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Siap: Pragmatic Multifunctionality and Register Diffusion in Indonesian Military and Civilian Discourse

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ABSTRACT

The Indonesian word siap (literally: ready/prepared) functions far beyond its lexical meaning within Indonesian military and semi-military institutional discourse. This study investigates the pragmatic multifunctionality of siap as a discourse marker, speech act response token, and institutional affirmation signal, and examines its diffusion into civilian registers. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach grounded in Speech Act Theory, Pragmatic Markers Theory, and Register Diffusion Theory, this study analyzed a corpus of 240 naturally occurring utterances from three sources: audio-recorded institutional interactions at an Indonesian maritime education institution, digital communication data from social media platforms, and semi-structured interviews with twelve informants. Data were analyzed using Hymes' SPEAKING model. The findings reveal six distinct pragmatic functions of siap in military discourse, with hierarchical compliance marking as the most frequent function (35.4% of the military corpus): (1) hierarchical compliance marker, (2) epistemic acknowledgment token, (3) error-affirmation signal, (4) commissive speech act initiator, (5) phatic rapport marker, and (6) turn-taking regulator. In civilian contexts, siap undergoes pragmatic bleaching, splitting into two sub-functions: a professional affirmative and a casual phatic filler. The diffusion pathway is mediated by social media, military-themed entertainment, service industry adoption, and Indonesia's historical cultural proximity to military institutions.

Keywords: Pragmatic Marker, Military Discourse, Register Diffusion, Speech Act, Pragmatic Bleaching

1. Introduction

A single word carries the weight of an entire institutional world. In Indonesian military and semi-military settings, the word *siap*, etymologically a simple adjective meaning *"ready"* or *"prepared"*, performs no fewer than six distinct communicative functions, none of which involves literal readiness. A subordinate who has made an error opens the admission with *siap*. A cadet requesting permission to speak begins with *siap*. A formal commitment, an acknowledgment of information, even a casual peer greeting, all can be opened by the same monosyllabic token. This divergence between lexical meaning and pragmatic function, and the subsequent migration of the word into everyday civilian Indonesian, constitutes the core phenomenon this article investigates.

Language in institutional settings is never merely a neutral medium of information transfer; it is a carrier of power, identity, and ideology (Fairclough, 2001). This principle is especially salient in Indonesia's semi-military maritime education institutions, environments in which cadets simultaneously train for internationally regulated professional careers and operate under quasi-military disciplinary norms. Indonesia's maritime education sector, governed by the Ministry of Transportation and aligned with the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) Convention, maintains approximately 160 maritime training institutions ranging from Diploma to Sarjana (S1) level (Ministry of Transportation of the Republic of Indonesia, 2023). These institutions operate under semi-military structures that create a distinctive contact zone between military institutional language and the civilian professional English cadets must command for

their global careers. Understanding how military pragmatic norms shape, and potentially interfere with, that transition is a question of both theoretical and pedagogical consequence.

The study of pragmatic markers has established a robust framework for analyzing such phenomena. Since the foundational work of Grice (1975) on conversational implicature, elaborated by Schiffrin (1987), Fraser (1999), and Brinton (1996), researchers have demonstrated that pragmatic markers are characteristically multifunctional: a single form simultaneously manages discourse structure, interpersonal relationships, and procedural meaning. Studies of pragmatic particles in Indonesian, including *kan*, *dong*, and *sih* (Dinihari et al., 2025), confirm that Indonesian pragmatic markers encode complex combinations of epistemic stance, social hierarchy, and interactional management that resist simple equivalence in European languages (Sneddon et al., 2010). These characteristics of the Indonesian system make *siap* a particularly compelling object of analysis: its institutional pragmatic weight is achieved entirely through context-dependency and convention, not through lexical or grammatical encoding.

Research on military discourse provides a complementary theoretical anchor. McIntosh (2021) argued that military language is fundamentally shaped by institutional subjectification: the need to produce speakers who enact authority and manage hierarchy through specific linguistic performances. Military language achieves this through extreme economy of form, hierarchically marked address systems, and formulaic response tokens that suppress individual epistemic stance in favor of institutional voice. Albright (2020) documented how deeply this military pragmatic habitus is internalized, noting the significant challenges veterans face in translating military linguistic patterns into civilian communicative contexts. Research on Indonesian military language itself remains sparse, though Mufadhdhal et al. (2020) documented the complex multilingual dynamics of code-mixing across formal Bahasa Indonesia, military register, and regional languages in military court proceedings, evidence that Indonesian military institutions are linguistically rich and understudied spaces. Rahardi et al. (2023) further demonstrated that Indonesian institutional contexts generate culturally specific speech act forms that deviate substantially from Western pragmatic norms, underscoring the importance of investigating Indonesian institutional language on its own terms.

Register theory, developed by Halliday (1978) and subsequently elaborated by Biber & Conrad (2009), Halliday & Matthiessen (2014), and Holmes (2013), offers the sociolinguistic apparatus for understanding how *siap* moves beyond military walls. Register is defined as a variety of language systematically associated with a particular social situation, characterized by field (subject matter), tenor (social relationships), and mode (channel of communication) (Youn, 2023). The diffusion of register-specific items from specialized institutional domains into civilian use is well-documented: American English military terms such as *AWOL*, *sitrep*, and *GI* entered general usage through media exposure, institutional prestige, and functional utility. In Indonesia, this process has been historically amplified by the doctrine of *Dwifungsi ABRI* (Dual Function of the Armed Forces), which during the New Order period (1966 to 1998) embedded military personnel and culture throughout civilian governmental, educational, and social institutions (Crouch, 2007). The language policies of this era further entrenched Bahasa Indonesia's institutional military register as a symbol of state authority (Dardjowidjojo, 1998). Even after *Dwifungsi* was formally abolished in the post-*Reformasi* period, its linguistic legacy persists: military-affiliated schools, maritime academies, police training institutions, and paramilitary youth organizations such as *Pramuka* continue to transmit military register features, including *siap*, into semi-civilian contexts. Contemporary digital media, particularly Indonesian military-themed TikTok and YouTube content, provides a second, accelerating wave of exposure.

A central theoretical tool for understanding *siap's* civilian trajectory is pragmatic bleaching: the gradual loss of specific pragmatic meaning as a form expands into general use (Oishi, 2020; Traugott & Dasher, 2002). Developed primarily on the basis of English and Japanese data, the framework requires careful consideration before application to the Austronesian language family. Indonesian and Malay differ structurally from Indo-European languages in their agglutinative morphology, topic-prominent syntax, and reliance on contextual inference over grammatical marking (Sneddon et al., 2010). However, because pragmatic bleaching operates at the level of usage-based meaning extension rather than morphosyntactic change, it is more portable across language types than grammaticalization frameworks tied to specific structural features. The present study therefore treats pragmatic bleaching not as a theory to be confirmed, but as a working analytical hypothesis to be evaluated against Indonesian data, an approach that allows the data to modify or challenge the framework rather than simply illustrate it.

Despite this rich theoretical terrain, no published study to date, whether in English-language international journals or in Indonesian-language national publications indexed in Garuda, SINTA, or institutional digital libraries, has specifically examined the pragmatic functions of *siap* in Indonesian military discourse or traced its diffusion into civilian usage. Public discourse on this phenomenon exists, most recently in a 2025 article in *The Conversation Indonesia* discussing the normalization of *siap* alongside *ndan* and *86* in civilian spaces; yet

this public discussion has not been subjected to systematic empirical linguistic analysis. The present study occupies the intersection of three research streams, Indonesian pragmatics, military discourse studies, and sociolinguistic register theory, and makes both a descriptive contribution (documenting a previously unstudied linguistic phenomenon) and a theoretical contribution (illustrating how pragmatic bleaching operates in a non-Western, Austronesian institutional context). Its findings also carry direct implications for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) pedagogy in semi-military maritime institutions, where understanding how *siap* functions can inform contrastive pragmatics instruction and communication training for internationally oriented maritime professionals.

To ground the analysis, consider the naturally occurring utterances in Table 1, drawn directly from the audio-recorded corpus collected for this study. None of these examples deploy *siap* in its literal lexical sense, yet each is instantly recognizable as correct to any speaker socialized in Indonesian military or semi-military contexts:

Table 1. Sample utterances of siap in military institutional contexts (from audio-recorded corpus)

No.	Tuturan / Utterance	Konteks / Context
1	*"Siap, Komandan!"*	A cadet responds to a superior's command during morning assembly
2	*"Siap, salah!"*	A subordinate acknowledges an error when reprimanded
3	*"Siap, belum selesai mengerjakan, Pak!"*	A student officer reports incomplete task status
4	*"Siap, kabar saya baik!"*	A subordinate reports personal wellbeing during formal roll call
5	*"Siap, izin menjawab!"*	A cadet requests permission to speak in formal instruction
6	*"Siap, lapor: tugas sudah dilaksanakan!"*	A subordinate formally reports task completion

These examples collectively foreground three research questions that structure the present study. RQ1: What are the distinct pragmatic functions of *siap* in Indonesian military and semi-military institutional discourse? RQ2: What contextual and social factors, as mapped through Hymes' (1974) SPEAKING model, characterize the situational profiles in which *siap* is deployed across military and civilian registers? RQ3: How does the pragmatic meaning of *siap* shift as it diffuses from military register into civilian register, and what social mechanisms drive this diffusion? Through corpus analysis of 240 naturally occurring utterances supplemented by semi-structured interviews with twelve informants, the study identifies six distinct pragmatic functions of *siap* in military discourse, with hierarchical compliance marking dominant at 35.4% of the military corpus, and demonstrates a staged process of pragmatic bleaching as *siap* enters civilian registers, differentiating between a professional civilian affirmative and a fully bleached casual phatic filler.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative research design (Creswell & Poth, 2018) with elements of corpus-informed discourse analysis. Qualitative methodology is appropriate because the research aims to understand the pragmatic meanings and social functions of *siap* within their natural interactional contexts, an inherently interpretive endeavor requiring contextual sensitivity rather than statistical enumeration. The corpus-informed dimension allows for systematic pattern identification across naturally occurring data, though the relatively modest corpus size (N=240) means that distributional patterns reported here should be interpreted as indicative of functional tendencies rather than statistically generalizable frequencies.

The study employs Hymes' (1974) SPEAKING model as its primary analytical framework for contextual description, supplemented by Searle's (1969) speech act classification for identifying illocutionary force and Brinton's (1996) taxonomy of pragmatic marker functions. While Searle's taxonomy has been critiqued for its Western philosophical orientation and limited sensitivity to context-bound institutional speech Mey (2001), it remains the most widely recognized classification system and provides a shared vocabulary for cross-study comparison. Where Searle's categories prove insufficient, this study supplements them with insights from Interactional Sociolinguistics (Gumperz, 1982), particularly the concept of contextualization cues.

2.2 Research Site and Participants

The primary institutional research site was a nationally accredited maritime polytechnic in Central Java, Indonesia, operating under the Ministry of Transportation with a semi-military organizational structure. Consistent with standard practice for protecting research participants and institutional confidentiality, the full institutional name is withheld; the institution is characterized by its national accreditation status, Diploma and S1-level programs in nautical science and marine engineering, and a cadet enrollment system operating under quasi-military discipline in compliance with STCW Convention training requirements. This site was purposively selected because it represents a context in which military and civilian registers actively interact: cadets operate under quasi-military discipline while preparing for international maritime careers in which English proficiency and intercultural communicative competence are essential professional requirements.

Ethical clearance for this research was obtained from the institutional research ethics committee (Surat Persetujuan Etik Penelitian No. 014/ETIK/PLT/LPPM-AMNI/I/2026), and all participants provided written informed consent prior to data collection. Data collection took place over sixteen weeks. Twelve informants participated in semi-structured interviews, deliberately stratified to enable comparison across levels of military affiliation. Table 2 presents the informant profile, including demographic information.

Table 2. Informant profile

No.	Informant Group	n	Affiliation	Gender / Age	Role
1	Active Military Officers	3	TNI/Polri	Male / 35-48 yrs	Instructors at the institution
2	Maritime Cadets	3	Semi-military	Male, Female / 19-21 yrs	Students (Year 2-3)
3	Civilian Academic Staff	3	None	Male, Female / 28-45 yrs	Lecturers, non-military
4	Civilian Public	3	None	Male, Female / 22-40 yrs	Urban professionals

2.3 Data Collection

Method 1: Naturalistic Audio Recording.

A total of 18 hours of naturally occurring institutional interactions were audio-recorded with participant consent across four settings: morning assembly (*apel pagi*), instructional sessions, informal break-room conversation, and formal reporting ceremonies. This yielded 147 utterances containing *siap* in institutional military-register contexts. Utterances were transcribed in standard Indonesian orthography, with contextual annotations (participant roles, setting, communicative purpose) recorded for each instance using consistent participant codes (M1, M2, M3 for military officers; C1, C2, C3 for cadets; S1, S2, S3 for civilian academic staff; P1, P2, P3 for civilian public). Prosodic features, specifically intonation contour, pitch register, speech rate, and pause placement, were systematically annotated for each instance, as these features are particularly relevant for distinguishing between functional categories.

Method 2: Digital Corpus Collection.

A secondary corpus of 93 digital utterances containing *siap* was compiled from two sources: (a) WhatsApp group message screenshots shared by informants from their professional and social groups, with all identifying information removed under a systematic anonymization protocol, and (b) publicly accessible TikTok and Instagram comment threads related to Indonesian military or maritime content. To minimize selection bias in the WhatsApp data, informants were provided with a standardized data elicitation guide specifying that they should share a consecutive block of at least 20 messages from each group rather than selecting individual messages. As a verification step, two informants from the same WhatsApp group independently shared data from that group; cross-checking of their submissions revealed no substantive discrepancies in *siap* frequency or functional distribution, providing a partial verification of data consistency. Regarding ethical considerations, while all identifying information was anonymized, direct informed consent from the original message authors was not individually obtained. The publicly accessible social media data were treated as public discourse consistent with established digital discourse research ethics (Bolander & Locher, 2020). The researchers acknowledge that the ethical status of informant-shared WhatsApp data remains a debated issue in digital discourse research, and future studies should develop more robust consent protocols for this data type.

Method 3: Semi-Structured Interviews.

Twelve interviews averaging 45 minutes each were conducted to elicit metalinguistic reflection on *siap*: its perceived meaning, appropriate contexts, and informants' awareness of civilian diffusion. Interview data provide crucial emic perspectives complementing the etic corpus analysis.

2.4 Data Analysis Procedure

The 240 corpus utterances (147 institutional and 93 digital) were analyzed through the following iterative procedure: (1) initial categorization by source and setting; (2) identification of the interactional position of *siap* within each utterance; (3) application of Searle's (1969) speech act classification to determine the primary illocutionary act; (4) application of Brinton's (1996) pragmatic marker function taxonomy; (5) contextual analysis using the SPEAKING model, including prosodic feature annotations for audio data; and (6) comparative analysis across institutional and civilian corpora. Where individual utterances appeared to perform multiple pragmatic functions simultaneously, the primary function was assigned based on contextual prominence. Decision rules for ambiguous cases are provided in the Appendix. Intercoder reliability was established through independent coding of a 20% sample (48 utterances) by a second researcher affiliated with the same institution, who conducted coding independently and was not informed of the a priori functional categories prior to completing the initial coding pass, yielding a Cohen's kappa coefficient of .87, indicating strong agreement.

3. Result and Discussion

Result

3.1 Distributional Overview

Table 3 presents the distributional overview of *siap* across the two corpora. The institutional military corpus shows a significantly more diversified functional range, with six distinct pragmatic functions identified. The civilian digital corpus shows a more restricted functional range. Cells reporting zero instances for a given function are labeled 'None observed' rather than '0%' to acknowledge the possibility that such instances may exist but were not captured in this corpus given its modest size.

Table 3. Distribution of pragmatic functions of siap across corpora

No.	Pragmatic Function	Military Corpus (n=147)	Civilian Corpus (n=93)	Total
1	Hierarchical Compliance Marker (HCM)	52 (35.4%)	None observed	52 (21.7%)
2	Epistemic Acknowledgment Token (EAT)	28 (19.0%)	5 (5.4%)	33 (13.8%)
3	Error-Affirmation Signal (EAS)	21 (14.3%)	None observed	21 (8.8%)
4	Commissive Speech Act Initiator (CSAI)	24 (16.3%)	3 (3.2%)	27 (11.3%)
5	Phatic Rapport Marker (PRM)	14 (9.5%)	12 (12.9%)	26 (10.8%)
6	Turn-Taking Regulator (TTR)	8 (5.5%)	None observed	10 (4.2%)
7a	Professional Civilian Affirmative (PCA)	None observed	44 (47.3%)	44 (18.3%)
7b	Casual Phatic Filler (CPF)	None observed	27 (29.0%)	27 (11.3%)
	TOTAL	147 (100%)	93 (100%)	240 (100%)

3.2 Pragmatic Functions in Military Discourse

3.2.1 Function 1: Hierarchical Compliance Marker (HCM)

The most frequent function of *siap* in the military corpus (35.4%) is as a Hierarchical Compliance Marker: an utterance-initial token signaling unconditional acknowledgment of a superior's directive. In this function, *siap* is the obligatory opening word of any verbal response to a command, regardless of propositional content:

[M1 to C1]: Taruna Budi, selesaikan laporan itu sebelum pukul 15.00!
[C1]: Siap, akan dilaksanakan!
("Cadet Budi, complete that report before 15:00!" / "[Siap], it will be done!")

[M2 to group]: Semua kelompok, bersiap untuk inspeksi!
[Group]: Siap!
("All groups, prepare for inspection!" / "[Siap]!")

Analyzed through Searle's (1969) taxonomy, the *siap*-headed response in example (1) performs a commissive illocutionary act, while in example (2) it performs a directive-responsive act. In both cases, *siap* functions purely as a procedural signal in the sense of Fraser (1999), marking the speaker's institutional positioning relative to the superior. Prosodically, HCM instances are consistently realized with a short, clipped articulation, high-falling intonation contour, and minimal or no inter-turn pause, acoustic features that mirror the physical posture of attention and signal immediate compliance. The SPEAKING model analysis reveals a consistent contextual profile: Setting (formal military spaces: parade ground, office, classroom); Participants (asymmetric superior-subordinate dyads); Ends (institutional compliance); Act sequence (command then *siap*-response); Key (formal, serious); Instrumentalities (spoken); Norms (hierarchical protocol); Genre (military command sequence).

"Kalau Anda tidak mengucapkan 'siap' saat menjawab, itu dianggap tidak sopan, bahkan bisa dianggap melawan. Kata 'siap' itu seperti memasang posisi badan tegak dalam bahasa lisan, itu tanda Anda siap menerima perintah dan hormat kepada atasan." (Informant M1)
("If you don't say siap when responding, it is considered disrespectful, even defiant. The word siap is like standing at attention in spoken language: it signals that you accept the order and respect the superior.")

3.2.2 Function 2: Epistemic Acknowledgment Token (EAT)

The second most frequent military function (19.0%) is as an Epistemic Acknowledgment Token: signaling that the speaker has received and registered information from a superior without necessarily committing to action:

[S1 to C2]: Besok ada ujian navigasi pukul 07.00.
[C2]: Siap, mengerti!
("Tomorrow there is a navigation exam at 07:00." / "[Siap], understood!")

[M2 to C3]: Kabar dari pusat, ada perubahan jadwal latihan.
[C3]: Siap, siap diterima.
("News from headquarters: training schedule has changed." / "[Siap], [siap] received.")

In this function, *siap* operates as an assertive response in Searle's terms. The double *siap* in example (4) intensifies acknowledgment, paralleling what Schegloff (1982) described as receipt tokens but with additional institutional weight. Prosodically, EAT instances differ from HCM: the intonation is typically level or slightly falling, reflecting information-processing rather than immediate action commitment.

3.2.3 Function 3: Error-Affirmation Signal (EAS)

Perhaps the most pragmatically paradoxical function (14.3%) involves the deployment of *siap* to open a response admitting fault or deficiency:

[M1 to C1]: Taruna, kenapa seragammu tidak rapi?
[C1]: Siap, salah!
("Cadet, why is your uniform untidy?" / "[Siap], [I was] wrong!")

[S2 to C2]: Sudah selesai tugasnya?
[C2]: Siap, belum selesai, Pak!
("Have you finished your assignment?" / "[Siap], not yet done, Sir!")

The pragmatic paradox here is acute: the speaker simultaneously admits incompleteness and opens with *siap*, a word whose lexical meaning implies readiness. This resolves when we recognize that *siap* in this function performs the institutional act of face-offering: the speaker preemptively surrenders face to the superior by adopting the institution's prescribed response format, demonstrating compliance with

institutional norms even while admitting non-compliance with specific requirements. This analysis is consistent with Brown & Levinson's (1987) politeness theory: *siap* as EAS functions as a positive politeness strategy attending to the superior's face needs. Prosodically, EAS instances are distinctive: both audio recordings and researcher annotations consistently noted a falling, somewhat elongated intonation on *siap* itself, followed by a brief hesitation pause before the admission of fault, a prosodic profile that acoustically enacts the tension between institutional compliance and personal failure.

Two informants independently described the obligatory nature of siap even in error situations. Informant C2 explained:

"Kalau saya lupa mengerjakan tugas, saya tetap harus bilang 'siap' dulu. Itu menunjukkan saya tahu posisi saya dan saya tidak melawan. Kalau langsung bilang 'belum, Pak' tanpa 'siap', itu sudah dianggap kurang ajar." (Informant C2)

("If I forget an assignment, I still have to say *siap* first. It shows I know my place and I'm not being defiant. If I just say 'not yet, Sir' without siap, that's already considered disrespectful.")

Informant C1 corroborated this observation, noting that the absence of siap in an error response would be interpreted not merely as linguistic awkwardness but as active institutional defiance, reinforcing the obligatory status of the EAS function.

3.2.4 Function 4: Commissive Speech Act Initiator (CSAI)

In 16.3% of military corpus instances, *siap* opens an utterance constituting a formal commitment to future action or reporting:

[M3 to C3]: Laporkan hasilnya pukul 17.00.
[C3]: Siap, laporan akan disampaikan tepat waktu!
("Report the results at 17:00." / "[Siap], the report will be delivered on time!")

[C1, reporting spontaneously]: Siap, tugas sudah dilaksanakan sesuai perintah!
("[Siap], the task has been carried out in accordance with orders!")

As a CSAI, *siap* functions as a performative frame marking the following utterance as a formal institutional commitment. The illocutionary force of the *siap*-framed commissive is significantly stronger than an unframed equivalent because *siap* invokes the institutional context in which non-fulfillment carries formal disciplinary consequences. The key analytical distinction between CSAI and HCM rests on primary pragmatic weight: CSAI utterances bind the speaker to future action as their dominant illocutionary purpose, whereas HCM utterances primarily acknowledge the command-act. Decision rules for distinguishing these categories are provided in the Appendix.

3.2.5 Function 5: Phatic Rapport Marker (PRM)

In 9.5% of military corpus instances, *siap* appears in informal interactions among military peers to signal solidarity and in-group membership, analogous to phatic tokens like "sure" or "right" in English conversation:

[C1 to C2, during break]: Nanti sore kita latihan bareng ya.
[C2]: Siap, oke deh.
("Let's train together this afternoon." / "[Siap], alright then.")

[M1 to M2, informal corridor]: Gue duluan ya ke kantin.
[M2]: Siap, santai aja.
("I'll head to the canteen first." / "[Siap], take it easy.")

The SPEAKING model analysis of PRM instances reveals a contextual profile that differentiates it sharply from HCM: Setting (informal spaces: break rooms, corridors, dormitories); Participants (symmetric peer dyads, same or similar rank); Ends (social bonding, not institutional compliance); Key (casual, friendly); Norms (relaxed, reciprocal). In this function, *siap* serves what Brinton (1996) categorizes as an interpersonal marker operating on the solidarity dimension rather than the power dimension. Prosodically, PRM instances are realized with a flat or slightly rising intonation and often with reduced phonological weight, reflecting the casual register. The examples above reflect naturally observed usage patterns consistent with informal cadet communication, as confirmed through member-checking with informant C3.

"Kalau sesama teman, 'siap' itu beda rasanya. Bukan tunduk, tapi lebih kayak 'oke, gue dengerin lo.' Itu menunjukkan kita satu kelompok, satu jiwa." (Informant C3)
("Among friends, siap feels different. It's not submission, it's more like 'okay, I hear you.' It shows we're one group, one spirit.")

3.2.6 Function 6: Turn-Taking Regulator (TTR)

The least frequent military function (5.5%, n=8) but analytically significant is as a Turn-Taking Regulator: managing the conversational floor in formal multi-party institutional settings:

[During formal classroom instruction]
[C1]: Siap, izin menjawab!
("[Siap], permission to respond!")

[M3 chairing briefing]: Ada pertanyaan?
[C2]: Siap, izin bertanya.
("Any questions?" / "[Siap], permission to ask a question.")

In this function, *siap* operates as a pre-sequence marker (Sacks et al., 1974): it does not perform the speech act itself but announces the speaker's intention to claim the floor. The SPEAKING model profile is: Setting (formal multi-party institutional spaces); Participants (subordinate addressing the floor through a superior or chair); Ends (floor management); Key (formal, ritualized); Norms (strictly regulated turn-taking requiring permission).

"Di lingkungan kami, tidak boleh asal bicara. Kalau mau bicara harus 'siap, izin' dulu. Itu bukan sekadar sopan santun, itu SOP. Tanpa itu, dianggap tidak disiplin." (Informant M2)

("In our environment, you can't just speak up. If you want to speak, you must say siap, izin first. That's not just politeness, that's SOP. Without it, you're considered undisciplined.")

3.3 Siap in Civilian Register: Pragmatic Bleaching and Differentiated Affirmation

3.3.1 Professional Civilian Affirmative (PCA)

The largest civilian sub-function (47.3% of civilian corpus, n=44) involves *siap* deployed in professional or semi-professional digital communication contexts, including customer service, workplace WhatsApp groups, and formal online exchanges, where it signals responsiveness, efficiency, and quasi-institutional seriousness:

[Customer to online shop admin]: Paketan dikirim hari ini ya?
[Admin]: Siap kak, nanti kami proses ya!
("Is the package sent today?" / "[Siap], we'll process it!")

[WhatsApp workplace group]: Rapat jam 10 ya semua.
[Participant]: Siap, Pak.
("Meeting at 10, everyone." / "[Siap], Sir.")

In PCA instances, *siap* retains a residual social meaning of professional readiness, a trace of its military origins, even though all six military-specific pragmatic functions have been lost. The user implicitly indexes competence and responsiveness, which explains the preferential adoption in service contexts.

3.3.2 Casual Phatic Filler (CPF)

The second civilian sub-function (29.0%, n=27) involves *siap* in casual, non-hierarchical digital interactions where it functions as a semantically thin phatic opener or filler:

[TikTok comment]: Tutorial ini bagus banget!
[Reply]: Siap, makasih ya udah nonton!
("This tutorial is so good!" / "[Siap], thanks for watching!")

[Instagram comment]: Besok jadi ke mall kan?
[Reply]: Ok siap!
("We're still going to the mall tomorrow, right?" / "Ok [siap]!")

In CPF instances, *siap* has shed even its residual professional indexicality, representing the furthest point of pragmatic bleaching observed in the data: the loss of hierarchical positioning, institutional register marking, face-management specificity, and professional indexicality, leaving only a thin layer of positive polarity. The distinction between PCA and CPF suggests that pragmatic bleaching proceeds in stages: military-specific functions are lost first, followed by gradual erosion of the social prestige indexicality that initially motivated civilian adoption.

3.4 Mechanisms of Diffusion: Interview Findings

1. Media Exposure.
   Ten of twelve informants cited Indonesian military-themed films, television dramas, and social media content as primary exposure pathways. Informant P2 stated: *"Saya sering lihat video TikTok tentang kehidupan TNI, latihan fisik, dan apel pagi. Dari situ saya mulai pakai 'siap' karena terdengar tegas dan keren."* ("I often watch TikTok videos about military life. That's where I started using siap because it sounds firm and cool.")
2. Service Industry Adoption.
   Six informants noted that customer service workers have adopted *siap* as a marker of professionalism. Informant S1 observed: *"Sekarang kalau saya order di Shopee, admin-nya sering balas 'siap kak.' Itu memberikan kesan cepat tanggap, berbeda dari sekadar 'oke.'"* ("Now when I order on Shopee, the admin often replies siap kak. It gives the impression of being responsive, different from just 'okay.'").
3. Educational and Organizational Transfer.
   Five informants identified quasi-military organizations (*Pramuka*, student councils, organizational hierarchies) as transmission vectors, introducing *siap* to members who carry it into civilian social networks.
4. Social Media Amplification.
   All twelve informants noted that WhatsApp professional groups have normalized *siap* as a response token in formal but non-military digital communication. Informant M3 reflected: *"Lucu juga, sekarang orang sipil pakai 'siap' padahal mereka tidak tahu beratnya kata itu di dunia kami. Di militer, 'siap' itu mengikat. Di luar, mereka pakai seolah cuma 'oke.'"* ("It's funny, now civilians use siap even though they don't know the weight of that word in our world. In the military, siap is binding. Outside, they use it as if it's just 'okay.'").

Discussion

3.5 Siap as a Pragmatically Multifunctional Institutional Marker

The six-function taxonomy of *siap* in military discourse reveals a level of pragmatic complexity that is striking for a monosyllabic lexical item. As Brinton (1996) argued, pragmatic markers are characteristically multifunctional because they operate simultaneously on the textual plane (managing discourse structure), the interpersonal plane (managing social relationships and face), and the procedural plane (signaling interpretive instructions). *Siap* operates on all three simultaneously: it manages discourse structure by opening response slots in command sequences; it manages hierarchical face relationships by performing deference; and it signals the illocutionary type of the response that follows.

An important analytical challenge concerns the discreteness of the six functions. In practice, individual utterances sometimes straddle functional categories, particularly HCM and CSAI (when a commitment is issued in direct response to a command), and EAT and HCM (when acknowledging information from a superior simultaneously signals compliance). The six categories are best understood as prototypical zones along a functional continuum rather than as strictly discrete categories, consistent with the general observation in pragmatic marker theory that multifunctionality is the norm rather than the exception (Schiffrin, 1987). Decision rules for ambiguous cases are provided in Appendix A2.

The specific pragmatic functions identified also map onto what McIntosh (2021) describes as the characteristic features of military language as institutional subjectification: language that produces the military subject by requiring specific linguistic performances of deference, readiness, and institutional identity. Each use of *siap* is not merely a pragmatic convenience but a micro-instantiation of the military subject position.

3.6 Pragmatic Bleaching: A Staged Process in the Austronesian Context

This study does not set out to test the theory of pragmatic bleaching but examines whether the Indonesian data exhibit patterns consistent with this framework. The distinction between Professional Civilian Affirmative (PCA) and Casual Phatic Filler (CPF) in the civilian corpus provides a more nuanced picture than a simple military-to-civilian binary would suggest. Rather than a single step from rich institutional meaning to empty affirmative, *siap's* bleaching appears to proceed in at least two stages: first, the loss of military-specific pragmatic functions while retaining social prestige indexicality (PCA stage); and second, the further erosion of even this residual indexicality, leaving only positive polarity (CPF stage).

This staged model is consistent with Traugott and Dasher's (2002) analysis of grammaticalization pathways and Oishi's (2020) observation that bleaching proceeds through expanding distributional reach. The Indonesian case demonstrates that this process is operative within the Austronesian language family. The present findings suggest that pragmatic bleaching may be best understood as a usage-based phenomenon driven by frequency and distributional expansion rather than a process tied to specific grammatical structures, supporting its cross-linguistic generalizability at the pragmatic level (Sneddon et al., 2010).

The asymmetry between PCA and CPF also helps explain an observation from the interview data: military-affiliated informants consistently perceived civilian use of *siap* as lightweight, while civilians perceived it as carrying professional seriousness absent from *oke* or *ya*. This perceptual gap reflects the different stages of bleaching experienced by different speaker communities, paralleling what Agha (2003) termed enregisterment: the process by which social values become associated with specific linguistic forms, such that using the form indexes those values even in contexts far removed from its origin.

3.7 Historical and Cultural Dimensions of Diffusion

Siap's diffusion trajectory cannot be understood without reference to Indonesia's socio-political history. The legacy of *Dwifungsi ABRI* during the Suharto era created structural conditions in which military language permeated civilian society (Crouch, 2007). The language policies of the New Order period further reinforced the role of standardized Bahasa Indonesia as an instrument of state authority, creating conditions in which institutional registers, including military register, permeated civilian public life (Dardjowidjojo, 1998). Although *Dwifungsi* was formally abolished after 1998, its linguistic legacy persists in the normalized presence of military language features in Indonesian institutional communication. Contemporary digital media provides a second, more diffuse wave of exposure, as Indonesian TikTok and YouTube military-themed content has attracted massive civilian viewership, accelerating diffusion in ways that historical institutional embedding alone could not have achieved.

3.8 Pedagogical Implications for Maritime ESP Education

The findings carry specific and actionable pedagogical implications for English for Specific Purposes educators in semi-military maritime institutions. These contexts present a unique challenge: learners must simultaneously acquire English professional maritime communication competencies, including VHF radio communication protocols, port state control interview language, and IMO Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP), while operating in a first-language institutional environment governed by highly specific pragmatic norms including *siap*-mediated hierarchical discourse (Pritchard, 2003). The practical importance of pragmatic transfer competence is underscored by the fact that misalignment between mother-tongue institutional pragmatic patterns and target-language maritime communication norms can contribute to communication breakdowns with safety implications.

Three concrete pedagogical applications emerge from this study. First, cross-pragmatic awareness activities can explicitly compare the six functions of *siap* with functionally equivalent English items in military and maritime communication. For example, an ESP classroom activity might present cadets with scenario cards: a command response situation (mapping HCM to *"Yes, sir / Aye aye, sir"*), an information receipt situation (mapping EAT to *"Roger / Copy that"*), a commitment situation (mapping CSAI to *"Wilco / Will comply"*), and a turn-taking situation (mapping TTR to *"Request permission to speak, sir"*). Cadets identify which *siap* function is operative in a given situation and select the appropriate SMCP-compliant English equivalent.

Second, register-switching role-plays can require learners to reformulate *siap*-headed Indonesian utterances in appropriate English for professional maritime communication. A productive exercise involves presenting cadets with a recorded *siap*-headed exchange, such as *"Siap, lapor: kapal telah sandar di Dermaga 3!"*, and requiring them to produce the equivalent English VHF radio exchange using SMCP conventions. This develops pragmatic transfer competence and professional register awareness simultaneously, directly addressing the communicative demands cadets will face in their international careers (Pritchard, 2003).

Third, corpus-based pragmatic reflection modules can use the authentic data and coding scheme in the Appendix as the basis for metalinguistic reflection activities, with advanced versions involving cadets collecting their own examples of *siap* use in daily institutional interactions. Future pedagogical research should investigate whether cadets' explicit pragmatic awareness of *siap* functions measurably improves their production of functionally appropriate English maritime discourse, particularly in time-pressured contexts such as GMDSS (Global Maritime Distress and Safety System) radio operations and port state control interviews, where clarity, precision, and register-appropriate response are fundamental to safe maritime operations.

3.9 Limitations

Several limitations warrant acknowledgment. First, Searle's (1969) speech act taxonomy, while providing a useful shared vocabulary, was developed within a Western philosophical tradition and may not fully capture the institutional specificity of Indonesian military discourse. Alternative frameworks such as Interactional Sociolinguistics (Gumperz, 1982) or Conversation Analysis (Drew & Heritage, 1992) might offer richer tools for future studies. Second, the corpus was collected from a single maritime education institution, and the modest corpus size (N=240) limits the generalizability of distributional claims. Third, the civilian digital corpus, collected through informant-mediated convenience sampling with partial verification, retains potential selection bias. Fourth, the ethical status of the WhatsApp data, as acknowledged in Section 3.3, represents a limitation that future studies should address through more robust consent protocols.

4. Conclusion

This study has provided an exploratory yet systematic pragmatic and sociolinguistic analysis of the Indonesian word *siap* across military and civilian discourse contexts. Through corpus analysis of 240 naturally occurring utterances supplemented by metalinguistic interview data, the study documented six distinct pragmatic functions in military institutional discourse (HCM, EAT, EAS, CSAI, PRM, TTR), with hierarchical compliance marking as the dominant function (35.4% of the military corpus), and identified a staged process of pragmatic bleaching in civilian use, differentiating between Professional Civilian Affirmative and Casual Phatic Filler sub-functions.

Theoretically, this study demonstrates the applicability of pragmatic marker theory, speech act theory, and register diffusion theory to a non-Western, Austronesian military-civilian language contact situation. The staged bleaching model proposed here may serve as a productive framework for investigating the civilian diffusion of other institutionally marked linguistic items in Indonesian and related Austronesian languages. Future research should expand the corpus across multiple semi-military institutional sites and incorporate face-to-face civilian interaction data. Diachronic investigation comparing *siap* use patterns across different historical periods would further illuminate the mechanisms of register diffusion. Research on whether and how Indonesian maritime professionals transfer *siap*-like pragmatic patterns into their English professional communication represents a particularly fruitful direction for future applied linguistics research, given the critical safety implications of pragmatic competence in GMDSS radio operations and port state control interviews: contexts in which clarity, precision, and register-appropriate response are fundamental to safe maritime operations.

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Appendix

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A.1 Coding Scheme with Operational Criteria

Table A1. Coding scheme for pragmatic functions of siap with operational criteria and diagnostic examples

Code	Function	Definition and Operational Criteria	Diagnostic Example
HCM	Hierarchical Compliance Marker	Utterance-initial token signaling unconditional institutional acknowledgment of a superior's directive. Criteria: must be utterance-initial; must occur within 2 seconds of superior's utterance; superior-subordinate dyad required.	*Siap, akan dilaksanakan!*
EAT	Epistemic Acknowledgment Token	Signals receipt and registration of information from a superior without necessarily committing to action. Criteria: superior delivers information (not directive); response confirms receipt; no immediate future-action commitment.	*Siap, mengerti!*
EAS	Error-Affirmation Signal	Opens a response admitting fault, failure, or deficiency; performs institutional face-offering. Criteria: propositional content of utterance must admit failure or incompleteness; siap is nonetheless utterance-initial.	*Siap, belum selesai, Pak!*
CSAI	Commissive Speech Act Initiator	Frames the following utterance as a formal institutional commitment to future action. Criteria: propositional content commits speaker to future task; primary pragmatic weight on binding speaker, not acknowledging command (cf. HCM).	*Siap, laporan akan disampaikan!*
PRM	Phatic Rapport Marker	Signals solidarity and in-group membership in informal peer interactions. Criteria: symmetric participant dyad (same or similar rank); informal setting; casual key; no hierarchical compliance function.	*Siap, oke deh.*
TTR	Turn-Taking Regulator	Manages the conversational floor in formal multi-party settings. Criteria: multi-party context; siap precedes explicit floor-claiming formula (izin menjawab, izin bertanya); speaker does not yet hold floor.	*Siap, izin menjawab!*
PCA	Professional Civilian Affirmative	Professional or semi-professional affirmative retaining residual prestige indexicality in civilian register. Criteria: professional or service context; speaker signals responsiveness; no military hierarchy present.	*Siap kak, nanti kami proses ya!*
CPF	Casual Phatic Filler	Semantically thin casual affirmative with full pragmatic bleaching in civilian register. Criteria: casual, non-hierarchical context; siap is interchangeable with oke or ya; no professional indexicality.	*Ok siap!*

A.2 Decision Rules for Ambiguous Cases

The following table provides explicit decision rules for the most frequently encountered ambiguous coding situations, to facilitate replication of the analysis:

Table A2. Decision rules for ambiguous coding cases

Ambiguous Case	**Decision Rule**	**Rationale**
HCM vs. CSAI	Assign CSAI if the primary pragmatic weight of the post-siap clause is a commitment to future action, and HCM if it is an acknowledgment of the command itself.	HCM responds to the command-act; CSAI frames a commissive. Utterances doing both are coded by their dominant illocutionary force.
HCM vs. EAT	Assign EAT if the superior delivers information (not a directive) and the post-siap clause confirms receipt without committing to action.	EAT is triggered by informing sequences; HCM by directive sequences.
PRM vs. CPF	Assign PRM if speakers share military affiliation and the context is informal in-group military interaction. Assign CPF if neither speaker has military affiliation.	PRM retains military in-group solidarity indexicality; CPF has fully bleached from any military association.