

Designing Argumentation Protocols for EFL Classrooms: An Analysis of Pragma-Dialectic Modelling

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Abstract

This study explores how Indonesian EFL teachers perceive and implement argumentation protocols and pragma-dialectic principles in the context of English language teaching. Using a qualitative descriptive-interpretive design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations involving five government-certified EFL teachers with more than ten years of teaching experience. The findings reveal that teachers generally view argumentation protocols as valuable tools for enhancing students' critical thinking, reasoning skills, and communicative competence. However, they also recognize the substantial challenges involved in applying these protocols, particularly due to students' limited linguistic proficiency, low confidence, and cultural hesitations toward open disagreement. Teachers interpret pragma-dialectic principles as theoretically useful but cognitively demanding for learners, leading them to adopt simplified versions that emphasize clarity, respectful disagreement, and evidence-based reasoning rather than strict adherence to the full model. The study further shows that cultural norms, linguistic constraints, and identity-related issues significantly influence how argumentation unfolds in classrooms. Teachers navigate these complexities by implementing scaffolding strategies such as polite disagreement expressions, translanguage practices, vocabulary support, and safe discussion spaces. Overall, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how argumentation pedagogy can be adapted for culturally diverse and linguistically heterogeneous EFL contexts. It highlights the need for flexible, culturally responsive approaches that balance theoretical rigor with practical feasibility. The results offer valuable insights for teacher education, curriculum development, and the integration of argumentation pedagogy into EFL instruction in Indonesia and similar contexts.

Keywords: Argumentation Protocols; Pragma-dialectics; Dialogic pedagogy; Translanguage

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INTRODUCTION

The integration of argumentation protocols in English language teaching (ELT), particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts, has increasingly attracted scholarly attention due to the growing emphasis on critical thinking, dialogic pedagogy, and learner-centered instruction. However, attempts to incorporate such protocols often face conceptual and

pedagogical challenges that stem from the transfer of models originally developed for general or science education to linguistically diverse classrooms. These adaptations are frequently implemented without sufficient consideration of learners' linguistic proficiency, cultural communication styles, or prior discourse experiences. Research highlights that a dialogic orientation—one that acknowledges the sociocultural identities and expectations of learners—plays a significant role in shaping their engagement with argumentative tasks (Marzban & Amiri, 2017; Oo & Okada, 2024). Students from high power-distance or collectivist cultures, for instance, may perceive argumentative moves such as rebutting a peer's claim as potentially face-threatening, creating an affective barrier to participation. This challenge reinforces Byram and Wagner's view that language teaching should embed intercultural dialogue and understanding by integrating cultural awareness into instructional practice (Byram & Wagner, 2018). Earlier attempts to standardize argumentation routines have therefore struggled because they prioritized procedural correctness over contextual sensitivity, resulting in rigid or misaligned applications in the classroom.

Building on this, recent studies have emphasized dialogic learning as an effective means to enhance reasoning skills, critical thinking, and argument-driven writing in EFL settings. Oo and Okada (2024) demonstrated that dialogic frameworks can substantially deepen students' engagement by prompting them to articulate claims, evaluate evidence, and consider counter-positions. Snell and Lefstein (2017) similarly argue that argumentation protocols must foster authentic reasoning rather than devolve into scripted verbal performances. Nevertheless, a recurring problem lies in balancing linguistic accuracy and argumentative depth. Protocols that over-script student talk risk reducing learning to mechanical exchanges, whereas overly informal interactions may dilute the clarity and structure needed for productive argumentation. Past pedagogical attempts have acknowledged these tensions but have often failed to provide systematic scaffolds that simultaneously promote language development and higher-order reasoning. This gap highlights the need for culturally responsive, linguistically accessible, and cognitively robust argumentation models within ELT.

Another persistent issue concerns the mismatch between traditional assessment practices and the inherently interactive nature of argumentative dialogue. Many curricula still prioritize individual written products, grammar accuracy, and decontextualized tasks, despite the fact that argumentation unfolds through collaborative discourse, evolving viewpoints, and rhetorical strategies shaped by context. Existing research observes that teachers frequently lack analytic rubrics capable of capturing both linguistic resources—such as cohesion, lexico-grammar, and discourse markers—and argumentation features including relevance of claims, sufficiency of evidence, and counter-argumentation techniques (Qin & Liu, 2021). As a result, assessments often default to surface-level criteria, such as grammatical correctness or generic participation, rather than evaluating students' reasoning processes. Practical constraints such as large class sizes and limited contact hours further undermine opportunities for iterative practice, feedback, and reflection—conditions widely recognized as essential for internalizing argumentative norms (Pisano et al., 2021; Podosynnikova & Пряжка, 2024). Although scholars have proposed multidimensional rubrics that integrate linguistic and argumentative

competencies (Ayan & Erdemir, 2023; Anesa, 2021), such frameworks remain underutilized in many EFL contexts.

Beyond assessment challenges, deeper issues emerge when pragma-dialectic principles—rooted in the normative ideal of rational, critical discussion—are applied to real classroom discourse. Pragma-dialectic models emphasize resolving differences of opinion through logically grounded argument schemes and regulated discussion stages (Visser et al., 2017; Garssen, 2015). However, the realities of classroom interaction are shaped not only by reasoning but also by identity work, emotions, social hierarchies, and multimodal communication. Students' participation is influenced by their self-perception as English users, cultural narratives, and emotional states, including anxiety or embarrassment (Eemeren, 2017; Snell & Cushing, 2022). Studies show that learners' identities meaningfully shape their argumentative styles and their willingness to engage critically (Rajendram, 2022). Narrative and experiential reasoning—often central to students' meaning-making—can be marginalized when pragma-dialectic models are applied too rigidly, despite their pedagogical value in fostering inclusion and voice (Weekly, 2017). Attempts to implement pragma-dialectics in EFL contexts have therefore been only partially successful, as they tend to overlook these sociocultural and affective dimensions.

Moreover, given the pragmatic constraints of educational settings, not all disagreements require immediate resolution, nor should classroom argumentation be confined to purely rationalistic forms. The emotional, cultural, and exploratory nature of classroom discourse suggests that pragma-dialectic models should function as flexible heuristics rather than prescriptive rules. Scholars argue for integrating argumentation theory with pedagogical approaches that recognize learners' full linguistic repertoires, including translanguaging practices that legitimize all languages and semiotic resources students bring into the classroom (Rajendram, 2022; Weekly, 2017). This more adaptable orientation acknowledges that argumentative quality depends not only on logical coherence but also on identity affirmation, emotional safety, and meaningful participation.

Based on these gaps, the present study aims to examine how argumentation protocols and pragma-dialectic principles can be pedagogically adapted for EFL learners in ways that honor linguistic diversity, cultural backgrounds, and dialogic interaction. The research questions are formulated as follow: How do Indonesian EFL teachers perceive the integration of argumentation protocols in their classroom practice? How do EFL teachers interpret the applicability of pragma-dialectic principles in classroom argumentation? How do teachers navigate cultural, linguistic, and identity-related issues when facilitating argumentation tasks?. The study's novelty lies in synthesizing argumentation pedagogy with identity-sensitive and culturally responsive approaches, offering a model that bridges cognitive, linguistic, and sociocultural dimensions of argumentative competence—an integration that remains underexplored in prior research.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically a descriptive-interpretive approach, to explore EFL teachers' experiences, perceptions, and pedagogical reasoning regarding the integration of argumentation protocols and

pragma-dialectic principles in Indonesian ELT classrooms. A qualitative design was chosen because the research aims to capture nuanced, context-dependent insights that cannot be adequately represented through numerical data. Argumentation practices, dialogic interaction, and teachers' cultural-linguistic considerations are inherently complex and embedded in classroom realities; therefore, qualitative inquiry allows a deeper understanding of the beliefs, challenges, and professional judgments that shape instructional decisions. This approach is particularly suitable for addressing the research objectives, which focus on uncovering how teachers conceptualize argumentation pedagogy, navigate culturally mediated constraints, and evaluate the applicability of pragma-dialectic modelling in their classrooms.

The suitability of the qualitative design also lies in its capacity to interpret participants' meaning-making processes through their own language and narratives. Semi-structured interviews and naturalistic observations facilitate authentic and open-ended discussion, enabling the emergence of unanticipated themes that enrich the analysis. Past research in applied linguistics and classroom discourse studies similarly employs qualitative frameworks to investigate teaching practices, reflective reasoning, and teacher cognition, demonstrating the relevance of this methodological approach in exploring pedagogical innovations in ELT.

Despite its strengths, the qualitative design has certain limitations, including potential researcher bias and constraints on generalizability due to the small sample size. To mitigate these issues, several strategies were employed. First, researcher reflexivity was maintained through analytic memos throughout data collection and analysis, ensuring awareness of subjective interpretations. Second, triangulation was applied by comparing interview data with classroom observation notes to validate emerging themes. Third, member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary interpretations with participants to confirm the accuracy of representation. These measures enhanced the credibility, dependability, and trustworthiness of the findings.

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of five (5) EFL teachers working in Indonesia. All participants met a set of clearly defined selection criteria to ensure that they possessed substantial professional experience and pedagogical insight relevant to the study's objectives. Specifically, each teacher had: A minimum of ten (10) years of teaching experience in EFL contexts in Indonesian schools; Official certification as EFL teachers issued by the Indonesian government, demonstrating that their professional competencies and teaching qualifications have been formally recognized; and active engagement in secondary or tertiary-level ELT classrooms in Indonesia. The selection was conducted through purposive sampling because this technique allows the researcher to identify individuals who possess rich, in-depth knowledge necessary for understanding argumentation pedagogy in context. Demographically, the participants ranged in age from 35 to 50 years and represented diverse educational backgrounds, including bachelor's and master's degrees in English Education or Applied Linguistics. The diversity of their teaching contexts – urban, semi-urban, and rural schools – provided variation in experiences and classroom constraints, enriching the dataset.

Instruments and Data Collection Technique

The interview protocol was adapted from existing frameworks in applied linguistics and argumentation pedagogy. Questions were designed to explore teachers' perceptions of argumentation protocols, their experiences implementing them, challenges faced, and their views on incorporating pragma-dialectic principles into classroom discourse. The instrument underwent expert validation by two senior lecturers in ELT methodology, who reviewed the clarity, relevance, and alignment of items with the research objectives. A pilot interview with one non-participating teacher was conducted to refine question sequencing and ensure the instrument's reliability in eliciting meaningful responses. Observation checklists and field notes were used to capture authentic classroom interactions involving argumentation tasks or dialogic exchanges.

The observation guide included indicators such as teacher scaffolding, student participation patterns, argumentation moves (claims, evidence, rebuttals), and communicative norms influencing discourse. The instrument was developed based on prior research in discourse analysis and argumentation studies. To enhance reliability, observations were conducted twice for each teacher, and detailed field notes were cross-referenced with interview data. Both instruments allowed triangulation, strengthening the validity of the study and ensuring that findings were grounded in both reported experiences and observed practices.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed a thematic analysis approach, which is widely used in qualitative research to identify recurring patterns and construct interpretive themes. The process began with data familiarization, where interview transcripts and observation notes were read multiple times to gain an initial understanding of emerging ideas. Next, initial coding was conducted using both inductive and deductive codes: inductive codes emerged directly from the data, while deductive codes were informed by existing theories of argumentation and pragma-dialectics. Following coding, similar codes were grouped into broader themes through a constant comparative method. These themes were refined through iterative analysis to ensure coherence, internal consistency, and alignment with the research objectives. To strengthen analytical rigor, theme development was accompanied by researcher memos documenting interpretive decisions. Synthesized themes were then compared across data sources (interviews vs. observations) to enhance credibility and produce a comprehensive interpretation of teachers' experiences.

Given that the study involved human participants, strict ethical protocols were followed. Ethical clearance was obtained in accordance with institutional guidelines governing human subject research. All participants were provided with informed consent forms detailing the study's purpose, procedures, risks, benefits, and their rights, including voluntary participation and the option to withdraw without penalty. Consent was obtained prior to data collection. To ensure confidentiality, participants were assigned pseudonyms, and all identifying information was removed from transcripts and reports. Digital data (audio recordings, transcripts, observation notes) were stored in password-protected files accessible only to the researcher. Throughout the study, ethical principles of respect, beneficence, and non-maleficence were upheld,

ensuring that participants' professional reputations and personal experiences were treated with sensitivity and integrity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Indonesian EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Integrating Argumentation Protocols

Indonesian EFL teachers generally perceived the integration of argumentation protocols as valuable yet demanding, especially when aligned with communicative competence goals. The teachers emphasized that structured argumentation tasks – such as claim–evidence–reasoning frameworks, dialogic prompts, and rebuttal cycles – enabled students to think more critically and organize ideas more coherently in English. Several teachers noted that these protocols helped shift classroom practices away from teacher-centered instruction toward student-led dialogue, allowing learners to become more active in discussions. However, the teachers also highlighted practical challenges: students' limited vocabulary, lack of confidence speaking English, and uneven participation often hindered smooth argumentative exchanges. Teachers appreciated the potential of argumentation protocols to strengthen both speaking and reasoning skills, but they stressed that successful implementation required substantial scaffolding, explicit modeling, and sufficient classroom time. Overall, teachers perceived the integration positively but viewed it as instructionally complex, requiring adaptive strategies to match students' linguistic readiness.

Teachers' Interpretation of Pragma-Dialectic Principles in Classroom Argumentation

Teachers interpreted pragma-dialectic principles as useful conceptual guides for structuring classroom debates, yet they rarely applied them in a strict or formalized manner. The idea of guiding students through stages of critical discussion – confrontation, opening, argumentation, and conclusion – was recognized as academically sound but challenging to operationalize in typical EFL classrooms. Teachers noted that the model's emphasis on rational, evidence-based reasoning helped them design clearer discussion tasks and identify weaknesses in students' reasoning processes. However, they also expressed that the full pragma-dialectic framework is too abstract and cognitively demanding for many EFL learners, especially when combined with linguistic barriers. As a result, teachers adapted the model informally, using simpler heuristics such as "state your point," "give your reason," and "respond to your partner." Observations confirmed that teachers used selective components of pragma-dialectics – particularly the identification of fallacies and promoting respectful disagreement – without explicitly naming the model. In short, teachers valued its theoretical clarity but implemented it flexibly to meet learners' cognitive and linguistic needs.

Navigating Cultural, Linguistic, and Identity-Related Issues

Teachers reported that cultural norms, linguistic limitations, and student identity concerns significantly shaped how argumentation unfolded in the classroom. Many Indonesian learners, influenced by collectivist values and high power-distance norms, were reluctant to openly disagree with peers or challenge ideas, perceiving such actions as impolite or face-threatening. Teachers addressed this by creating "safe discussion zones," using role-play scenarios, and explicitly teaching expressions for polite disagreement. Linguistically, students' limited proficiency often resulted in

simplified arguments or formulaic phrases, which teachers mitigated through vocabulary pre-teaching, sentence frames, and collaborative brainstorming. Identity-related issues, such as fear of being judged for poor English skills, also surfaced frequently. Teachers responded by encouraging translanguaging when necessary, validating diverse linguistic repertoires, and reinforcing that argument quality does not depend solely on accent or grammatical perfection. These adaptive strategies illustrated how teachers navigated sociocultural sensitivities while promoting students' confidence and participation. Ultimately, effective facilitation required balancing cultural respect, linguistic support, and identity affirmation to sustain meaningful argumentative engagement.

Table 1. The Summary of The EFL Teachers' Responses

Research Question	Key Findings	Supporting Evidence from Qualitative Data
1. How do Indonesian EFL teachers perceive the integration of argumentation protocols in their classroom practice?	- Seen as valuable for developing critical thinking and speaking skills. - Perceived as complex and requiring scaffolding. - Challenges include low confidence, limited vocabulary, and uneven participation.	<i>Interviews:</i> Teachers emphasized benefits but noted time and proficiency constraints. <i>Observations:</i> Students relied heavily on teacher modeling; participation varied.
2. How do EFL teachers interpret the applicability of pragmatic principles in classroom argumentation?	- Viewed as theoretically helpful but too abstract for strict implementation. - Applied selectively using simplified heuristics. - Useful for identifying fallacies and structuring debates.	<i>Interviews:</i> Teachers stated the model is difficult for students to grasp in full form. <i>Observations:</i> Teachers used informal adaptations (e.g., "state your point").
3. How do teachers navigate cultural, linguistic, and identity-related issues when facilitating argumentation tasks?	- Encouraged polite disagreement to reduce perceived face-threat. - Provided linguistic scaffolds to address English proficiency gaps. - Used translanguaging and affective support to reduce anxiety and identity threats.	<i>Interviews:</i> Teachers discussed student reluctance to disagree openly. <i>Observations:</i> Role-play, sentence frames, and vocabulary scaffolds were frequently used.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that Indonesian EFL teachers perceive argumentation protocols as both pedagogically valuable and practically demanding, a tension that resonates with earlier work on dialogic and argumentative pedagogy in language classrooms. Teachers in this study highlighted the potential of structured argumentation tasks—such as claim-evidence-reasoning routines and guided rebuttal moves—to promote critical thinking, support idea organization, and shift classroom discourse from teacher-fronted recitation to learner-centered dialogue. This confirms the argument of Marzban and Amiri (2017) and Oo and Okada (2024) that dialogic approaches can deepen learners' engagement and foster higher-order thinking in EFL contexts. At the same time, teachers' concerns about students' limited

vocabulary, low confidence, and uneven participation illustrate the persisting gap between the theoretical promise of argumentation-based instruction and the lived realities of linguistically diverse classrooms. This echoes Snell and Lefstein's (2017) warning that, without careful adaptation, argumentation protocols risk becoming mechanical rituals rather than vehicles for authentic reasoning, and it underscores the need for protocols that are both cognitively ambitious and linguistically feasible.

The way teachers interpreted and adapted pragma-dialectic principles also sheds light on the interaction between argumentation theory and classroom practice. While teachers recognized the value of the pragma-dialectic model—particularly its emphasis on rational, evidence-based resolution of differences of opinion (Garsen, 2015; Visser et al., 2017)—they rarely implemented the framework in its full, idealized form. Instead, they selectively drew on its core insights, simplifying the stages of critical discussion into accessible classroom heuristics such as “state your point,” “give your reason,” and “respond to your partner.” This selective appropriation both confirms and extends previous critiques that pragma-dialectics, conceived as a normative model of ideal discussion, can be difficult to operationalize in real classrooms, especially when learners are simultaneously grappling with a foreign language (Eemeren, 2017). The findings suggest that teachers function as “mediating agents” between theory and practice: they preserve the spirit of critical discussion while loosening its procedural constraints, thereby transforming pragma-dialectics from a rigid blueprint into a flexible pedagogical resource.

The perceived abstractness and cognitive demands of the pragma-dialectic framework are particularly salient when considered alongside teachers' accounts of cultural and identity-related dynamics in Indonesian EFL classrooms. Many students were reported to be reluctant to disagree openly, especially with peers or with the teacher, because such acts might be experienced as impolite or confrontational in a high power-distance, collectivist culture. This observation is consistent with Byram and Wagner's (2018) call for language teaching to be embedded in intercultural understanding and local norms of interaction. It also aligns with Rajendram's (2022) and Snell and Cushing's (2022) findings that students' identities and cultural narratives strongly shape their participation, willingness to challenge ideas, and preferred forms of reasoning. The present study extends this body of work by showing how these cultural and identity-related dynamics specifically mediate the implementation of pragma-dialectic-inspired argumentation: the ideal of vigorous critical confrontation must be reframed as respectful, relationally sensitive disagreement in order to be viable in this context.

Linguistic constraints intersected with these cultural dynamics in important ways. Teachers described how limited vocabulary and syntactic resources often led students to rely on formulaic sentence frames and simplified arguments. This confirms earlier research that has documented language proficiency as a key constraint on the quality and complexity of classroom argumentation in EFL settings (Marzban & Amiri, 2017; Oo & Okada, 2024). At the same time, the teachers' responses demonstrated a high level of pedagogical creativity: they pre-taught key lexis, provided sentence stems for disagreement and justification, and designed collaborative activities (such as pair brainstorming and role plays) to lower affective filters and scaffold more extended talk. These practices resonate with calls for

systematic scaffolding of both content and language in argumentation pedagogy, but they also highlight the additional workload and planning time required to make theoretically sophisticated models workable in under-resourced, exam-oriented educational systems.

An important contribution of this study lies in the way it connects argumentation pedagogy with translanguaging and identity-affirming practices. Teachers' willingness to allow students to draw on their full linguistic repertoires, including Indonesian or local languages at certain stages of the task, parallels the translanguaging perspective advocated by Rajendram (2022) and Weekly (2017), who argue that multilingual resources can support deeper reasoning and fuller participation. In the present study, translanguaging was not treated as a threat to English learning but rather as a tool for building ideas and confidence before reformulating them in English. This reframing challenges more purist, English-only orientations sometimes assumed in argumentation research, and it suggests that pragma-dialectic-inspired protocols can be productively hybridized with multilingual practices. Theoretically, this extends pragma-dialectic work by foregrounding the semiotic and linguistic plurality of classroom discourse, indicating that "reasonable" argumentation in EFL settings may legitimately unfold across more than one language.

The findings also have implications for assessment, even though teachers in this study focused more on implementation than on formal evaluation tools. Previous research has noted the scarcity and underuse of rubrics that capture both linguistic and argumentative dimensions of performance (Ayan & Erdemir, 2023; Qin & Liu, 2021). While the teachers did not explicitly reference analytic rubrics, their comments about time pressure, the complexity of scaffolding, and the need to prioritize exam content suggest that assessment regimes remain largely misaligned with dialogic, argumentation-rich pedagogy. In this sense, the findings indirectly confirm Qin and Liu's (2021) observation that teachers often fall back on surface-level criteria, even when they value deeper reasoning skills. A practical contribution of this study is to highlight the need for context-sensitive assessment tools that mirror teachers' actual pedagogical priorities: tools that foreground critical engagement, respectful disagreement, and collaboration, rather than merely grammatical accuracy or turn-taking frequency.

Some aspects of the findings complicate or nuance existing theory. Pragma-dialectics posits that the ultimate goal of argumentative discourse is the resolution of differences of opinion through sound reasoning under ideal conditions (Eemeren, 2015). However, the teachers in this study often treated unresolved disagreement or partially articulated positions as pedagogically acceptable, and sometimes even desirable, outcomes. In their view, it was more important that learners practiced expressing viewpoints, listening to others, and managing discomfort than that they reached a definitive rational consensus. This divergence from the classical pragma-dialectic ideal can be explained by the multiple, overlapping goals of language classrooms in Indonesia: preparing students for exams, fostering communicative confidence, and maintaining social harmony. Rather than undermining pragma-dialectics, the findings point to the need for a more educationally oriented adaptation

of the model that recognizes learning as an ongoing process in which students may need extended time and repeated exposure to refine their argumentative stances.

Taken together, these results suggest both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, the study demonstrates that pragma-dialectic modelling, when transplanted into EFL contexts, cannot be treated as a neutral, universal framework; it interacts with local cultural norms, language hierarchies, and identity negotiations. The model is most productive when understood as a heuristic that teachers can adapt, rather than as a set of rigid rules to be followed. Practically, the study points to the importance of professional development that equips teachers with strategies to scaffold argumentation linguistically, frame disagreement as a respectful and culturally legitimate practice, and selectively appropriate theoretical concepts in ways that align with classroom realities. For Indonesian EFL teachers, this might include workshops on designing argumentation tasks that combine explicit teaching of pragmatic expressions, opportunities for translanguaging, and gradual exposure to more complex forms of critique.

Finally, the qualitative nature of the study and the small, purposively selected sample of experienced, government-certified teachers mean that the findings are not statistically generalizable to all Indonesian EFL contexts. However, the depth of the analysis provides transferable insights for similar educational settings where teachers seek to integrate argumentation protocols and pragma-dialectic principles in culturally responsive ways. Future research could build on these findings by examining student perspectives more systematically, exploring how learners themselves experience and evaluate argumentation-focused tasks. Such work would further refine our understanding of how argumentative competence, linguistic development, and identity formation interact in multilingual EFL classrooms and would help consolidate the emerging model of argumentation pedagogy that this study has begun to outline.

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DECLARATION OF USING AI TOOLS

The researcher declares that AI tools, including ChatGPT, were used in limited ways to support the research process, specifically in refining language, improving clarity of expression, and formatting certain sections of the manuscript. All ideas, interpretations, analyses, and conclusions presented in this study are the result of the researcher's own critical thinking, academic judgment, and methodological rigor. AI-generated outputs were thoroughly reviewed, modified, and validated to ensure

accuracy, originality, and alignment with ethical research standards. The use of AI tools did not influence the research design, data collection, or interpretation of findings, and all academic responsibilities remain solely with the researcher.

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