

Gender-Based Linguistic Patterns in Indonesian Suicide Notes (2020–2024): A Forensic Stylistic Analysis (Pola Linguistik Berasaskan Jantina dalam Nota Bunuh Diri di Indonesia (2020–2024): Analisis Stilistik Forensik)

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ABSTRACT

Existing suicide research has predominantly focused on psychological and behavioral factors, while limited attention has been given to how gendered experiences of distress are encoded in linguistic form. This study addresses this gap by investigating how linguistic features in Indonesian suicide notes construct and reflect gendered expressions of suicidal intent through forensic stylistic analysis. The study analyzes fifty authenticated suicide notes published on online news platforms and official media websites between 2020 and 2024 using Prokofyeva's forensic stylistic framework. Adopting a descriptive qualitative design, the analysis focuses on five stylistic domains: clear reasoning, emotional expression, text structure, grammar, and punctuation. The findings reveal systematic gender-based distinctions in the linguistic construction of suicide. Male-authored notes are characterized by explicit causal reasoning, rational and final formulations, controlled emotional expression, and structurally organized discourse that encodes suicide as a deliberate and irreversible decision. In contrast, female-authored notes display relational and affective formulations, emphasizing emotional exhaustion, self-blame, and withdrawal, with linguistic features that construct suicide as a moral response to perceived burden on others. These patterns are consistently reinforced across multiple linguistic levels and form stable discourse configurations within the dataset. The study demonstrates that linguistic structure functions as an observable marker of gendered suicidal cognition, reflecting differences in how intent is framed, justified, and communicated. By addressing the limited understanding of how gendered experiences of distress and suicidal intent are represented through linguistic features, the findings contribute theoretically to forensic linguistics and offer practical implications for early detection and suicide prevention in Indonesia.

Keywords: forensic stylistics; gender-based linguistic patterns; Indonesian suicide notes; linguistics forensic; male and female

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini meneliti bagaimana ciri-ciri linguistik dalam nota bunuh diri di Indonesia membentuk dan mencerminkan niat bunuh diri yang berasaskan jantina melalui pendekatan stilistik forensik. Penyelidikan sedia ada mengenai bunuh diri lebih tertumpu kepada faktor psikologi dan tingkah laku, manakala perhatian terhadap bagaimana pengalaman tekanan berasaskan jantina dikodkan dalam bentuk linguistik masih terhad. Bagi merapatkan jurang ini, kajian ini menganalisis lima puluh nota bunuh diri yang disahkan dan diterbitkan antara tahun 2020 dan 2024 dengan menggunakan kerangka analisis gaya bahasa forensik Prokofyeva. Dengan menggunakan reka bentuk kualitatif deskriptif, analisis memberi tumpuan kepada lima domain stilistik utama, iaitu penalaran jelas, pengungkapan emosi, struktur teks, tatabahasa, dan tanda baca. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan perbezaan sistematik berasaskan jantina dalam pembinaan wacana bunuh diri. Nota yang ditulis oleh lelaki dicirikan oleh penaakulan sebab-akibat yang lebih jelas, pernyataan yang rasional dan muktamad, pengungkapan emosi yang lebih terkawal, serta struktur wacana yang tersusun yang menggambarkan bunuh diri sebagai suatu keputusan yang disengajakan dan tidak boleh dipulihkan.

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Sebaliknya, nota yang ditulis oleh wanita menunjukkan formulasi relasional dan afektif, yang menekankan kelelahan emosi, kecenderungan menyalahkan diri sendiri, dan penarikan diri sosial di mana bunuh diri dikonstruksikan sebagai tindak balas moral terhadap beban yang dirasakan terhadap orang lain. Pola-pola ini secara konsisten diperkuat merentas pelbagai tahap linguistik dan membentuk konfigurasi wacana yang stabil dalam korpus kajian. Kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa ciri-ciri linguistik dalam nota bunuh diri mencerminkan perbezaan berasaskan jantina dalam pembentukan dan penyampaian niat bunuh diri, khususnya dari segi cara niat tersebut dibingkaikan, dijustifikasikan, dan disampaikan. Dengan menghubungkan forensik stilistik dengan psikologi bunuh diri, dapatan ini memberikan sumbangan teoretikal kepada bidang linguistik forensik serta implikasi praktikal bagi pengesanan awal dan pencegahan bunuh diri di Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: forensik stilistik; pola linguistik berasaskan jantina; catatan bunuh diri di Indonesia; linguistik forensik; lelaki dan wanita

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia ranked fourth globally in suicide cases in 2024, reflecting a concerning trend in societal well-being (Anon, 2024). Between January and October 2024 alone, 1,023 cases were reported (Wirawan, 2024), and by mid-2025, the number had already reached 796 (Pusiknas, 2025). These figures indicate that suicide is a critical public health issue that affects individuals across all segments of society, including both males and females. Although women are often stereotypically perceived as more vulnerable to stress (Costa et al., 2021; Choi et al., 2025; Sabik & Brown, 2025), existing data suggest that suicide is not confined to a single gender (Pusiknas, 2025). Rather, both men and women are affected, highlighting the need to move beyond generalized assumptions and to examine how gender-related differences may manifest in underlying factors, including patterns of expression and communication.

The Indonesian context further strengthens the importance of examining suicide-related communication. Setiyawati et al. (2024), in their interviews on Indonesian perspectives on suicide, found that some participants perceived suicide as a more honourable alternative to living as a burden to others. This finding suggests that such perceptions underscore the urgent need for immediate and comprehensive suicide prevention efforts across all genders. Consequently, this highlights the relevance of examining how gender-based differences may manifest in patterns of communication associated with suicide.

Similarly, Onie et al. (2024), in “Indonesia’s first suicide statistics profile”, reported that Indonesia has one of the highest rates of suicide underreporting globally. Suicide in Indonesia is driven not only by mental health issues but also by various economic and social factors. As the authors note, “suicide is shaped by a combination of mental health problems, poverty, social isolation, chronic illness, and a lack of social protection—particularly among vulnerable groups such as the elderly” (Onie et al., 2024). However, the study provides limited discussion of how gender-based differences are reflected in suicide-related communication, and this issue remains largely unexplored in the Indonesian context.

In linguistics, forensic stylistics is a subfield of forensic linguistics concerned with the analysis of linguistic style to support authorship attribution, authenticity verification, and the interpretation of communicative intent in disputed texts (Kingston and Stalker, 2006; Prokofyeva, 2013; Aljazrawi & Aljazrawi, 2024). In such contexts, linguistic choices may encode not only emotional distress but also intentionality, cognitive organization, and audience orientation, providing critical insight into whether a suicide reflects deliberate planning or an acute crisis state (Jeffrey et al., 2024; Amalia et al., 2024; Pallocci et al., 2024).

Suicide notes, as texts produced prior to death, can therefore be systematically analyzed using a forensic stylistic approach. This enables the identification of underlying linguistic patterns and structures that may vary across demographic variables, including gender. Such variation was first documented by Garcia-Caballero et al. (2012) and reaffirmed in more recent corpus-based work (Gunn et al., 2025). These findings demonstrate the continuing relevance of this line of inquiry in contemporary forensic linguistic research. Beginning with Kim et al. (2019), followed by Tanusy (2022), and extended by Potdar (2025), previous studies suggest that examining whether male and female individuals exhibit similar or distinct linguistic patterns in suicide notes represents a significant line of inquiry within forensic linguistics. This is due to the fact that gender may influence how individuals linguistically express distress, responsibility, guilt, apology, blame, affection, and finality. These patterns are further shaped by cultural expectations, social norms, and communicative contexts, including the distinctive characteristics of suicide notes as a written genre (Saleem et al., 2021; An et al., 2022; Borhan, 2024; Moafian et al., 2024). Therefore, the present study examines how gender-based differences are reflected in the linguistic patterns of Indonesian suicide notes. By analyzing these patterns, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how suicidal intent is constructed and communicated across gendered contexts, while also offering insights that may inform more culturally sensitive and context-specific suicide prevention efforts.

Beyond its contribution to forensic linguistics, this study also has broader social significance. The United Nations (UN) introduced the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), building on the earlier Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Within SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being, target 3.4 aims to reduce premature mortality, including deaths related to mental health conditions such as suicide. In addition, target 3d emphasizes strengthening early warning systems and risk management capacities. Accordingly, reducing suicide rates is of critical importance, particularly in Indonesia, where suicide cases remain concerning. This highlights the relevance of research that may contribute to early detection and prevention strategies, including the analysis of linguistic patterns associated with suicide.

In the Indonesian context, several scholars have begun to explore the relationship between forensic stylistics and psychological interpretation (Fata et al., 2021; Lubis et al., 2024). However, existing studies remain largely descriptive, focusing on isolated stylistic features and offering limited analytical depth. Notably, previous research has not sufficiently examined gender-based differences in the linguistic patterns of Indonesian suicide cases. Similarly, international research has underscored the relevance of forensic stylistics in analyzing vocabulary, grammar, and punctuation to determine authorship and underlying intent in suicide notes (Jasim & Jaafar, 2022; Kanyama, 2023; Sanni, 2025).

The examination of gender-based linguistic patterns represents a valuable extension of forensic stylistic research. Such patterns may strengthen authorship profiling (Ashurov, 2025) and support forensic investigations involving gendered forms of communication (Benedetti & Queralt, 2023). This is relevant because men and women may use language differently (Mat Ali and Krish, 2016). More recent research has also identified gendered forms of communication in forensic investigation (Benedetti & Queralt, 2023). Such differences may help forensic experts interpret an unknown writer's possible identity, social positioning, or communicative. For example, Vietnamese studies have shown that the combination of personal pronouns and negative words may function as a significant stylistic marker across gender groups (Nguyen & Dinh, 2021). Despite these developments, comparable research on gender-based linguistic patterns in Indonesian suicide notes remains limited.

Accordingly, this study examines gender-based linguistic patterns in Indonesian suicide notes from 2020 to 2024, a period selected to ensure sufficient publicly accessible data within a manageable analytical scope. By identifying gender-specific expressions of distress and suicidal intent, the study contributes to forensic linguistics and may raise awareness among families and communities. This knowledge may support gender-sensitive interpretation and early-detection efforts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Forensic stylistics provides a balanced and reliable evaluation of linguistic evidence in a legal context by focusing on the identification of language style (Ashurov, 2026). One important application is the construction of a psycholinguistic profile of the author based on characteristics such as age, gender, and professional affiliation (Babuk, 2022). Moreover, forensic stylistic analysis helps interpret a writer's underlying communicative intention by linking linguistic forms to their functions within a text.

Building on this perspective, previous studies have demonstrated that gender-related tendencies may also be reflected in writing style. Nini (2018), for example, found that male writers tended to use a more formal and informative style, whereas female writers tended to use a more contextual and interpersonal style. Likewise, Sarwar and Khalique (2026) showed that forensic stylistics can reveal how gender identity is constructed through language and can provide relevant linguistic markers. Their findings indicated that female-authored texts tended to be longer and more complex, whereas male-authored texts tended to be shorter, denser, and more direct. Furthermore, males and females differ in how they express emotional distress (Fowler et al., 2022; Bennett et al., 2024; McMahon et al., 2024; Qu et al., 2024).

Although these studies provide evidence that gender influences linguistic style, they were conducted using non-Indonesian datasets and different textual contexts. Consequently, it remains unclear whether similar gender-based linguistic patterns are present in Indonesian suicide notes. Existing studies on Indonesian suicide notes have primarily focused on identifying general linguistic features without systematically comparing how male and female writers differ across forensic stylistic categories, such as reasoning, emotional expression, text structure, grammar, and punctuation. This represents an important gap in the literature because gender-based linguistic patterns have not yet been comprehensively examined within the Indonesian context using a forensic stylistic framework. Therefore, the present study applies Prokofyeva's (2013) forensic stylistic framework to examine gender-based linguistic patterns in Indonesian suicide notes published between 2020 and 2024.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method, as it enables the researcher to present findings in a clear and factual manner while remaining closely grounded in the original text, without excessive theoretical abstraction (Sandelowski, 2000; Ahmad Shahime et al., 2026). Within this approach, descriptive qualitative research facilitates an in-depth exploration of dominant gender-based linguistic patterns in Indonesian suicide notes (2020–2024). The analysis

is guided by the forensic stylistic framework proposed by Prokofyeva (2013), which focuses on linguistic stylistic features. Specifically, the analysis examines five key criteria within this framework: clear reasoning, emotional expression, text structure, grammar, and punctuation.

THE DATA SOURCES

The primary data for this study consist of 50 suicide notes from Indonesian cases collected between 2020 and 2024, with approximately 10 notes representing each year. The dataset contains 6,379 words, as calculated with the WordList function in Voyant Tools. The data were sourced from Indonesian online news platforms and official media websites, including Kompas.com, Detik.com, Tribunnews.com, CNN Indonesia, Tempo.com, and other relevant outlets. This sample size is considered appropriate for qualitative analysis, given that suicide notes are inherently rare, difficult to access, and not consistently made public. Moreover, a dataset of 50 notes enables in-depth linguistic examination, including the analysis of language patterns and forensic stylistic indicators. The selection criteria for the suicide notes include: (1) availability from credible or official news sources, (2) documentation within the 2020–2024 period, (3) use of Indonesian or regional languages, and (4) presentation in handwritten format to preserve original stylistic features.

The 2020–2024 period was selected because it provides a manageable dataset with sufficient availability of publicly accessible Indonesian suicide notes. Rather than investigating temporal trends, this study uses data from multiple years to capture a wider range of linguistic variation and contextual backgrounds. The five-year sampling period also reduces dependence on cases from a single year and allows recurring gender-based linguistic patterns to be examined across a more diverse set of suicide notes.

THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Based on Figure 1, the suicide notes were systematically prepared and organized for forensic stylistic analysis. Each note was examined according to these categories to identify its linguistic and stylistic features. The analysis produced a descriptive profile of the suicide notes, including (i) the linguistic features present in the notes and (ii) the gender-based linguistic patterns in the suicide notes. Subsequently, the analysis provided preliminary linguistic insights into the language patterns used to communicate distress and suicidal intent, which may increase awareness of potential warning signs among families and communities.

No geographical limitations were imposed during the selection process; consequently, the data originate from various regions across Indonesia, allowing for a broader representation of the country's linguistic and cultural diversity. In addition to standard Bahasa Indonesia, some notes include elements of local or regional languages, such as Batak, Sundanese, and Javanese, reflecting the sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds of the individuals. The dataset was predominantly written in Bahasa Indonesia. The meanings of the regional-language elements were interpreted from the surrounding context and verified using dictionaries. Because the study focused on forensic stylistic patterns at the discourse level rather than on regional-language linguistics, separate analysis by native speakers was not considered necessary. This multilingual dimension is particularly significant, as it enriches the analysis by capturing variation in linguistic expression across different cultural contexts.

Building on this diverse dataset, the verified texts were subsequently organized for systematic forensic stylistic analysis. As illustrated in Figure 1, the analysis was guided by the five key criteria in Prokofyeva's framework: Clear reasoning refers to instances in which the writer provides a direct answer to the question "Why?". This category consists of three subcategories: disease, including physical or mental illness; offence, referring to feelings of being hurt or wronged; and blame or despair, including self-blame or blaming others, the government, or other external parties. In suicide notes, statements reflecting clear reasoning are conveyed as responses to the implicit question of why the act occurred. The most frequent and salient linguistic indicator of such reasoning is the subordinating conjunction "because" (*karena*).

Emotional expression reveals the writer's emotional state and includes fear of living, relief, hopelessness, and absence of doubt. Fear of living may be expressed explicitly or implicitly through statements that convey suffering, distress, or an inability to continue living under existing circumstances. Relief is typically indicated through references to peace, rest, freedom from suffering, or a perceived solution to the writer's problems. Hopelessness is reflected in expressions of the absence of hope or desire, suggesting that the writer perceives no possibility of improvement in their situation. The absence of doubt refers to a clear sense of determination regarding the intended act of suicide and is considered one of the strongest indicators that the text functions as a genuine suicide note.

Text structure was analysed in terms of organizational patterns and discourse coherence. It consists of three main components: form of address (more often someone specific), culmination/body (acknowledging the act itself and providing further instructions/arrangements/apologies), and conclusion (farewell; signature; post-scriptum; other types of final words).

Grammatical analysis focuses on syntactic structures and tense usage. Previous studies have shown that suicide notes tend to contain more references to the past than to the present or future, making past-tense constructions particularly prominent.

Punctuation analysis examines both conventional and non-conventional punctuation practices. Particular attention was given to non-standard features such as ellipses, exclamation marks, and run-on sentences, which may function as indicators of urgency, emotional intensity, psychological distress, or stream-of-consciousness narration.

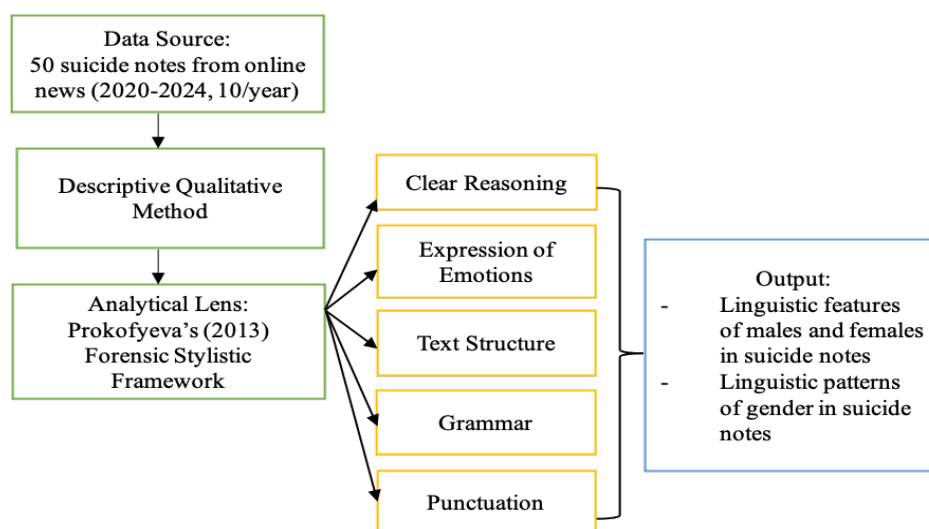


FIGURE 1. The Conceptual Framework

SAMPLE OF THE RESEARCH

The selection process employed a purposive sampling strategy, a qualitative research approach aimed at identifying current concepts, standards, and social issues relevant to the study (Stratton, 2024). This approach allows the sampling process to remain flexible and iterative, enabling the researcher to adjust data selection as a deeper understanding of the research focus is developed.

In this study, purposive sampling was employed to identify suicide notes that offer rich and relevant linguistic features aligned with the research objectives. Texts were selected based on their capacity to contribute meaningfully to the development of gender-based linguistic analysis. This strategy ensures that the data are not only sufficient in quantity but also analytically significant for examining forensic stylistic patterns. As noted in prior literature, purposive sampling is designed to develop insight into a specific research question and is one of the most commonly used approaches in qualitative research across a wide range of scientific disciplines (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025).

Two main criteria were applied in the online data collection: inclusion and exclusion criteria (Zimmerman et al., 2016). Each suicide note was included in the dataset based on three predefined criteria. First, the note had to be explicitly attributed to the suicide victim by online news sources. Second, the suicide notes had to be accessible and suitable for forensic stylistic analysis. Third, sufficient contextual information regarding the author's background—such as gender, geographical location, and circumstances surrounding the case—had to be reported to support contextual interpretation of the linguistic data.

To ensure textual authenticity, analysis was restricted to suicide notes accompanied by original photographs of handwritten texts, enabling visual verification of the original wording; reports lacking such documentation were excluded. In addition, suicide notes were excluded if they were summarized, paraphrased, or reported indirectly without access to the original textual content. This requirement enabled the researcher to examine the original linguistic content directly from the published images rather than relying on secondary descriptions or media summaries.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Data collection proceeded through the following stages:

1. Indonesian online news platforms were searched using the keyword “*catatan bunuh diri di Indonesia*” (“suicide notes in Indonesia”), followed by the relevant year (2020–2024).
2. Reports containing photographs of the original handwritten suicide notes were identified, while those presenting only paraphrases or summaries were excluded.
3. Each case was cross-checked across other online news platforms to confirm consistent reporting and case details.
4. Notes meeting the inclusion criteria were selected, compiled, and analysed according to Prokofyeva's (2013) categories.
5. Each note was assigned a case code consisting of its publication year and a sequential identification number. For example, Case 2021–01 refers to a note published in 2021 and assigned the identification number 01.

RESULT

The results indicate the presence of distinctive gender-based characteristics in suicide note construction, highlighting systematic stylistic differences between male- and female-authored notes within the 2020–2024 dataset.

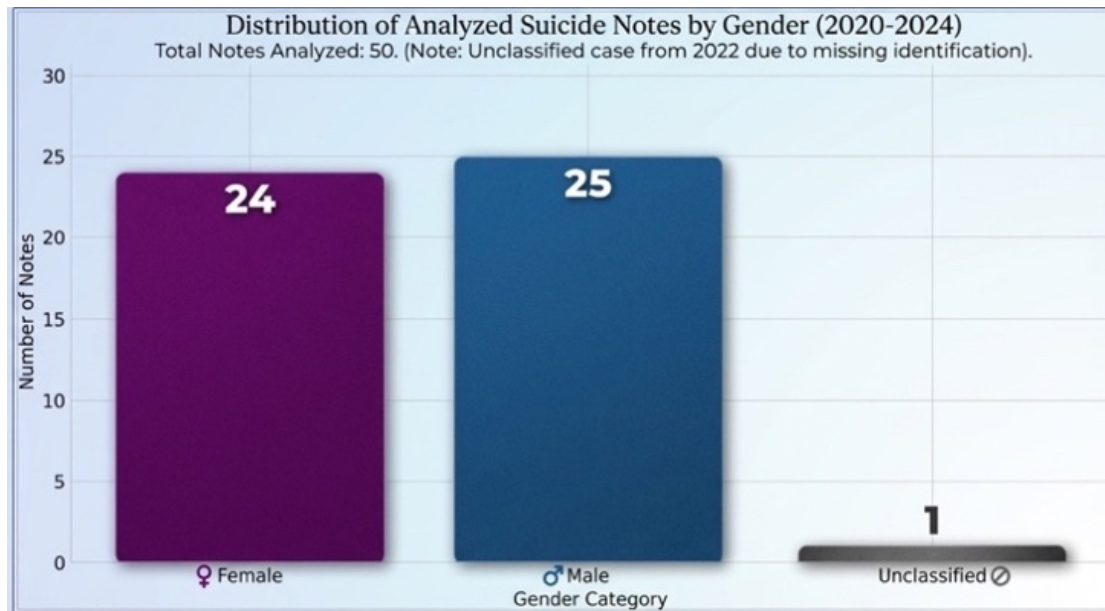


FIGURE 2. Gender category of Indonesian suicide notes (2020-2024)

As illustrated in Figure 2, the dataset demonstrates a near-balanced gender distribution. Although this distribution emerged naturally during the sampling process and was not established as a formal sampling criterion, it facilitates the comparison of gender-based linguistic patterns and reduces the possibility that observed stylistic differences are influenced by a major sampling imbalance.

The dataset was compiled from Kompas.com, Detik.com, Tribunnews.com, CNN Indonesia, Tempo.com, and other relevant Indonesian online news outlets that provided access to original suicide notes as part of their coverage. The dataset consists of 50 suicide notes, of which 25 were identified as male-authored and 24 as female-authored, as presented in Figure 2. One note from 2022 could not be classified by gender because the source material did not provide sufficient information regarding the author's gender. Although this note was retained in the overall dataset because it fulfilled the textual inclusion criteria, it was excluded from the gender-based comparative analysis. Consequently, the analysis of gender-based linguistic patterns was conducted using the 49 suicide notes for which the author's gender could be identified. Furthermore, the cases in this dataset were drawn from multiple regions across Indonesia and span the full 2020–2024 period. This distribution indicates that the identified forensic linguistic patterns were observed across different geographical locations and years within the dataset.

LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF MALE-AUTHORED SUICIDE NOTES
IN INDONESIA (2020-2024)

At the level of clear reasoning, male writers consistently construct suicide through explicit and linear causal chains that link perceived personal failure to the decision to end life. In Case 2021–01, the writer evaluates himself through successive self-condemning clauses “*Papa tak pantas mendampingimu,*” “*Papa juga bukan suami yang baik,*” and “*Papa telah gagal jd imam-mu*”—which are then causally unified by “*karena papa tak pantas mendampingimu & membiarkan anak-anak kita.*” Linguistically, this sequence frames suicide as the logical and inevitable consequence of failing masculine roles as husband, father, and moral leader. A similarly explicit causal construction appears in Case 2021–06, where the statement “*karna nyoe keuh saboh jalan yg geut bagi lon, lon akhiri hidup lon*” (“because this is the only path given to me, I end my life”) eliminates alternatives and positions death as the sole rational solution. Across the dataset, such patterns instantiate Prokofyeva’s blame in despair, in which responsibility is fully internalized, moralized, and treated as irreversible.

At the level of emotional expression, male-authored suicide notes reinforce this rationalized framing through emotionally controlled and morally evaluative language rather than affective outbursts. In Case 2022–03, emotional state is compressed into retrospective moral judgment through “*saya sangat malu dan sangat tidak berguna*” (“I am deeply ashamed and completely useless”). In Case 2024–07, emotional response is pre-emptively negated via irony “*tak perlu ada tangisan karena aku produk gagal yang tak layak ditangisi*”—which pragmatically closes emotional negotiation and reinforces decisional finality. These formulations align with Prokofyeva’s categories of fear of living and absence of hope, where emotion functions to justify closure rather than to invite rescue or intervention.

Evidence from text structure further supports intentionality and cognitive control. Male suicide notes repeatedly realize a canonical sequence of address → reasoning → instruction → closure. In Case 2020–08, the text opens with family address, proceeds through justification, and culminates in detailed post-mortem directives such as “*Agus tolong jaga Mak Yah,*” “*ojo oleh diotopsi,*” and “*jadikan kami satu liang lahat.*” Similarly, Case 2021–03 integrates causal reasoning with explicit financial regulation, “*Nek masalah utang urusane nyong kabeh*”—before closing, demonstrating planned management of social and familial obligations. This structural regularity corresponds to Prokofyeva’s assertion that coherent organization signals decisional stability rather than impulsive expression.

At the grammatical level, male-authored notes consistently employ present tense and present-as-future constructions that linguistically seal action and foreclose temporal openness. Expressions such as “I end my life...” / “*lon akhiri hidup lon*” (Case 2021–06), Dad’s words end here, “*Bapak akhiri sampai di sini*” (Case 2021–09), and “Dad is ending everything”, “*ini papa akhiri segalonyo*” (Case 2024–06) grammatically encode finality and certainty. The systematic absence of modal uncertainty markers such as *mungkin* (“maybe”) or *kalau* (“if”) confirms Prokofyeva’s criterion of absence of doubt, whereby death is treated as an ongoing certainty rather than a contemplated possibility.

Finally, punctuation functions as a meaning-bearing forensic device reinforcing decisional closure. In Case 2024–09, the statement “*Dunia itu indah, tapi tidak dengan duniaku. Im gagal.*” employs short declarative sentences and sentence-final periods as decisional seals that require no elaboration. Likewise, minimal punctuation and line segmentation in cases such as 2021–08 and 2023–02 operate not as expressive disorder but as pragmatic markers of exhaustion and finality. This is reflected in expressions such as “*Bapak sepurane*” (“Forgive me, Dad”), “*Mak Yah aku*

sepurane” (“Forgive me, Mom Dad”), and “*SEPURANE SENG AKE...TRUS GAWÉ*” (“I deeply apologize for everything I have done”). These examples are consistent with Prokofyeva’s view that punctuation in suicide notes prioritizes communicative function over formal correctness.

Taken together, the convergence of dominant causal reasoning, morally framed emotional expression, canonical text structure, grammatically sealed temporality, and functional punctuation across cases including 2020–04, 2020–08, 2021–01, 2021–03, 2021–06, 2021–08, 2021–09, 2022–03, 2022–05, 2023–02, 2024–01, 2024–06, 2024–07, and 2024–09 provides consistent empirical evidence that male-authored suicide notes in Indonesia systematically realize Prokofyeva’s forensic stylistic categories. The stability of these patterns across demographic variation confirms that they constitute dominant gender-specific linguistic characteristics, in which suicide is constructed as a rational, controlled, and morally justified act that preserves masculine agency, responsibility, and decisional authority until death.

LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF FEMALE-AUTHORED SUICIDE NOTES IN INDONESIA (2020-2024)

Based on a forensic stylistic analysis of suicide notes written by female authors in the 2020–2024 dataset, it can be concluded that the linguistic patterns that emerge consistently across cases directly realize the main analytical categories within Prokofyeva’s (2013) framework, namely clear reasoning, emotional expression, text structure, grammar, and punctuation. At the level of clear reasoning, nearly all female-authored notes exhibit suicide reasoning that is relationally oriented and marked by *self-blame in despair*, in which death is constructed as a moral solution to cease being an emotional or social burden to others. This pattern is explicitly observable in evaluative statements such as “*selama aku hidup hanya menjadi beban hidup kalian*” (“throughout my life I have only been a burden to you all”) (Case 2022–01), “*dede selalu nyusahin mamah*” (“I have always troubled Mom”) (Case 2024–04), and “*aku hanya menyusahkan kalian*” (“I only cause trouble for you”) (Case 2020–02). Linguistically, these expressions are characterized by self-directed responsibility rather than blame directed toward external individuals or circumstances. This pattern is consistent with Prokofyeva’s category of *blame in despair*, in which the reasons for suicide are primarily attributed to the self.

At the level of emotional expression, emotions in female-authored notes are predominantly conveyed through a lexicon of exhaustion, inability to endure, and surrender (*exhaustion* and *surrender*), rather than *through* anger or protest. Expressions such as “*aku sudah tidak kuat*” (“I am no longer strong”), “*aku capek*” (“I am tired”), “*aku nyerah*” (“I give up”), and “*aku ingin istirahat*” (“I want to rest”) recur across years and cases (e.g., Cases 2021–02; 2023–05; 2024–04), forming an affective profile that aligns with Prokofyeva’s categories of *fear of living* and *relief-as-release*. Emotions are not presented as affective outbursts calling for intervention, but rather as stabilized and accepted states, thereby reinforcing decisional finality and closing off ambiguity.

In terms of text structure, female suicide notes display a relatively canonical and layered organization, typically realizing the sequence of *address* → *emotional explanation* → *instruction or posthumous arrangement* → *closure*. This structure is clearly evident in Case 2020–01, which opens with an address to the mother, “*Indah pamit Mak*” (“Indah says goodbye, Mom”), followed by an emotional explanation, “*Indah gak mau buat mamak malu*” (“Indah does not want to make Mom ashamed”). The note then proceeds to posthumous arrangements and instructions, such as “*Mak ini Indah tinggali semua emas Indah buat mamak*” (“Mom, I leave all of my gold to you”). It ends with farewell and closure expressions, including “*Aku menyayangi kalian semua*” (“I love

all of you”), “*Jangan tangisi mayat ku lagi doakanlah aku*” (“Do not cry over my body anymore; pray for me”), and “*AKU PAMIT*” (“I say goodbye”). A similar pattern appears in Case 2024–10, which concludes with a spiritual form of closure. Within Prokofyeva’s framework, such structural regularity may indicate textual organization and internal coherence, suggesting that these notes are purposive final messages rather than unstructured emotional outpourings.

At the level of grammar, female-authored notes consistently exhibit a dominance of present tense, present-as-future constructions, and past/perfective framing that represent the author’s life as already completed, while the future is allocated to others. This is evident in expressions such as “*aku pamit*” (“I take my leave”) (Case 2020–01), “*jika aku sudah tiada*” (“if I am already gone”) (Case 2022–01), and “*selama aku hidup*” (“throughout my life”) (Case 2024–04), which function as grammatical markers of temporal closure. In addition, the use of imperative and directive forms such as “*jaga anak-anak*” (“take care of the children”), “*doakan aku*” (“pray for me”), and “*jangan tangisi aku*” (“do not cry for me”) direct action entirely toward those left behind, thereby reinforcing the feature of self-removal from futurity, which Prokofyeva identifies as a marker of absence of doubt.

Finally, punctuation functions as a meaning-bearing forensic device that helps organize emotional expression, interpersonal messages, and final communications. Across the female-authored notes, punctuation is frequently realized through minimal punctuation marks, ellipses, line breaks, repetition, and other non-standard forms. For example, repeated ellipses in Case 2020–06 “*Maafkan aku...*”, (“Forgive me,”) and “*Aku pergi...*”, (“I am leaving”) create pauses that convey resignation and emotional heaviness, while line breaks in Case 2024–05 segment the explanation of physical suffering and the farewell message into distinct communicative units, for example “*aku sengaja mati bunuh diri karena / aku nggak kuat klo rasa sakit di badan*” (“I deliberately died by suicide because / I could not bear it when the pain in my body”). In other cases, such as Case 2022–01, farewell expressions, including “*AKU PAMIT*” (“I take my leave”), are reinforced by simple, direct closing sequence such as “*MAKASIH YA MAK PAK, BAHAGIA SELALU KALIAN TERIMAKASIH ORANG BAIK*” (“Thank you, Mother and Father, may you always be happy thank you good people.”). These patterns are consistent with Prokofyeva’s view that punctuation in suicide notes operates as a meaning-bearing device prioritizing pragmatic function over formal correctness.

Overall, the consistency observed across cases, years, and age groups demonstrates that female-authored suicide notes in the 2020–2024 dataset possess a stable and clearly defined forensic stylistic profile within Prokofyeva’s (2013) framework. The consistent mapping of empirical linguistic evidence onto all of Prokofyeva’s analytical categories confirms that these patterns are not individual anomalies, but rather constitute gender-specific characteristics in the construction of female-authored suicide notes in Indonesia.

DISCUSSION

DOMINANT GENDERED FEATURES IN INDONESIAN SUICIDE NOTES (2020-2024)

The findings indicate that, throughout the 2020–2024 period, a set of linguistic expressions recurrently and dominantly appeared in the construction of suicide discourse. These expressions were identified based on their consistent occurrence across gendered texts, encompassing both male- and female-authored suicide notes.

The classification of dominant linguistic expressions according to each of Prokofyeva's categories explicitly contrasts patterns observed in suicide notes authored by male and female writers. In the categories of clear reasoning and emotional expression in suicide notes written by male authors are dominated by explicit and final formulations that frame suicide as a rational and unavoidable decision are frequently accompanied by morally evaluative self-assessments of failure. Emotional language in these notes is tightly controlled and functions primarily to justify and stabilize the decision to die.

In contrast, suicide notes written by female authors repeatedly employ relational formulations that position the self as a burden to others, alongside a dominant lexicon of exhaustion and surrender (e.g., *"I am tired," "I am no longer strong," "I give up"*). In these texts, suicide is linguistically constructed as a moral solution aimed at reducing perceived emotional or social burden on others, with emotional states represented as settled rather than temporary.

These contrasts are further reinforced through text structure, grammar, and punctuation. Suicide notes authored by male writers typically exhibit task-oriented and managerial organization, present and present-as-future constructions that linguistically seal the act of suicide, and short declarative sentences with sentence-final periods functioning as decisional closures. Suicide notes authored by female writers, by contrast, are characterized by relational and affective structuring, life-as-completed grammatical framing that transfers futurity to those left behind, and the use of fragmentation, repetition, and capitalization to mark emotional fatigue and decisional firmness.

Figure 3 provides a complementary visual synthesis of these findings by illustrating how recurrent linguistic expressions cluster into two dominant discourse configurations: formulations emphasizing rational finality in suicide notes written by male authors and formulations emphasizing exhaustion and release in suicide notes written by female authors.

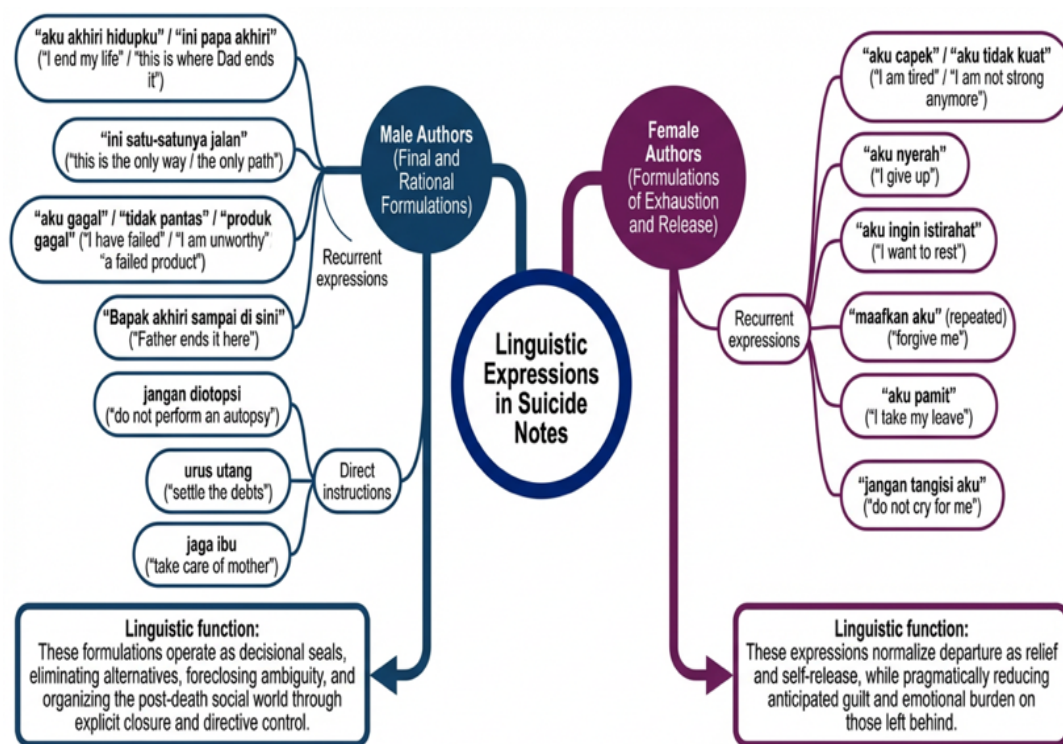


FIGURE 3. Dominant gendered linguistic patterns in Indonesian suicide notes (2020–2024)

The figure demonstrates that linguistic expressions in Indonesian suicide notes are systematically patterned rather than randomly distributed, forming stable, gender-differentiated configurations across the 2020–2024 dataset. These patterns show that dominant linguistic expressions function differently by gender: male-authored notes frame death as a controlled and rational decision, whereas female-authored notes frame it as a relational act grounded in emotional exhaustion and self-erasure, confirming stable forensic stylistic characteristics across the Indonesian dataset.

Accordingly, Figure 3 addresses *the question “how do these expressions cluster to form distinct discourse patterns across the dataset?”* by demonstrating that linguistic expressions in Indonesian suicide notes are not randomly distributed but are systematically organized into stable forensic stylistic patterns associated with author gender across the 2020–2024 dataset.

These findings are consistent with prior research on gendered emotional expression. Fowler et al. (2022), argue that male emotional expression often does not conform to the classical model of depression; instead, distress is more frequently expressed through irritability, anger, and role exhaustion rather than sadness, and vulnerability is often concealed due to masculinity norms. Similarly, Bennett et al. (2024) highlight that male distress is commonly expressed through rationality, control, and withdrawal. In contrast, the present study finds that suicide notes written by female authors are characterized by formulations emphasizing exhaustion and release. This aligns with findings by McMahon et al. (2024) and Qu et al. (2024), who report that females are significantly more likely than males to have a history of self-harm.

From a practical perspective, the early detection of such linguistic patterns can significantly enhance responsiveness within family, friend, and close social networks. This is evident in recurrent relational and emotionally laden expressions such as “*aku sudah tidak kuat*” (“I am no longer strong”), “*aku capek*” (“I am tired”), “*aku menyerah*” (“I give up”), and “*aku ingin istirahat*” (“I want to rest”). Recognizing these expressions may alert surrounding individuals to escalating distress before it transitions into explicit suicidal intent. Linguistics-based early detection may therefore provide a practical and community-level preventive mechanism, particularly in contexts where women tend to communicate distress indirectly through relational and affective language rather than through explicit declarations of suicidal desire.

Taken together, these patterns indicate that dominant linguistic expressions function differently across genders. Suicide notes written by males tend to frame death as a rational and final decision, whereas those written by females more often frame it as a relational act rooted in emotional exhaustion, guilt, and a tendency toward self-erasure. These findings confirm the presence of relatively stable and consistent forensic stylistic characteristics across the Indonesian suicide note dataset (2020–2024).

Furthermore, these results demonstrate that linguistic analysis not only contributes to the development of forensic stylistics as a field of study but also carries broader implications in bridging public health, suicide prevention strategies, and forensic understanding of the construction of suicidal intent. By identifying recurring and gender-specific language patterns in suicide notes, linguistic analysis can provide insights into how distress and suicidal intent were communicated. These insights may raise awareness among families, friends, and communities of similar patterns when they appear in other communications, although their predictive value requires further research.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that suicide notes in the Indonesian dataset (2020–2024) exhibit stable, gender-differentiated forensic stylistic patterns. Linguistic expressions are systematically organized into two dominant configurations. Male-authored notes construct suicide through explicit, causal, and final formulations, framing death as a rational and controlled decision. In contrast, female-authored notes employ relational and affective expressions, framing suicide as an act of emotional exhaustion and withdrawal intended to reduce perceived burden on others. These distinctions are consistently reflected across reasoning patterns, emotional expression, text structure, grammar, and punctuation, supporting the empirical applicability of Prokofyeva's (2013) framework.

In practice, these findings highlight the value of linguistic analysis in helping families, friends, and communities understand how distress and suicidal intent were communicated through recurring gender-specific expressions. Despite limitations related to data sourced from online media, this study demonstrates that forensic stylistics offers a valuable interdisciplinary approach to understanding and preventing suicide.

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