

## SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF LEGAL DOCUMENTS IN THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) OF THE INDONESIAN MINISTRY OF HEALTH

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### ABSTRAK

Penggunaan bahasa dalam MoU membutuhkan ketelitian agar pesan yang disampaikan dapat dipahami dengan jelas, yang pada akhirnya mendukung tercapainya kerja sama yang efektif. Analisis ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi makna denotatif dan konotatif pada tiga MoU dan untuk mengetahui bagaimana ketiga tahapan interpretasi tersebut berperan dalam mengungkapkan makna keseluruhan yang dapat mendukung efektivitas kerjasama internasional. Dengan memahami makna denotatif dan konotatif, para pihak yang melakukan perjanjian kerjasama di bidang bisnis dapat lebih memahami isi dokumen MoU. Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode deskriptif dengan analisis data kualitatif. Penelitian ini akan menganalisis makna denotatif dan makna konotatif berdasarkan tiga tahapan interpretasi, yaitu makna literal, eksplikatur, dan implikatur. Sumber data yang digunakan adalah Nota Kesepahaman (MoU) Kementerian Kesehatan Indonesia, dari tiga MoU yang berbeda, yaitu MoU Denmark, MoU Jepang, dan MoU Tanzania. Hasil dari penelitian ini menemukan makna denotatif dan konotatif pada setiap dokumen MoU. Pada penelitian MoU Denmark ditemukan Sembilan Makna Denotatif, Enam Makna Konotatif, sedangkan pada penelitian MoU Jepang ditemukan empat Makna Denotatif, empat Makna Konotatif, dan hasil yang ditemukan pada penelitian MoU Tanzania ditemukan lima Makna Denotatif dan tiga Makna Konotatif. Dari ketiga Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) tersebut, makna denotatif lebih dominan dibandingkan dengan makna konotatif.

**Kata kunci:** Linguistik, Semantik, Denotatif dan Konotatif, Dokumen Hukum, Nota Kesepahaman

### ABSTRACT

The use of language in a MoU requires precision so that the message conveyed can be understood clearly, which ultimately supports the achievement of effective cooperation. This analysis aims to identify the denotative and connotative meanings in three MoU and how the three stages of interpretation play a role in uncovering the overall meaning that can support the effectiveness of international cooperation. By understanding the denotative and connotative meaning, parties entering into cooperation agreements in the business sector can better understand the contents of the MoU document. The research method used in this research is a descriptive method with qualitative data analysis. This research will analyze the denotative meaning and connotative meaning based on three stages of interpretation, namely literal meaning, explicature and implicature. The data source used is the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of the Indonesian Ministry of Health, from three different MoUs, namely the Danish MoU, Japan MoU and Tanzania MoU. The results of this research found denotative and connotative meanings in each MoU document. In the Danish MoU research there was nine Denotative Meaning, six Connotative Meaning, while in the Japanese MoU research there was four Denotative Meaning, four Connotative Meaning, and the results found in the Tanzanian MoU research were five Denotative Meaning and there Connotative Meaning. Of the three Memorandums of Understanding (MoU), the denotative meaning is more dominant than the connotative meaning.

**Keywords:** Linguistics, Semantics, Denotative and Connotative, Document Legal, Memorandum of Understanding

## INTRODUCTION

Linguistics encompasses various subfields, with semantics focusing on the interpretation of written and spoken language. This branch aids in comprehending word meanings in English (Paranduk and Karisi 2020). Semantics is the study of meaning, semantics examines symbols or signs that express meaning, the relationship between meanings and each other, and their influence on humans and society (Indah Rezeki et al. 2020). Semantic analysis proves particularly valuable when examining legal documents, such as Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) utilized by Indonesia's Ministry of Health for international collaborations. A memorandum is defined as serving as the foundation for a future formal contract or deed (Syarifah Wafiqah Wardah, Hafidz, and Qahar 2020). These MoUs are crucial for ensuring clear communication and reducing potential misunderstandings between involved parties (Swarniti 2021)(Amaelia 2022).

This research necessitates an exploration of both denotative and connotative meanings. Denotation refers to a word's literal or referential definition, while connotation encompasses the additional or implied meanings associated with its usage (Rohmah and Latifah 2022). Denotation is the meaning of a word that is primarily referred to the real word (Sari and Kusumawardhani 2016). Denotative meaning is typically defined as the genuine meaning based on sensations such as sight, smell, hearing, or emotion, it is similar to referential meaning in most cases (Hayati and Jadidah 2022). In MoUs, denotative meanings provide objective explanations of words or expressions, aiming to prevent misinterpretations and facilitate effective message conveyance. Conversely, connotative meanings carry emotional values and associations beyond literal definitions, enriching communication by offering deeper and more complex interpretations. The use of connotative diction serves to evoke emotions, convey attitudes, create vivid imagery, influence perceptions, and communicate cultural values (Nabilah Fauziyah and Nur Ilmi 2020). In this context, a thorough semantic analysis of MoUs is essential to grasp both the denotative and connotative meanings of each word and phrase employed.

There are two types of meaning in semantic studies, namely denotative and connotative meaning. Denotative meaning refers to the literal or basic meaning of a word, while connotative meaning implies additional meanings that are subjective

depending on the specific context (Zuhdah and Alfain 2020). Accuracy in understanding these two types of meaning is important, especially in official documents such as the MoU, where each word has the potential to influence the understanding and implementation of the collaboration. In addition, there are three relevant stages of interpretation in this semantic analysis, namely literal meaning, explicature, and implicature.

Previous relevant research was conducted by (Zuhdah and Alfain 2020), which highlighted the importance of understanding denotative and connotative meanings in literary texts to uncover implied meanings. This study shows that semantic analysis can help deeper interpretations. On the other hand, a study by (Wahyuni and Sari 2019) also found that denotative meanings were more dominant in official articles, which is relevant in the context of the MoU because this document usually emphasizes the clarity of information literally but still implies connotative meanings that strengthen bilateral commitments.

Based on previous research and the need for meaning analysis in a legal context, this study focuses on the semantic analysis of the MoUs of the Indonesian Ministry of Health with three different countries—Denmark, Japan, and Tanzania. This analysis aims to identify the denotative and connotative meanings in each MoU and how the three stages of interpretation play a role in uncovering the overall meaning that can support the effectiveness of international cooperation.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The research method plays an important role in ensuring accurate and relevant results. This study uses a descriptive method with a qualitative data analysis approach. The descriptive method was chosen because it allows researchers to provide a detailed picture of the research object as a whole. A qualitative approach was applied to understand the denotative and connotative meanings in the context of the legal documents of the MoU from the Indonesian Ministry of Health with three different countries, namely Denmark, Japan, and Tanzania.

This study focuses on the semantic analysis of the MoU with three stages of interpretation: literal meaning, explicature, and implicature according to the theory put forward by (Zuhdah and Alfain 2020). In the first stage, literal meaning, words and phrases are analyzed based on their basic meaning. The second stage, explicature, assesses the meaning of the text supported by additional information. The third stage, implicature, explores implicit meanings that are not expressed directly but imply certain messages in the context of the MoU.

The data of this study are in the form of three MoU documents between the Indonesian Ministry of Health and partner countries, namely:

1. Memorandum of Understanding Indonesia-Denmark
2. Memorandum of Understanding Indonesia-Japan
3. Memorandum of Understanding Indonesia-Tanzania

The data collection technique was carried out through the documentation method. The MoU text was studied and classified based on the use of denotative and connotative meanings in relevant sentences and paragraphs. Each MoU was analyzed individually to obtain a specific picture of the meaning contained, both explicitly and implicitly.

Data analysis was carried out through a semantic approach with stages of literal meaning, explicature, and implicature interpretation. The denotative meaning was analyzed based on the literal meaning found in the dictionary or general understanding. While the connotative meaning was analyzed through context, by looking at the relationship between words or phrases that can provide additional value based on the subjective understanding of both parties involved in the MoU.

The results of this analysis will provide an in-depth understanding of the tendencies of the use of meaning in MoU legal documents and how these meanings contribute to strengthening cooperative relations between the countries involved.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This study analyzes the denotative and connotative meanings in three documents of the Indonesian

Ministry of Health's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Denmark, Japan, and Tanzania. These three documents were analyzed using three stages of

semantic interpretation: literal meaning, explicature, and implicature to assess the extent to which the explicit and implicit meanings in the documents play a role in supporting communication and mutual understanding between the parties involved.

## 1. Analysis of the Indonesia-Denmark MoU

The MoU between Indonesia and Denmark, which focuses on health infrastructure financing cooperation, contains nine sentences with denotative meanings and six sentences with connotative meanings.

### Denotative Meaning

Denotative meaning in this document includes direct statements about the form of cooperation, and termination procedures, as well as clear amendment provisions such as:

- a. *"This Memorandum of Understanding ('MoU') is signed between:"* (Art/1/1). This sentence is denotative because it directly explains that this MoU was signed between the Indonesian side and the Danish side.
- b. *"To strengthen and promote infrastructure finance and investment cooperation between Both Parties..."*(Art/1/2). This section uses clear and direct language, explaining the aim of strengthening cooperation in the field of infrastructure finance between the two parties.
- c. *"Both Parties intend to explore options for utilizing the Danish Side's direct loan and state guarantee facility provided through Danish Export Credit Agency ('EKF')..."*(Art/2/2). This sentence contains a specific and direct meaning regarding the intention to explore the option of using direct loan facilities and state guarantees from Denmark, which are provided through the EKF.
- d. *"Both Parties accept the fields of cooperation may include, but are not limited to:"*  
 (Art/3/3). This sentence is denotative because it directly mentions areas of cooperation that may be included in the MoU.
- e. *"Form of cooperation will cover financing cooperation, technical assistance and other cooperation as may be agreed by both Parties."*(Art/3/no.2/3). This section

is also denotative because it clearly identifies forms of cooperation which include cooperation in financing, technical assistance and other cooperation.

- f. *"Implementation of the cooperation under this MoU shall be carried out through specific arrangements, programs or projects concluded by Both Parties."* (Art/4/4). This phrase emphasizes the way in which cooperation will be implemented through specific arrangements, programs or projects agreed upon by both parties.
- g. *"This MoU may be reviewed or amended at any time by mutual consultation and consent in writing by Both Parties."* (Art/7/5) This sentence is denotative because it clearly states that the MoU can be reviewed or amended at any time through mutual consultation and written agreement from both parties.
- h. *"Either side may terminate this MoU by giving 6 (six) month-notice in writing through diplomatic channels."* (Art/8/5). This section is also denotative because it directly regulates the procedures for terminating the MoU by providing written notification six months in advance through diplomatic channels.
- i. *"This MoU is not intended to be, and will not be, legally binding and, by entering into it, Both Parties do not intend to create legal relations between them."* (Art/8/6). This phrase clearly states that this MoU is not intended and will not be legally binding, and is not intended to create a legal relationship between the two parties.

### **Connotative Meaning**

The connotative meaning of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Indonesia and Denmark emphasizes the principles of sovereignty, equality and mutual benefit, as well as a commitment to strengthening the financial cooperation framework. These sentences explicitly indicate the intention to build strong and sustainable relationships, but implicitly imply flexibility, responsibility and thorough evaluation in implementing cooperation. This connotative meaning reflects the determination of both parties to establish dynamic, transparent and responsible cooperation. Further explanation regarding the denotative meaning can be seen in this explanation:

- a. *"RECOGNIZING the importance of fostering bilateral cooperation through the principles of sovereignty, equality, mutual respect, and mutual benefit."* (Pg/1).

This phrase implicitly implies a moral and ethical commitment that strengthens the foundation of cooperation.

- b. *"DESIRING to strengthen and further develop the bilateral finance cooperation framework..."*(Pg2). It expresses a desire to strengthen and develop the bilateral financial cooperation framework between Indonesia and Denmark, including national organizations and institutions active in the field of investment and financing. Also, both parties have clear goals to enhance their financial cooperation, showing that they are committed to building a deeper and more structured cooperation framework in this specific area.
- c. *"Both Parties will maintain regular communication to define and review the implementation of key fields and priorities of cooperation for a medium-term period of three to five years so as to maximize the outcome of the cooperation."* (Art/3 no.3/3). This sentence states that both parties will maintain regular communication to determine and review the implementation of key areas and priorities for cooperation for the medium period (three to five years) in order to maximize the results of cooperation. And also this sentence states that there is a systematic effort to maintain effective and structured communication, indicating that both parties plan to actively manage and supervise the implementation of their cooperation in order to achieve optimal results.
- d. *"Any financial cooperation pursued in prolongation of this MoU will be conducted in accordance with their respective laws, regulations, and subject to each Party's relevant policies and mandates..."*(Art/4/3). States that any financial collaboration carried out under this MoU will be in accordance with the laws, regulations and policies of each party, including project assessment, impact analysis, ESG policies and applicable credit approvals. And also, both parties emphasized their commitment to comply with applicable rules and regulations in a transparent and sustainable manner. This shows that there is a strong responsibility for the process and results of the collaboration carried out.
- e. *"Such revisions or amendments will come into effect on such date as may be determined by Both Parties and shall form an integral part of this MoU."* (Art/7/5). This sentence states that the revision or amendment to the MoU will

come into effect on the date specified by both parties and will become an integral part of the MoU. As well as stating that the flexibility and adaptability of this MoU is recognized, showing that both parties are open to updating their agreement according to needs or changing conditions, which shows dynamic and sustainable cooperation.

- f. *"Furthermore, this MoU does not impose any obligation on neither Party to provide any financing facility..."*(Art/8/no.4/6). This sentence states that this MoU does not obligate both parties to provide financing facilities, because such decisions are always subject to credit assessment and approval from each party for the specific project in question. And also stated that this MoU emphasizes the importance of careful evaluation and proper approval before providing financing facilities, confirming that financial policies will be carried out carefully and responsibly.

This analysis shows that the Indonesia-Denmark MoU not only emphasizes rules and procedures, but also illustrates the values on which the relationship between the two countries is based.

## **2. Analysis of the Indonesia-Japan MoU**

In the MoU between Indonesia and Japan, which focuses on infrastructure development, there is a balance between denotative and connotative meanings, four sentences each.

### **Denotative Meaning**

Denotative meaning appears in phrases that describe the objective of cooperation, for example in sentence such as:

- a. *"The Ministry of Public Works and Housing of the Republic of Indonesia and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism of Japan, (hereinafter referred to individually as 'Side' and collectively as 'Both Sides'),"* (Ph/1/1). This sentence literally identifies the two ministries involved in the memorandum, namely the Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing of the Republic of Indonesia and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism of Japan. They are referred to individually as 'Side' and collectively as 'Both Sides'.

- b. *"The objective of this Memorandum of Cooperation...is to strengthen and intensify capacity in the fields of infrastructure development and its related issues."* (Ph/1/2). This sentence conveys information in a literal way without requiring additional interpretation.
- c. *"The scope of cooperation is as follows: Integrated water resources management, flood and drainage system management, and sabo..."* (Ph/2/3). This sentence shows in detail the scope of cooperation which includes integrated water resources management, flood and drainage management, and sabo (river maintenance and management).
- d. *"Forms of Cooperation: Within the given authorities of Both Sides and in line with the laws and regulations of their respective countries..."* (Ph/3/3). Explain the forms of cooperation that are permitted within the framework of the authorities granted by both parties, in accordance with the laws and regulations of their respective countries.

### **Connotative Meaning**

Meanwhile, connotative meanings are seen in phrases such as:

- a. *"Desiring to continue, strengthen and expand their cooperation. Based on equality, reciprocity, and mutual benefit."* The implicit meaning behind words like *"desiring"* and *"mutual benefit"* (Pg1). Shows the motivation and intention of both parties to expand their mutually beneficial cooperation. This reveals goodwill that is not only related to technical agreements but also involves emotional and moral aspects.
- b. *"Recognizing the willingness of Both Sides to share knowledge and experience as well as technical knowledge in the fields of infrastructure development for the welfare of the people in their respective countries;"* (Pg/1). This sentence acknowledges the willingness of both parties to share knowledge, experience and technical knowledge in developing infrastructure for the welfare of the people in their respective countries.
- c. *"Affirming such cooperation would serve the common interests and contribute to enhancing bilateral cooperation of their respective countries in the fields of infrastructure development;"* (Pg/1). This sentence clearly states that this

cooperation will serve mutual interests and contribute to increasing bilateral cooperation in the field of infrastructure development.

- d. *"Taking into account the Record of Discussion between the Ministry of Public Works of the Republic of Indonesia and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism of Japan..."* (Pg/2). This sentence shows that previous discussions between the two parties have been considered in the context of this cooperation. And also this sentence explains that the decisions and steps taken in this collaboration have taken into account various aspects and results of previous discussions to improve further collaboration.

### 3. Analysis of the Indonesia-Tanzania MoU

Analysis of the MoU between Indonesia and Tanzania shows that this document contains five sentences of denotative meaning and three sentences of connotative meaning.

#### Denotative Meaning

The denotative meaning in this document is reflected in sentences that explain the forms of cooperation, such as:

- a. *"The cooperation in the framework of this MoU may be conducted in the following forms."* (Ph/3/2). This sentence conveys explicit information related to the implementation of cooperation under the agreed format.
- b. *"The implementation of this MoU will be carried out through separate implementing arrangements".* (Ph/4/3). That the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will be done through a separate implementation arrangement.
- c. *"The Parties agree to implement this Cooperation through the following areas."* (Ph/2/2). The parties involved have agreed to cooperate in the areas set out in the agreement.
- d. *"Either Party may terminate this MoU at any time by giving written notification."* (Ph/14/7). Either party has the authority to terminate the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at any time by giving written notice.

- e. *“Any joint publication will be reviewed and decided by the Parties according to their own policies.”* (Ph/11/6). That any joint publication will be reviewed and decided by the parties in their sole discretion.

### **Connotative Meaning**

While the connotative meaning in this document is found in sentences such as:

- a. *“RECOGNIZING the strong and strategic bilateral relations between the two countries”* (Pg/1). The sentence states that the parties involved recognize the strong and strategic bilateral relationship between the two countries.
- b. *“ACKNOWLEDGING the achievements already obtained in the area of health cooperation”* (Pg/1). The sentence states that the parties involved recognize the achievements that have been made in health cooperation.
- c. *“DESIRING TO strengthen the friendly relationship between the two countries and their people”*. The words “desiring” and “friendly relationship” reflect the closeness of the relationship and the commitment to build harmonious cooperation, which strengthens the bilateral relationship between Indonesia and Tanzania emotionally, not just formally.

In the Tanzanian Memorandum of Understanding, connotations are seen in words such as "RECOGNIZING", "ACKNOWLEDGING", and "DESIRING". Explicitly, these sentences express recognition of strong bilateral relations, achievements in health cooperation, and the desire to strengthen friendship between countries and their peoples. Implicitly, these words also contain emotional nuances and a deep commitment to these goals.

The results of the analysis show that the use of denotative meaning is more dominant in the three MoU documents. Denotative meaning is used to provide clarity regarding the stipulated provisions and procedures, which is necessary to avoid misunderstandings in the implementation of cooperation. However, connotative meanings are still present in significant amounts, mainly to communicate the goodwill, principles and values underlying the bilateral relationship.

This finding is consistent with previous studies, such as the research by (Zuhdah and Alfain 2020), which emphasizes that a combination of denotative and connotative meanings is important in affirming the values of cooperation through formal documents.

For instance, in the MoU between Indonesia and Denmark, the denotative statement “This MoU may be reviewed or amended at any time by mutual consultation” provides clear procedural information, while the connotative phrase “Recognizing the importance of fostering bilateral cooperation through the principles of sovereignty, equality, mutual respect, and mutual benefit” implies a commitment to ethical principles that underlie the cooperation. Similarly, the MoU between Indonesia and Japan balances denotative clarity, as seen in “The objective of this Memorandum of Cooperation...is to strengthen and intensify capacity in the fields of infrastructure development,” with connotative expressions like “Desiring to continue, strengthen and expand their cooperation...on the basis of equality, reciprocity, and mutual benefit,” highlighting a mutual intent to build a harmonious and beneficial relationship. In the context of the MoU between the Ministries of Health, the balancing of denotative and connotative meanings helps to solidify the relationship between the countries, not only through a written agreement but also through an implied shared understanding.

## CONCLUSION

This study has analyzed the denotative and connotative meanings in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Indonesian Ministry of Health and the governments of Denmark, Japan, and Tanzania. Using semantic interpretation through literal meaning, explicature, and implicature, the analysis reveals that while denotative language dominates, connotative language plays an important role in reinforcing the diplomatic intentions and underlying values of each agreement.

The MoU between Indonesia and Denmark highlights a focus on procedural clarity with Nine statements containing denotative meaning, while six sentences connotative expressions reinforce mutual respect and commitment to shared principles. Meanwhile, the MoU between Indonesia and Japan shows an equal balance between denotative and connotative meanings, reflecting the technical objectives of the cooperation and the intention to deepen mutual benefits and reciprocal values. The MoU between Indonesia and Tanzania, with a slightly higher proportion of denotative language at five sentences, still emphasizes connotative language that strengthens emotional bonds and collaborative spirit.

Overall, this study shows that the use of connotative language, although secondary to denotative clarity, has an important function in enhancing the diplomatic resonance of MoUs. The balance between explicit and implicit meanings not only ensures procedural transparency but also builds a foundation of goodwill, respect, and ethical commitment. Future research can expand the sample of MoUs into other contexts to analyze how cultural and geopolitical factors affect the balance of denotative and connotative language in international agreements.

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