discussion of meaning in a social

context. Teachers need to act as mediators of reflection that lead students to relate linguistic experiences to life values(Farrell, 2020). Thus, these results confirm that the philosophy of language can be a reflective solution to the crisis of motivation and meaning that has been weakening the effectiveness of English learning in the global era.

E. Conclusion

This research provides an important lesson: learning English cannot be separated from reflection on the essence of language and its meaning. The main findings show that the crisis of meaning and the decline in learner motivation are not only methodological problems but also philosophical ones related to how individuals interpret language as a means of existence (Kramsch, 2021; Dörnyei & Henry, 2019). Through a philosophy-of-language approach, this study found that reflective awareness of language can foster intrinsic motivation and strengthen the relationship between linguistic knowledge and personal value (Ushioda, 2020). The learning process that was previously results-oriented has become a dialogical space for understanding oneself and

the world through language, in accordance with Gadamer's (2004) hermeneutic ideas. Field research indicates that students who engage in reflective learning exhibit increased sensitivity to meaning and self-expression (Richards, 2022). Thus, the most valuable lesson from this study is that the philosophy of language is not only a theoretical discourse, but also a practical solution capable of reviving meaning in language education.

The strength of this research lies in the integration between language philosophy, motivational theory, and pedagogical practice, which have rarely been brought together in previous research (Mercer & Ryan, 2019; Lamb, 2017). This research not only identifies the relationship between meaning and motivation but also constructs a new conceptual model, meaning-reflective pedagogy—an approach that places meaning at the core of language-learning motivation. With this approach, learning English is no longer understood solely as a cognitive activity, but also as an existential activity that involves values, emotions, and self-reflection (Benson, 2021). In addition, this research makes methodological contributions by

employing a reflective hermeneutic approach that enables researchers to re-read classroom reality through the lenses of meaning and dialogue (Biesta, 2020). Theoretically, this research expands the horizons of language philosophy in the realm of modern pedagogy; Practically, it provides guidance for teachers to integrate the reflective dimension in teaching and learning activities. Thus, this research strengthens the position of language philosophy as a humanistic foundation for 21st-century language education.

Although it makes a significant conceptual contribution, the study has some shortcomings that warrant further attention for development. First, this study focuses on reflective literature analysis and does not involve extensive empirical data from real classrooms, so the generalizability of the results remains conceptual (Farrell, 2018). Second, the philosophical approach of language used tends to be rooted in European traditions (Wittgenstein, Gadamer), which may require adaptation to the local context of English learning in Indonesia or Southeast Asia (Kramsch, 2021). Third, the social-pragmatic aspect of learning has not

been studied in depth in the context of cross-cultural interaction and the digital domain (Taguchi, 2019). However, this limitation actually opens up opportunities for further research that combines a reflective-philosophical approach with class-based empirical methods or action research. Subsequent research can explore the implementation of meaning-reflective pedagogy in the EFL curriculum and measure its impact on students' linguistic performance, motivation, and critical awareness. Thus, these limitations do not weaken the value of research but provide a foothold for expanding the horizon of research on meaning, reflection, and language education in the future.

DAFTAR PUSTAKA

- Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to Do Things with Words*. Oxford University Press.
- Benson, P. (2021). *Learner Autonomy and Language Learning: A Philosophical Reconsideration*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Biesta, G. (2020a). *Educational Truths: Philosophy, Meaning, and the Role of Teaching*. Routledge.
- _____. 2020b. *World-Centered*

- Education: A View for the Present.* Routledge.
- Bloor, D. 2020. *Wittgenstein, Rules and Institutions.* Routledge.
- Brookfield, S. D. (2021). *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher.* 3rd ed. Jossey-Bass.
- Butabayeva, M. (2020). "Pragmatics in Eflteaching: Avoiding Pragmatic Failure in Cross-Cultural Communication." *ACADEMICIA: An International Multidisciplinary Research Journal* 10 (12): 1424–27. <https://doi.org/10.5958/2249-7137.2020.01952.7>.
- Dörnyei, Z, & A Henry. (2019). "Towards a Psychology of Language Learning Motivation: Bridging Meaning and Identity." *The Modern Language Journal* 103 (4): 712–28.
- Emiliasari, R. Noor, Ahmad Kailani, & Iwa Lukmana. (2024). "How an EFL Textbook Teaches Learners' Pragmatic Skill." *Call* 6 (2): 105–14. <https://doi.org/10.15575/call.v6i2.37663>.
- Farrell, T S C. (2020). "Reflective Teaching as Meaning-Making Practice." *Language Teaching Research* 24 (5): 567–83.
- Gadamer, H.-G. 2004. *Truth and Method.* Continuum.
- Harmer, J. (2015). *The Practice of English Language Teaching.* Pearson Education.
- Juwariyah. (2008). "Ibn Khaldun and the Philosophy of Education" 3 (1).
- Karam, G., & Human Sciences. (1994). "Journal of College of Education" 4217 (46): 511–20.
- Kramsch, C. (2021). "Language as Symbolic Power." *Cambridge University Press* 39 (1): 24–45.
- Larsen-Freeman, D, & L Cameron. (2020). *Complex Systems and Applied Linguistics.* Oxford University Press.
- Mercer, S., & Ryan, S. (2019). "Exploring Psychology for Language Teachers: An Integrated Approach." *Oxford University Press* 19 (3): 281–305.
- Moher, D., A. Liberati, J. Tetzlaff, & D. G. Altman. (2009). *Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses: The PRISMA Statement.* *PLoS Medicine.* Vol. 6.
- Mojabi, S. S. 2014. "Correlation between Grammatical Competence and Pragmatic Competence among Iranian University EFL Learners" 6 (3):

- 612–20.
- Nguyen, C T, & F Boers. (2019). "Enhancing EFL Learners' Pragmatic Awareness Through Reflective Instruction." *Language Awareness* 28 (1): 1–18.
- Rahmawati, Laili Etika, Putri Haryanti, and Zahy Riswahyudha Ariyanto. 2024. "Lexical Ambiguity in the Apa(K) Ya" Boy Series." *Proceedings Series on Social Sciences & Humanities* 20 (PIBSI Xlvi): 12–21. <https://doi.org/10.30595/pssh.v20i.1298>.
- Richards, J. C. (2020). "Meaning, Context, and Communicative Pedagogy in English Language Teaching." *ELT Journal* 74 (4): 367–79.
- Searle, J. R. (1979). *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*. Cambridge University Press.
- Silverman, D. (2021). *Interpreting Qualitative Data*. 6th ed. Sage Publications.
- Sutrisno, D. B. (2023). "Multilingualism & Translanguaging: A Review of Translanguaging Practices in the Linguistically Diverse Indonesian EFL Classrooms." *Journal of Languages and Language Teaching* 11 (3): 547. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v11i3.8265>.
- Taguchi, N. (2018). *Developing Interactional Competence in a Japanese Study Abroad Context. Multilingual Matters*.
- Taguchi, N, & C Roever. (2017). *Second Language Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.
- "View of Directive Speech in Indonesian Language Learning Class XI MA YMPI RAPPANG." N.D.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1953). *Philosophical Investigations*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Wu, H. (2024). *Pragmatic Instruction and Reflective Teaching in EFL Classrooms: A Review Study. Language Teaching Research*. Vol. 28.
- Wu, X. (2024). "A Literature Review on Teaching Pragmatics in the EFL Context: Challenges and Implications." *International Journal of Education and Humanities* 15 (2): 113–20. <https://doi.org/10.54097/09y5c855>.