

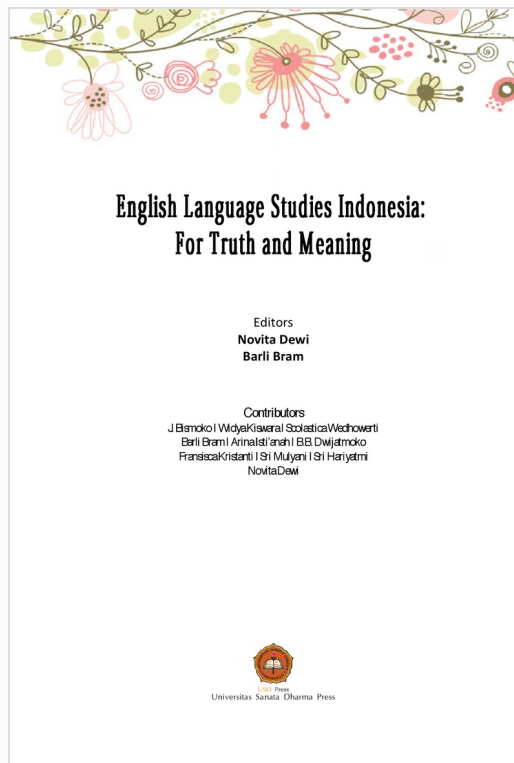


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# Editor-Introduction for ELS Indonesia For Truth and Meaning

*by* Novita Dewi

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# English Language Studies Indonesia: For Truth and Meaning

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# English Language Studies Indonesia: For Truth and Meaning

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**Novita Dewi & Barli Bram**

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The emblem of Sanata Dharma University is a five-petaled brown lotus. Inside the lotus is a black torch with red flame and black inscription "Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam" and "Universitas Sanata Dharma Yogyakarta". The lotus signifies glory, and the five petals, Pancasila, the Indonesian State philosophy. The torch suggests spiritual life, and the open book, relentless pursuit of knowledge. Attitude of maturity is represented by the brown color of the lotus, and the Latin "Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam" is the motto of the Society of Jesus meaning "For the greater glory of God".



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# Introduction

Novita Dewi

**T**he Master's Degree Program of English Language Studies (ELS), Sanata Dharma University is currently confronted with major sign posts of development and progress, both specific and generic, specifically, given its newly acquired accreditation status. ELS in Indonesian context is indeed a discipline in the process of marked change. Nationally it is the competence-based – outcome-based learning outlook and KKNI (the National Competence Framework Indonesia). Regionally it is the effective commencement of the Asian Economic Community, and globally the postmodern civilization. It is therefore only right and proper to mark the moment with some descent academic publication.

*English Language Studies Indonesia: For Truth and Meaning* is a collection of articles written by lecturers and alumni of the Master's Degree Program of English Language Studies (ELS), Sanata Dharma University. It aims to answer the big question being "How can ELS Indonesia, as a discipline construct display a highest class of science and technology on the one hand (development) and a highest class of human civilization (progress) on the other?" It is how ELS develops to become a venue for everyone in it and everyone it serves to grow excellent in one's own right, personally and socially, empirically and transcendently. As it is, we need to identify, clarify and expose critically such issues as its metaphysics, theory, design, implementation, contexts and constraints.

The chapters, therefore, address a spectrum of issues on ELS that will interest a wide audience, especially ELS enthusiasts in Indonesia. But we nevertheless attempted to join some attention on the issues that might be confronting ELS in the near future especially in Indonesia today. The binding theme of *ELS Indonesia: For Truth and Meaning* is the actual action attempted when we seek to find truth and meaning in English

Language Studies by means of teaching, research and community outreach in accordance to one's own specific specialization, i.e. education, linguistics and literature. Chapter One consists of 3 articles related to education, while Chapter Two holds together 4 articles on linguistics. The last chapter comprises of 3 literary articles.

The first chapter opens with an article by Bismoko to set the ground in our efforts to clarify the truth and meaning in ELS. He argues that parade of knowledge alone in analyzing the English language, literature and education today is not synonymous with the discovery of truth and meaning in ELS. Instead, the truth is that of scientific theory of concept relations of (ELS) objects as to improve empirical life quality. Likewise, the meaning is the transcendental meaning of lived experiences of ELS to improve transcendent or psycho-spiritual life quality. Built, among others, on the teaching of Plotinos and Driyarkara, Bismoko suggests improvement of the life quality as a human person to be self-actualizing and self-fulfilling, personally, socially, and spiritually.

The next article by Kiswara is part of his thesis aiming at understanding students' identity through their reflection on their roles and practices to help them strengthen their identity as well as to maximize their self-improvement. Conducting observation and in-depth interviews with three students of English Language Studies (KBI) students majoring education, Kiswara points out that teaching experience and orientation are deemed necessary for the students. Having been introduced to the culture, system, beliefs and objectives of the program, these well oriented students may reshape their identity easier in the process of studying to help them see the correlation between the subject with the objectives and the whole structure.

Wedhowerti's contribution is important as the only article on teaching English literature. The last article in this chapter contents that reading is the initial step in understanding literature; and that balancing the know-what and know-how in English literature is very important to help students think critically. Here, by conducting different ways of reading, i.e. reading for realism, reading as experience, reading for structure, reading suspiciously and reading for culture, the search for meaning can be achieved.



Four articles on linguistics in Chapter Two further sustain our journey in search for truth and meaning in ELS Indonesia. The first article by Bram deals with Predicate Argument Structure (PAS), knowing as it does that determining a semantic role for a particular predicate in a certain context is often far from simple. Bram's article meticulously examines PAS and grammatical function frame of the verb, including the demarcation and interaction of morphology-syntax-semantics whilst providing a number of examples of simple sentences to elucidate the complexity of the concept. Once understood, it will be useful, the article suggests, to examine further the PAS and grammatical functions of other syntactic categories such as the noun, adjective and preposition to help us clarify meaning when we use words.

The next three articles deal with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Isti'anah discusses the use of transitivity by language scholars in text analysis using CDA as an approach. While context of situation becomes the attention in the analysis, wording is the main source of the observation. The article examines how transitivity is employed through its respective ideational, interpersonal, or textual function to observe literary and non-literary texts. It argues that transitivity helps expose contextual meaning in concrete context that gives real meaning as in portrayal of characters and events, depiction of power-relations, etc. Sample of analyses on both non-literary and literary texts helps solidify the arguments in this article.

In the next article that follows, Dwijatmoko exemplifies the use of CDA to read one short story by Chinua Achebe "Dead Men's Path". Using Gee's seven building blocks of language, i.e. significance, activity, identity, relationship, politics, connection, and sign system, the article reveals the conflict between the modern and traditional life depicted in the story. Through the use of simple language and story structure, the article concludes, Achebe presents a conflict between the modern and the traditional, Christianity and indigenous religion, the colonializing and the colonized and the loss of the modern life to the superiority of the traditional people in power.

The last article in this chapter looks at how Robin Thicke's single hit song "Blurred Lines" contains certain sexist ideology, contrary to the view that the song lyrics promote feminist manifesto. Kristanti's analysis

of the multimodal dimension to the music video using the principles of CDA and postfeminist view of women empowerment shows that the song does reveal female objectifications.

The last chapter focuses on efforts in meaning-making by three articles on literature. Mulyani's article looks at Neil Gaiman's bestseller and award-winning fantasy novel, *Anansi Boys* (2005), to show that intricate weaves of intertextuality between the modern-day text set in Anglo American context and the African myths is but a novelty in narrative theory. The article uncovers the doublings of the paired characters as well as the intricacy of the plot structure by de/encoding this polyphonic text.

Identity formation is central to Hariyatmi's article that examines the main character in Willow Wilson's *Butterfly Mosque* (2011). Having been exposed to the demonization of Islam in her country, the young American woman character secretly chooses Islam as her religion, flees to Egypt and persistently questions Islam and her new, hybrid identity. Being a convert, she refuses fundamentalism but instead showing resistance by the display of her own personal understanding of the religion.

The book concludes with Dewi's article on the quest for life meaning as shown by the characters in some selected short stories by Bakdi Soemanto. Peopled with almost all ridiculous characters, the short stories studied often confront us with ill-fated coincidences that complicate the story while enhancing their greater emotional and comical effects. The character's apparent absurdity is a major aspect which persists throughout the story, although within this irrationality lies tireless search for the meaning of life in ways inconceivable by the average people.

Having bound together the 10 articles to fit in with the theme of the book including editorial assistance, we now await feedback and debate that will contribute to a further understanding of the complexities of the ELS as shown by the individual author herein. We would like to thank all contributors of this book; many of them submitted their valuable articles at short notice.

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