Mood congruency in COVID-19 podcast discourse: an interpersonal meaning analysis

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Abstract With the advent of podcasts, individuals are increasingly engaging with a diverse range of topics, from entertainment and education to news and personal narratives. In the wake of the global COVID-19 pandemic, podcasts have emerged as an influential platform for disseminating information. This current study attempts to depict the realization of Mood congruency in COVID-19 podcast discourse. Departing from qualitative approach, content analysis was employed as research design. The source of the data was obtained from Dedy Corbuzier’s YouTube Channel with Uus (comedian) as the guest in 2021 when COVID-19 case was known and recognized in Indonesia for the first time. The data were in the form of clauses obtained from the utterances from them. The utterances were electronically transcribed using sonix.ai before being rechecked manually to improve the data’s reliability. From the analysis, it was found that the variation of Mood is appeared in the form of congruent and incongruent (grammatical metaphorical representation). The congruent representation shows how utterance should be in the form as it is. On the other hand, the grammatical metaphorical representation of Mood brings out the variation such as statement realized in interrogative, and command in declarative Mood. The incongruency can perform an indication of speakers’ creativity and politeness in interaction.

Keywords: congruency, mood, podcast, COVID-19

1. Introduction

The digital landscape has witnessed a transformative surge in the consumption of audio content in recent years. Podcast is an abbreviation of iPod broadcasting and is a monolog activity between two or more people who discuss a certain theme or topic in a brief episode. Podcast is an article that is packaged in the form of an audio recording and then distributed among various types of media. It works in the same way as radio, and podcasts can be accessed by utilizing various types of platforms, such as Spotify, YouTube, Anchor, Google Podcasts, Apple Podcasts, SoundCloud, Pocket casts and many more (Sucin & Utami, 2020; Zein et al., 2021). Podcasts not only are used as entertainment but can also be used as learning media (Indriastuti & Saksono, 2015).

With the advent of podcasts, individuals are increasingly engaging with a diverse range of topics, from entertainment and education to news and personal narratives. In the wake of the global COVID-19 pandemic, podcasts have emerged as an influential platform for disseminating information (Kiernan et al., 2023; Mobasher & Costello, 2021), fostering discussions, and connecting people, especially in regions deeply affected by the crisis. Indonesia, a nation grappling with the multifaceted challenges posed by the pandemic, stands out as a pertinent case study for understanding the dynamic interplay of communication and systemic functional linguistics within podcast interactions.

In Indonesia itself, based on 2018 data, statistics show that from a sample of 2018 people, 67.97% were familiar with podcasts. In addition, data on the reasons for listening to podcasts were also obtained; 65% of the participants were willing to listen due to varied content, 62.69% were willing to listen due to flexibility (on demand), and 38.85% were willing to listen because it is more comfortable than visual content (Kencana & Meisyanti, 2020). The podcast content varies with topics stretching from interviews and unresolved opinions/free talks. The legacy of news media organizations takes cues from the success of this entertainment program by producing episodic podcasts that provide greater context around today’s troubled news (Nee & Santana, 2022). Podcast is related to freedom in Indonesia. Currently, there are no regulations that specifically regulate podcasts in Indonesia. Freedom is a strong reason why podcasts are popular and produced. People freely express their opinions and thoughts and use free language (Triyono & Putri, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought forth unprecedented challenges worldwide, reshaping societies, economies, and communication patterns (Maison et al., 2021). As traditional modes of information dissemination strain to keep up with the rapidly evolving situation, digital media platforms have risen to the occasion (Hong, 2022; Zhang et al., 2014). Podcasts,
characterized by their accessibility, versatility, and convenience, have become a valuable avenue for addressing pertinent issues while accommodating the demands of modern lifestyles. Amidst the tumultuous conditions of the pandemic, the Indonesian populace turned to podcasts not only as a source of information but also as a means of solace, connection, and shared experience.

The pandemic has created an imperative for accurate and timely information sharing, as well as preparedness to battle the pandemic itself (Dzau & Yadav, 2023; Massoudi & Sobolevskaia, 2021; Tsao et al., 2021). One way to share this information is through podcasting. Podcasts, often hosted by experts, officials, or community leaders, have the capacity to facilitate the spread of reliable information that is critical for public health and safety (Okonski et al., 2022). Investigating the linguistic strategies employed in disseminating this information can yield insights into how communicative goals are achieved and how linguistic choices accommodate diverse audience groups. Within the context of Indonesia, where diverse languages, cultures, and sociopolitical perspectives converge, podcast interactions take on a distinctive significance (Chung & Kim, 2015; Humaizi & Yusuf, 2024; Naff, 2020; Nurlela et al., 2024; Tobin & Guadagno, 2022).

Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) offers a comprehensive framework for unraveling the intricate layers of meaning and discourse that characterize these interactions. At its core, the SFL delves into the functional aspects of language use, focusing on how language serves both communicative and social functions (Eggins, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). As such, the application of the SFL to the analysis of podcast interactions in Indonesia provides a nuanced lens through which to understand the interplay of linguistic choices, cultural contexts, and communicative goals within the pandemic discourse.

Podcast interactions can foster a sense of community and shared experience, transcending geographical and social barriers (Zumach & Portillo, 2020). With physical distancing measures in place, the need for virtual connectivity and empathy has never been more pronounced (Baiano et al., 2022; de Ridder et al., 2022; Galang et al., 2021; Kluck et al., 2021; Pfattheicher et al., 2020; Sahi et al., 2021). By examining the ways in which linguistic features contribute to the establishment of rapport, trust, and solidarity within podcast discussions, we can uncover the mechanisms through which these interactions offer emotional support and a sense of belonging in a time of crisis.

In podcasts, interactions occur between individuals where language functions as a medium of interaction. This interaction can be studied through the interpersonal function, where the clause as an exchange position reflects the types of speech functions, namely, giving and requesting where the commodities exchanged in the interaction are goods and services (goods and services) or information (information). Therefore, there are 4 basic functions of speech, namely, statement, question, offer, and command (Eggins, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). This speech function is also realized in the form of a modus, which consists of indicative, declarative, interrogative, and imperative modes. Ideally, a command will be realized by using the imperative mode. This phenomenon is called congruence.

Studies related to podcasts and interpersonal functioning have been widely conducted worldwide. Abdulrahman et al. (2018) investigated the use of podcasts in language learning. This study aimed to examine students’ listening skills through the use of podcasts. The results of this study indicate that students perceive that using podcasts in listening lessons makes them more motivated to learn English. This study recommends that teachers use podcasts as a technology-based learning tool. Sucin & Utami (2020) when listening, given the effectiveness of these tools aimed to determine how new media converge in delivering messages through podcasts. This study used a descriptive qualitative method. The theoretical basis used is mass communication and media convergence. The results of the study show three things related to media convergence according to Jenkins, which was applied by the Malamkliwon podcast in an effort to convey messages, namely, by processing content by broadcasters in the form of audio and visual take and then carrying out the process of adding certain effects.

Chan-Olmsted & Wang (2022) showed that the advantages of entertainment, information, and audio platforms are the most important motivators for podcast consumption. In addition, motives influence listening behavior, including listening settings; width, depth, and listening routine; and the use of competing audio media, such as regular radio, online radio, and music streaming. These findings reveal that podcasting is a distinct medium with characteristics than the on-demand mobile extensions of existing audio platforms such as radio. Podcast consumption, especially on today's complex media platforms, is multidimensional, must be measured from multiple aspects and must be examined in multiple settings.

Systemic functional linguistic analysis of pandemic-related linguistic analysis can unveil the intricate interplay among language, context, and power (Al-badri & Al-Janabi, 2022; Sinar, et al., 2024; Zein, et.al, 2023). SFL’s emphasis on the social functions of language allows us to critically assess how linguistic choices reflect (García Montes et al., 2014) and perpetuate sociopolitical ideologies while also recognizing opportunities for fostering inclusivity and equitable discourse. Based on the previous explanation, the current study attempts to depict the realization of mood congruency in COVID-19 podcast discourse. Previous studies have not explored how mood congruency is realized in podcast interactions. Previous studies that explored linguistic aspects and COVID-19 included humor analysis and COVID-19 (Yusuf et al., 2023), critical discourse analysis (Al-Badri & Al-Janabi, 2022; J. Wang & Zang, 2022; Y. Wang, 2021), podcast and listening comprehension ability (Abdulrahman et al., 2018), and interpersonal meaning analysis in news about COVID-19 vaccination (Sari et al., 2021). The urgency of researching interactions within pandemic-related podcasts in Indonesia has become increasingly evident. The fusion of systemic functional linguistics with communication studies offers a holistic approach to dissecting the multifaceted

https://www.malque.pub/qjs/index.php/msj
dimensions of podcast interactions, ranging from information dissemination and community engagement to linguistic analysis. By delving into this realm, we can deepen our understanding of how podcasts serve as vehicles for sense-making, connection, and discourse in the face of unprecedented challenges.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employed a qualitative content analysis approach to explore the realization of mood congruency and incongruency within COVID-19 podcast discourse. Qualitative content analysis allowed for an in-depth examination of linguistic variations in mood, uncovering the ways in which communicative functions were creatively expressed in response to the pandemic context.

The primary source of data for this study was drawn from episodes of Dedy Corbuzier's YouTube Channel featuring Uus (comedian) as a guest. This particular context was selected based on its relevance to the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. Another reason is that the Dedy Corbuzier Channel is one of the top lists of podcasters in Indonesia. These channels are very popular since there have been many public figures (Indonesian and International) visiting the podcast as guests. In addition, Dedy Corbuzier podcasts commonly raise hot issues in Indonesia, such as COVID-19. These podcast episodes were chosen due to their potential to offer insights into how linguistic strategies were employed within a dynamic and engaging communicative environment. The transcriptions of the podcast episodes were obtained for analysis. To ensure accuracy and reliability, an electronic transcription tool, sonix.ai, was initially used. Subsequently, the transcriptions were manually cross-checked against the audio to enhance the quality and precision of the transcribed data. The transcribed data consisted of spoken language interactions, capturing the exchanges between Dedy Corbuzier and Uus.

The analysis focused on identifying instances of Mood variations, both congruent and incongruent, within the transcribed data. The study aimed to uncover how speakers creatively adapt linguistic resources to convey specific communicative functions while adhering to cultural norms and interactional dynamics. While every effort was made to ensure the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the transcribed data, potential limitations include the inherent subjectivity in interpreting linguistic nuances and the reliance on the availability of podcast episodes for data collection.

3. Results and Discussion

In general, the function of speech consists of two roles: giving and asking. The commodities exchanged in interactions can be in the form of goods and services (goods and services) or information (information) (Eggins, 2004; Gerot & Wignell, 1994). Based on these two categories, there are 4 basic functions of speech, namely, statements, questions, offers, and commands. This speech function is also realized in the form of Mode, which consists of indicative, declarative, interrogative and imperative modes. The mode is distinguished based on the MOOD structure of the clause. The function of speech can be realized in the form of congruent (appropriate) or incongruent (metaphorical) speech to produce a mode metaphor (Saragih, 2006). He also added that the Mood metaphor is related to the expression of speech functions in language. It is easy to define that the speech functions of statements, commands, and questions are congruently manifested by declarative, imperative and interrogative moods.

![Figure 1. Mood Congruency.](https://www.malque.pub/ojs/index.php/msj)
Congruent coding is often used when speakers want to communicate straightforwardly and efficiently without introducing unnecessary complexity or ambiguity. This approach conforms to the linguistic conventions that listeners are accustomed to, smoothing and making the communication process more predictable.

The above utterances delivered by UUS show congruence or linearity between the speech function and the Mood. Statement utterances should indeed be marked with a declarative mood where the pattern is subject + finite to indicate MOOD. This finding is in accordance with the statements of Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) and Eggins (2004). Statement is coded as a declarative mood due to the linguistic convention that aligns with the typical structure of expressing facts, opinions, or statements of information in many languages, including English. A declarative mood is the linguistic form used to convey statements or assertions. It is characterized by its straightforward and unmarked structure, where the subject typically precedes the verb.

The choice to code statements as declarative moods is often a matter of linguistic efficiency and clarity. When speakers wish to convey information, share facts, or express opinions, using a declarative mood allows direct communication without the added complexity of interrogative or imperative structures.

This type of interaction is also coded as congruent or linear. DC utterances indicate commands marked with prohibition through the use of the word do not. DC forbids UUSs from laughing because of the things they are talking about regarding the COVID-19 disease that is rocking the world. The use of congruent codes is also used to avoid misunderstanding the meaning of the listener (hearer). This is in line with what was conveyed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) and Eggins (2004).

The utterance delivered by DC shows the function of the question utterance, which is realized in the interrogative mode. This is coded as a congruent realization according to the statements of Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) and Eggins (2004). Questions or questions are coded in an interrogative mode, either with a polarity question (yes/no question) or a wh-question (what, when, where, why, who, and how). The above statement delivered by DC uses a polarity question type, which requires only a yes/no answer.

The above statement is another example of a question form using the wh-question pattern that appears in the interaction between DC and UUS. This type of question requires an answer in the form of an explanation of what is being asked. Because DC's utterance uses the question who, the answer must relate to a reference to the person or someone.
3.2. Incongruent Coding (Metaphorical)

Incongruent coding, also known as metaphorical coding, is a linguistic phenomenon where a particular linguistic structure is used in a way that deviates from its usual or expected pattern (Saragih, 2006). This deviation often involves using a linguistic form that conventionally belongs to one communicative function or grammatical category to express a different function or category. In other words, it involves a mismatch between the typical form and the intended meaning or function. Metaphorical coding is a concept within systemic functional linguistics (SFL), a linguistic theory that focuses on the interplay between language and social context. It is especially relevant in SFL when analyzing how language is creatively adapted to fulfill various communicative purposes within different contexts.

Table 5: Metaphorical Coding of Statements Realized in Interrogative Moods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Utterance</th>
<th>Minute</th>
<th>Speech Function</th>
<th>Mood</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deddy Corbuzier</td>
<td>Masa hidup tidak pusing? (is life indeed confusing?)</td>
<td>00:10:54</td>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Interrogative</td>
<td>Incongruent (metaphorical)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the above statement, the utterance function shows a statement but is coded in an interrogative mode. The meaning of the utterance conveyed by Deddy Corbuzier (DC) is “is life indeed confusing?”, but it is coded with questions that are also marked by rising intonation. This is also related to the previous statement conveyed by UUS that “I am not Bill Gates' child; I am dizzy. Definitely! I'm not a child of Bill Gates, not from a rich family; I must be dizzy”.

Table 6: Metaphorical Coding of Command Realized in Interrogative Moods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Utterance</th>
<th>Minute</th>
<th>Speech Function</th>
<th>Mood</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deddy Corbuzier</td>
<td>Untuk apa bohong-bohong? (for what do you lie?)</td>
<td>00:02:43</td>
<td>Command</td>
<td>Interrogative</td>
<td>Incongruent (metaphorical)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above utterance delivered by DC to UUS has an interrogative mode. However, in meaning, DC utterance implies the function of the command speech "do not lie". This is in accordance with what was conveyed by Eggins (2004), Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), and Suhadi (2015) that if the command is coded with an interrogative, then this is an incongruent code.

Table 7: Metaphorical Coding of Command Realized in Declarative Moods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Utterance</th>
<th>Minute</th>
<th>Speech Function</th>
<th>Mood</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UUS</td>
<td>Kalau Om Ded mau ke Taiwan Hati hati lu. (If uncle Dad wants to go to Taiwan, be careful)</td>
<td>00:11:47</td>
<td>Command</td>
<td>Declarative</td>
<td>Incongruent (metaphorical)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The utterances delivered by UUS show the function of command utterances that give the meaning of “be careful if you go to Taiwan” in the imperative mode. However, UUS encodes it with statements so that it creates an incongruent or metaphorical code. This is in line with the opinion conveyed by Eggins (2004), Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), and Suhadi (2015) that if the command is encoded with a declarative, then this utterance contains grammatical metaphors, especially in the mode type interpersonal grammatical metaphor.

Table 8: Metaphorical Coding of Questions Realized in Declarative Moods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Utterance</th>
<th>Minute</th>
<th>Speech Function</th>
<th>Mood</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deddy Corbuzier</td>
<td>Saya bertanya ini karena saya memang bodoh makanya bertanya gimana sih lu. I ask because I am fool so I ask. You do not know this.</td>
<td>00:03:53</td>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Declarative</td>
<td>Incongruent (metaphorical)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Halliday and Matthiessen revealed that the mode for the interrogative is coded with a finite that comes before the subject. However, in the above utterance, the form that appears is subject + finite, so the mode is declarative. However, the speech function conveyed by DCs is question coded with a declarative mode. This precisely shows that the metaphorical utterance here occurs, namely, the metaphor of mood.

The transference that appears in the data indicates the three types of mood. Some declarative moods are expressed in the interrogative and imperative, some types of moods are imperative in the declarative and interrogative, and some interrogative moods are indicative and imperative. Another major type of interpersonal metaphor is the mood metaphor. According to Halliday (1994), Mood expresses the speech function of statements, questions, offers and commands. This choice between different mood types allows people to provide information through statements, using declarative moods; to ask for information through questions, using an interrogative mood; to propose something for consideration and accept or reject through an offer, using an interrogative mood; or to ask for something to happen through a command, using the mood imperative. According to Suhadi (2015), Halliday's theory of interpersonal metaphors about mood can be justified as an adequate linguistic theory. However, congruent encodings undeniably exist; that is, a statement is delivered in a declarative mood, commands in an imperative and questions in an interrogative atmosphere.

Yang (2013) added that the grammatical metaphor (GM) is a phenomenon that automatically arises from the interaction between meaning and words in a language. In the development of human language, the realization of meaning with words develops first as a pattern in which semantic meanings are congruently mapped to grammatical expressions. For example, the semantic meaning of a command is congruently manifested by an imperative clause. Congruent patterns are not the only form of realization because language has the inherent power to realign the mapping between semantic meaning and grammatical realization.

These congruent and incongruent mood variations could reflect cultural norms and social practices within Indonesian society. This research underscores the importance of considering cultural and contextual factors in linguistic analysis, enhancing cross-cultural understanding and fostering more culturally sensitive communication. The congruent and incongruent mood variations within linguistic discourse can provide insightful insights into the rich tapestry of cultural norms and social practices that shape communication in Indonesian society (Diana et al., 2022). In Indonesia, as it is closely related to eastern-culture, the incongruent mood is commonly used to show politeness. The interplay between these linguistic variations and cultural context highlights the intricate ways in which language functions as a mirror of societal values, hierarchies, and interactional dynamics.

Incongruencies in mood within linguistic discourse often serve as fascinating indicators of speakers’ creativity and politeness, representing a subtle interplay between linguistic form and communicative intent (Park, 2008). These incongruencies, which manifest as deviations from expected grammatical patterns, are pivotal in signaling a speaker’s strategic adaptation of language to achieve specific communicative goals while adhering to cultural norms and social dynamics (Saragih, 2006). The example presented in table 8, “I ask because I am fool so I ask. You do not know this” provides the realization of incongruency. The speaker uttered ‘question’, but it is realized in declarative mood. For the adjacency pair, question is coded by interrogative.

Incongruencies in mood can be seen as linguistic devices through which speakers exercise their creative agency to manipulate linguistic forms in novel ways (Saragih, 2006). Such creative departures from conventional language use can result in striking linguistic effects, drawing attention to the utterance and prompting the listener to consider its implications. By intentionally disrupting the expected syntactic and semantic patterns, speakers evoke a sense of surprise and intellectual engagement. This creativity is particularly evident in instances where statements are realized as interrogatives and commands are structured as declaratives.

For instance, within the context of the pandemic-related podcast in Indonesia, a statement such as "The situation is dire" transformed into an interrogative (“Is the situation dire?”) might stimulate critical thinking and encourage introspection. This inversion of Mood functions as a rhetorical device, inviting listeners to reflect on the severity of the situation rather than merely accepting the statement at face value. This creative manipulation of Mood not only captures listeners’ attention but also prompts them to delve deeper into the content being discussed.

Incongruent mood variations, on the other hand, offer a glimpse into how politeness and hierarchical norms are subtly embedded in Indonesian communication. Politeness strategies, often rooted in the concept of "tata krama" (etiquette), guide interactions to maintain respect and avoid direct challenges. Transforming commands into declaratives serves as a politeness strategy, permitting the speaker to convey instructions while respecting the listener's autonomy. In many cultural contexts, linguistic politeness is a vital aspect of interpersonal communication (Park, 2008), reflecting speakers' sensitivity to maintaining social harmony and respect. The transformation of commands into declaratives, for example, can be a pragmatic mechanism for softening requests or instructions. This is particularly relevant in uncertain and emotionally charged contexts such as a pandemic, where a more indirect approach might be favored to mitigate potential confrontations.

By altering the mood to create incongruent representations, speakers exhibit linguistic politeness by avoiding direct impositions on listeners (Park, 2008). Rather than issuing a direct command (“Stay home”), the speaker might frame it as a declarative statement (“Staying home is important”), thereby preserving a sense of autonomy for the listener while...
conveying the same message. This subtle shift in linguistic structure reflects the speaker’s understanding of the listener’s perspective and his or her intent to maintain cooperative and harmonious interactions.

In conclusion, incongruencies in mood within pandemic-related podcast interactions serve as dynamic markers of both creativity and politeness. These linguistic variations highlight speakers’ ingenuity in altering conventional patterns to evoke engagement and thoughtfulness. Additionally, they underscore the importance of linguistic politeness, illustrating how speakers navigate communication dynamics to establish rapport, mitigate potential conflicts, and ensure effective message reception. The intersection of creativity and politeness within these mood incongruencies not only enhances our understanding of linguistic diversity but also illuminates the intricate ways in which language is adapted to serve both communicative and social functions within specific contexts.

4. Conclusions

The variation in mood appears to be congruent or incongruent (a grammatical metaphorical representation). The congruent representation shows how an utterance should be in the form as it is. On the other hand, the grammatical metaphorical representation of Mood brings out variations such as statements realized in interrogative moods and commands in declarative moods. Informencies can indicate speakers’ creativity and politeness in interactions.

This study provides empirical evidence of mood variations as a manifestation of grammatical metaphorical representation. This work enriches the understanding of linguistic creativity and highlights the dynamic interplay between grammar, context, and communication goals. The study’s findings shed light on how linguistic choices, particularly in Mood variations, contribute to effective communication during challenging times. This has practical implications for content creators, podcast hosts, and communicators, helping them tailor their messages to better suit their intended audience and communication goals. This has implications for media studies demonstrating how linguistic strategies are adapted to suit the affordances and constraints of specific communication platforms. This study subsequently provides a description of the intricate relationship between digital media (podcasts) and linguistic choices, demonstrating how linguistic strategies are adapted to suit the affordances and constraints of specific communication platforms.

Based on the conclusions provided, there are several potential suggestions for further research. Researchers can investigate how mood variations, such as grammatical metaphorical representations, are utilized in various digital communication platforms beyond podcasts. This could include social media platforms, messaging apps, or online forums to understand how linguistic strategies adapt to different digital environments. A comparative study can also be conducted across different cultures to examine how mood variations manifest in linguistic creativity and politeness. This research could explore cultural differences in the interpretation and usage of grammatical metaphorical representations, shedding light on the universality or cultural specificity of these phenomena. In addition, they can explore the effects of different mood variations on audience reception and engagement in digital media. This could involve experimental studies or audience surveys to assess how variations in mood influence perceptions of content credibility, persuasiveness, or relatability.

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Ethical considerations

Ethical guidelines regarding data usage and copyright were strictly followed throughout the study.

Conflict of interest

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