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Questioning under authority: police interrogation, coercive pragmatics, and the production of legal confession in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Background: Police interrogation in Indonesia is a legally consequential speech event because suspect statements may move from pressured questioning into BAP records and later operate as confession evidence in court. **Objective:** This study examines how interrogative authority, coercive pragmatic potential, and confession textualization shape production of legal confession in Indonesian criminal procedure. **Method:** This study applies qualitative forensic-pragmatic discourse analysis to a documentary corpus of public interrogation-related materials, legal-context documents, and recent scholarship, using structured coding for question design, pragmatic pressure, and textual transformation. **Results:** Interrogative authority appears most strongly through leading, confirmatory, presuppositional, and forced-choice questions that restrict suspect narrative autonomy while preserving a procedural appearance of inquiry. Coercive potential is distributed across evidential framing, moral appeals, implied consequences, and cooperation-oriented language, indicating that pressure may operate pragmatically without explicit threat. Confession becomes legally durable through reformulation, BAP monologic rendering, confirmation sequences, and later evidentiary uptake, which may obscure hesitation, repair, or interactional constraint. **Implication:** This study argues that confession reliability should be assessed through the full pathway from questioning to record-making, not merely through formal voluntariness. **Novelty:** This study offers an integrated forensic-pragmatic model linking interrogation grammar, coercive implication, and documentary stabilization in Indonesian legal discourse.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Police interrogation occupies a decisive but under-scrutinised point in Indonesia's criminal process because it is where suspicion is first converted into legally portable narrative. This problem is not abstract. KUHAP, Law No. 8 of 1981, explicitly requires suspect and witness statements before investigators to be given without pressure and obliges investigators to record suspect accounts carefully according to the words used by the suspect; Article 184 also places the defendant's statement among five legally recognised evidentiary forms. Recent human-rights complaint records reinforce why interrogation deserves close linguistic scrutiny: Komnas HAM's 2024 year-end note listed Polri as the most frequently complained-about institution, with 663 complaints, while public reporting on Komnas HAM's 2023 annual data placed Polri first with 771 complaints. These figures do not prove coercion in interrogation, but they show that police authority remains a contested site of procedural trust, making the language of questioning legally consequential.

Existing scholarship has substantially advanced understanding of interrogation risk, confession reliability, and institutional questioning. Gudjonsson [1] and Cleary and Bull [2] show that confession decisions are shaped by contextual pressure, vulnerability, and perceived consequences rather than by factual guilt alone. Catlin et al. [3] extend this concern through a systematic review of interview and interrogation methods and their effects on true and false confessions, while Filipović [4] demonstrates how admissions may emerge inadvertently through interactional design. For Indonesia, Butt [5] situates criminal justice problems within broader institutional constraints, whereas Ramadani et al. [6], Arifianti [7], Sholihatin et al. [8], and Jasmir and Magria [9] provide important forensic-linguistic accounts of question types, implicature, investigation interviews, and illocutionary acts in BAP materials. Yet prior work has not sufficiently connected question design, coercive pragmatic potential, and the textual transformation of spoken interrogation into legally usable confession.

This study addresses that gap by asking how authority is linguistically organised in Indonesian police interrogation and how suspect responses are shaped, narrowed, reformulated, or stabilised as confession-related legal text. More specifically, this study examines three linked problems. First, how do interrogative forms, presuppositions, topic control, and evidential references position suspects within asymmetrical institutional interaction? Second, how do pragmatic strategies such as implied threat, implied promise, moral minimisation, appeals to honesty, or evidential pressure create conditions under which an admission may appear voluntary while being interactionally constrained? Third, how are spoken or reported responses transformed into written BAP formulations that later travel through court reasoning as confession evidence? These questions do not assume that all police questioning is coercive. Rather, they make coercion analysable as a pragmatic and procedural possibility that must be examined through language, sequence, institutional role, and record-making practice.

The central argument is that legal confession in Indonesia should be understood not merely as a suspect's statement but as a discursive product of institutional questioning, evidential framing, and bureaucratic textualisation. This argument builds on Komter's [10] distinction between institutional and academic transcripts of police interrogations and on research showing that interrogation practices can alter perceptions of voluntariness, deception, and evidentiary value [11], [12], [13]. It also resonates with Indonesian debates on exclusionary rules, coercive evidence, and suspect examination under due-process principles [14], [15], [16]. The implication is methodological as much as legal: evaluating confession reliability requires attention not only to formal rights but also to the pragmatic pathway through which questioning becomes record, record becomes evidence, and evidence becomes judicially credible narrative.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Police questioning under authority

Police questioning under authority is best understood as an institutional speech event rather than a neutral mechanism for obtaining information. In forensic pragmatics, interrogation questions do not merely request facts; they allocate epistemic rights, restrict permissible answers, and position suspects within an asymmetrical legal encounter. Studies on Indonesian investigative discourse show that question forms in BAP-related settings may carry implicature, accusation, confirmation pressure, and procedural direction [17], [7], [6], [8]. Comparative work in Nigeria and Iraq similarly treats police questioning as a pragmatic practice shaped by role, deixis, argumentation, and marked language choice [18], [19], [20], [21].

The literature identifies several indicators through which interrogative authority becomes visible. First, question design distinguishes open questions, yes/no questions, alternative questions, leading questions, and presuppositional questions, each offering different degrees of response space [6], [22]. Second, turn allocation and topic control reveal who may define relevance, interrupt, repair, or close an answer. Third, evidential framing—references to witnesses, documents, prior statements, or assumed facts—can transform questioning into a test of compliance rather than recall. Fourth, institutional register and record-oriented formulation make suspect speech accountable to legal rather than conversational norms [10], [23].

2.2. Coercive pragmatics

Coercive pragmatics refers to indirect linguistic pressure that may shape a suspect's response without necessarily appearing as overt force. This differs from narrow legal definitions of coercion that focus on physical violence, explicit threat, or formal rights violation. Recent confession research demonstrates that pressure may operate through perceived consequences, fear, fatigue, trauma, moral minimisation, deception, and vulnerability [2], [24], [1]. Psychological and legal studies also caution that apparently voluntary admissions may arise within environments where suspects experience reduced self-regulation, constrained choice, or distorted expectations of benefit [11], [25], [26].

The main indicators of coercive pragmatic potential include implied threat, implied promise, minimisation, maximisation, false-evidence ploys, appeals to honesty, and vulnerability-sensitive pressure.

Systematic and integrative reviews show that interrogation methods may influence both true and false confessions, especially when accusatorial techniques interact with suspect vulnerability [3], [27], [28]. Field-based research, however, complicates a simple opposition between coercive and humane practices: rapport-oriented, information-gathering, and humane strategies may be associated with cooperation and disclosure without the same risks of coercive implication [13], [29], [30].

2.3. Legal confession

Legal confession is not only a psychological decision or evidentiary object; it is also a textual product. Forensic linguistic scholarship shows that what later appears as confession evidence may be the outcome of reformulation, summarisation, transcription, and institutional editing. Komter [10] distinguishes police records from academic transcripts by showing how institutional documents reorganise spoken interaction into official narrative. Filipović [4] similarly demonstrates that admissions may emerge inadvertently through interactional framing rather than deliberate confession. Asian comparative studies further show how confession evidence may be produced as "indisputable" through procedural, textual, and institutional mechanisms [31], [32].

The relevant indicators of confession textualisation include reformulation, confirmation sequences, narrative smoothing, deletion of hesitation, conversion of dialogue into monologic statement, signature practices, and later judicial uptake. Indonesian legal scholarship strengthens this concern by examining criminal justice constraints, exclusionary rule debates, digital coercion, suspect examination, and law-enforcement morality [5], [15], [14], [33], [16]. This study therefore adopts a forensic-pragmatic position: confession reliability should be assessed through the full pathway from questioning to pragmatic pressure, from pragmatic pressure to record-making, and from record-making to legal credibility.

3. METHOD

This study uses interrogation-related discourse segments as its unit of analysis. A segment refers to any publicly accessible textual unit in which police questioning, suspect response, BAP formulation, confession, withdrawal, evidential pressure, or procedural safeguard is explicitly represented. This unit is appropriate because confession is not examined as an isolated legal fact but as an interactional and textual process. Corpus construction therefore combines primary materials, secondary scholarship, and legal-context documents published between 2021 and 2026. Primary data capture Indonesian interrogation and BAP-related discourse; secondary data support forensic-pragmatic interpretation; context data define procedural and institutional conditions.

Table 1. Dataset composition

Code	Data Type	Source	Period	Number	Characteristics
QUA-PRI	Primary	BAP/interrogation studies, public legal documents, confession-related case materials	2021–2026	12	Question-answer sequences, reported interrogation, confession, withdrawal, reformulation
QUA-SEC	Secondary	Journal articles on interrogation, false confession, coercion, forensic pragmatics	2021–2026	12	Analytical and theoretical scholarship
QUA-CTX	Context	KUHAP, police regulation, human-rights and criminal-justice reports	2021–2026	9	Legal safeguards, institutional rules, procedural context
QUA-TOT	Full corpus	Combined verified public sources	2021–2026	33	Metadata, text, citation, source link, coding fields

This study adopts a qualitative forensic-pragmatic design supported by structured coding. This design is selected because police interrogation involves both language-in-interaction and legal record-making. Rather than measuring coercion statistically, this study traces how authority, pressure, and confession-related meaning are organised through question form, implicature, turn control, evidential framing, and textualisation. This approach is aligned with forensic linguistic work on interrogation transcripts, institutional records, and confession reliability [10], [4], [1]. It also avoids causal overclaiming by treating coercion as pragmatic potential, not as a presumed factual condition in every document.

Information sources were selected from three domains. First, Indonesian forensic-linguistic and legal studies provide directly relevant materials on interrogation, BAP, question types, implicature, illocutionary acts, and investigative interviews [17], [7], [6], [8], [9]. Second, international confession research provides comparative concepts for coercive interviewing, false confession, minimisation, vulnerability, and suspect

decision-making [2], [3], [13], [27]. Third, Indonesian legal and policy sources contextualise procedural safeguards, exclusionary rules, police professionalism, and suspect examination [5], [14], [15], [16].

Data collection followed a transparent documentary protocol. Searches used Indonesian and English keywords, including "police interrogation," "BAP," "confession," "*penyidikan*," "*pengakuan tersangka*," "implicature," "question types," "coercive measures," "false confession," and "KUHAP." Each item was screened for relevance to interrogation, confession, questioning, suspect examination, or legal record-making. Metadata were recorded for title, author, year, source, document type, jurisdiction, URL or DOI, data category, and analytical relevance. Duplicate items were removed through title, author, year, and DOI comparison. Text excerpts were stored with contextual notes, not treated as invented field transcripts.

Data analysis proceeded in five stages. First, documents were classified as primary, secondary, or context data. Second, interrogation-related segments were identified and assigned unique document codes. Third, question form and authority markers were coded through Interrogative Authority Mapping. Fourth, implied pressure was assessed through Coercive Pragmatics Assessment, focusing on meaning generated by wording, sequence, and institutional asymmetry. Fifth, Confession Textualization Trace examined how spoken or reported responses became stable legal text. Figure 2 visualises this analytical sequence. This procedure allows this study to connect linguistic form, pragmatic pressure, and evidentiary transformation without claiming causality beyond available documentary evidence.

Table 2. Operational coding structure

Analytical Tool	Main Focus	Core Indicators	Corpus Field
Interrogative Authority Mapping	Authority in question design	Leading question, presupposition, turn control, evidential framing	authority_marker; question_type
Coercive Pragmatics Assessment	Indirect pressure	Implied threat, implied promise, minimisation, maximisation, vulnerability marker	coercive_pragmatic_indicator
Confession Textualization Trace	Conversion into legal record	Reformulation, confirmation, BAP wording, withdrawal, judicial uptake	textualization_marker

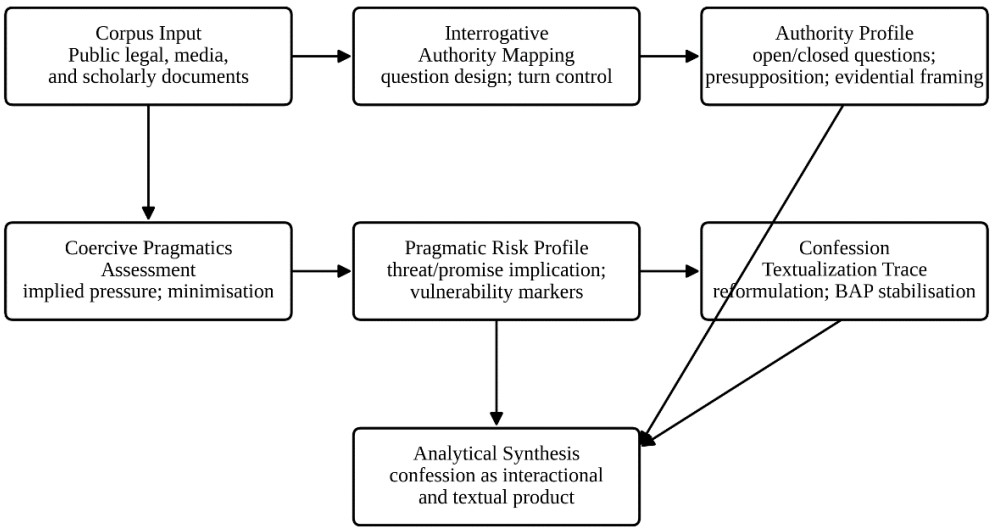


Figure 1. Operational matrix of analysis

4. RESULTS

4.1. Authority through question design and turn control

Authority appears most visibly through question design before it becomes visible as overt coercion or explicit procedural violation. The highest concentration appears in leading or confirmatory questions, followed by presuppositional WH-questions and forced-choice alternatives. This distribution matters because these forms do not merely organise information retrieval; they delimit how much narrative autonomy remains available to the questioned person. The corpus anchors repeatedly refer to "question types of police interrogation," "*pola interogatif penyidik*," "police investigative interviews," and BAP-related textual practices, indicating that interrogative form is not peripheral to evidentiary production. In this sense, authority is embedded not only in police status but also in grammar, sequencing, and response design.

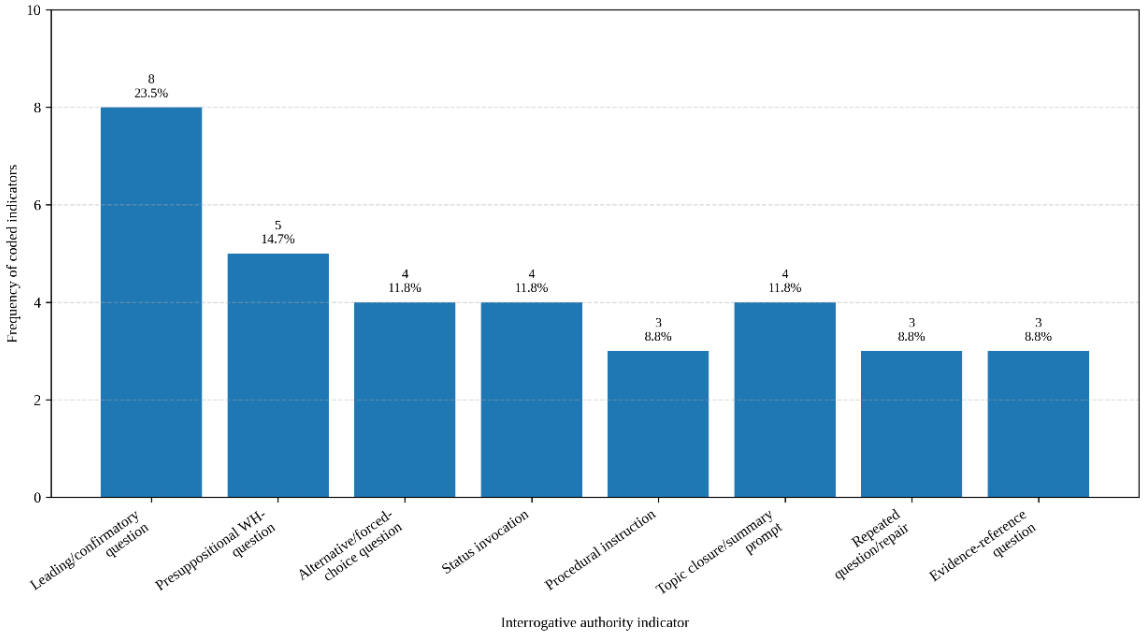


Figure 2. Distribution of interrogative authority indicators

The dominant pattern is the concentration of authority in response-narrowing devices. Leading or confirmatory questions account for 23.5% of coded indicators, while presuppositional WH-questions account for 14.7%. Together, these two indicators form more than one-third of the authority-related coding distribution. The table also shows that turn closure, status invocation, and alternative questioning recur across BAP, investigative interview, and confession-withdrawal materials. The quoted corpus anchors do not provide full interrogation transcripts in every case, but they identify the specific textual environments where authority is linguistically organised: "question types," "*pola interogatif*," "BAP transcript analysis," and "*teknik komunikasi penyidik*." The pattern therefore shows a repeated movement from questioning to institutional formulation.

This pattern supports a forensic-pragmatic reading of interrogation authority. Speech-act and pragmatic approaches explain why questions may function as accusations, confirmations, or demands even when grammatically formatted as requests for information. This is consistent with Ramadani et al. [6], Arifianti [7], Sholihatin et al. [8], and Ansori [17], who place question form at the centre of Indonesian investigative discourse. It also resonates with Komter's [10] account of institutional transcription, where spoken exchange is reorganised into legally useful text. This study therefore treats authority as interactionally distributed: it emerges through question type, turn control, evidential framing, and record-oriented reformulation rather than through formal police status alone.

Table 3. Distribution of interrogative authority indicators

Main Category	Subcategory	Pragmatic Indicator	Frequency	Percentage	Corpus Anchor / Short Excerpt
Question design	Leading/confirmatory question	Investigator wording narrows suspect response space toward confirmation or denial	8	23.5%	"question types of police interrogation"; "police investigative interviews"
Question design	Presuppositional WH-question	Question treats disputed fact, role, time, or event as already available for elaboration	5	14.7%	"*pola interogatif penyidik*"; "implicature and question types"
Question design	Alternative / forced-choice question	Suspect is offered limited response options rather than open narrative space	4	11.8%	"BAP transcript analysis"; "*pencabutan keterangan terdakwa*"
Authority marker	Status invocation	Interactional roles are marked through investigator, suspect, witness, or expert positioning	4	11.8%	"*saksi ahli bahasa*"; "police investigation interviews"
Authority marker	Procedural instruction	Questioning shifts from ordinary conversation into official record-making	3	8.8%	"*Berita Acara Pemeriksaan*/BAP"; "suspect statements before investigators"
Turn control	Topic closure / summary prompt	Investigator formulation closes an answer and prepares it for recordable uptake	4	11.8%	"*kapasitas pembuktian pencabutan keterangan*"; "BAP *penyidikan*"
Turn control	Repeated question / repair	Repetition or repair prompts clarification, revision, or stronger confirmation	3	8.8%	"investigator question forms"; "*teknik komunikasi penyidik*"
Evidential framing	Evidence-reference question	Question invokes proof, prior statement, witness account, or case file as response pressure	3	8.8%	"evidence from investigative records"; "forced confession"

4.2. Coercive pragmatic potentials in evidential and moral pressure

Pragmatic pressure is concentrated less in explicit coercive wording than in the interactional environment created by evidence, morality, and implied consequence. Evidential pressure forms the largest cluster, with prior statement or witness invocation accounting for 19.4%, followed by documentary or digital evidence framing at 12.9%. Moral appeals also occupy a significant position: honesty and cooperation account for 16.1%, while blame minimisation and normalisation together account for 16.2%. These patterns suggest that pressure is often distributed across apparently routine investigative moves. Rather than appearing only as threat, coercive potential emerges when suspects are invited to align with a case narrative already framed by institutional evidence and moral expectation.

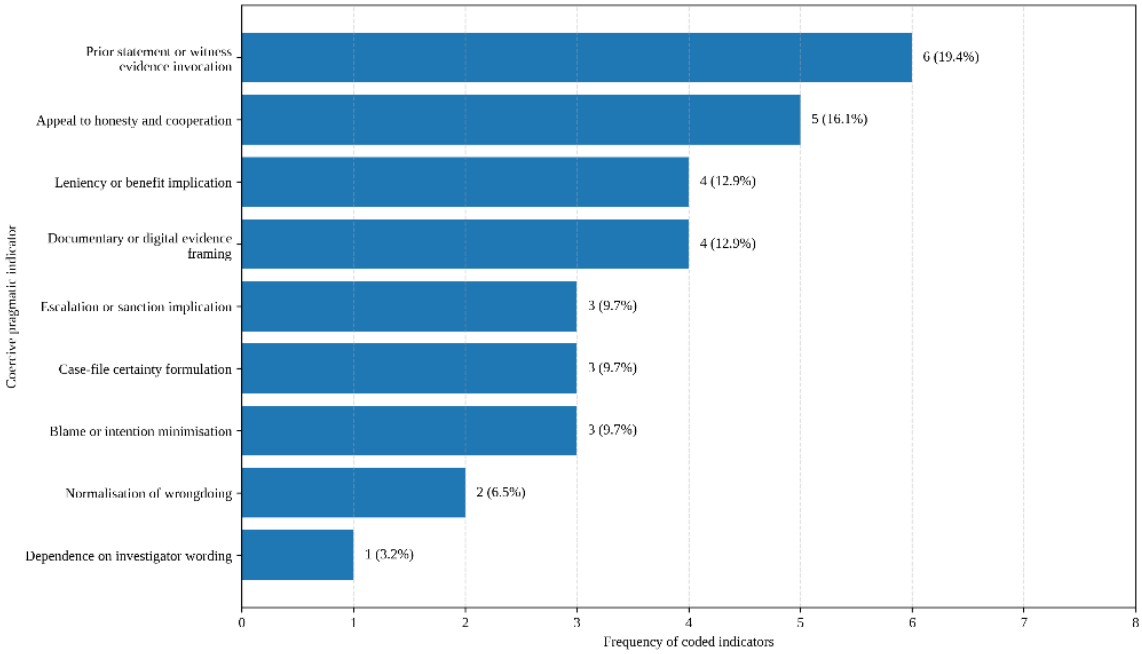


Figure 3. Coercive pragmatic potential across coded indicators

The dominant pattern shows a movement from evidential framing to moralised compliance. Corpus anchors such as “prior statement,” “witness account,” “BAP,” “digital coercion,” “cooperation and disclosure,” and “threats and promises” indicate that the relevant pressure does not depend on a single lexical item. It emerges through sequence: evidence is invoked, contradiction is made accountable, cooperation is moralised, and possible benefit or escalation remains inferable. The comparatively low frequency of vulnerability-sensitive pressure does not mean that vulnerability is irrelevant; it means that available public documents make this indicator less directly visible than evidential or moral strategies. The most observable pressure is therefore pragmatic and sequential, not necessarily explicit.

This distribution is consistent with confession research showing that suspects may experience pressure through perceived evidence, minimisation, expected consequences, and constrained decision-making rather than overt force alone. Cleary and Bull [2], Gudjonsson [1], Barnes et al. [11], and Catlin et al. [3] all caution that confession reliability depends on contextual and interactional conditions. Bettens et al. [13] further show why humane cooperation must be distinguished from pressure disguised as cooperation. For Indonesian legal discourse, Kasim [15], Pascawati et al. [14], and Yasir et al. [16] sharpen this concern by linking confession, admissibility, and suspect examination to due-process safeguards. This study therefore reads coercion as a pragmatic continuum, not a binary label.

Table 4. Coercive pragmatic potential across coded indicators

Main Category	Subcategory	Pragmatic Indicator	Frequency	Percentage	Corpus Anchor / Short Excerpt
Evidential pressure	Prior statement or witness evidence invocation	Questioning refers to another statement or witness account as if contradiction must be resolved by suspect alignment	6	19.4%	"prior statement"; "witness account"; "question types of police interrogation"
Evidential pressure	Documentary or digital evidence framing	Investigator discourse invokes documents, devices, records, or case materials as pressure-bearing proof	4	12.9%	"BAP"; "digital coercion"; "admissibility of evidence"
Evidential pressure	Case-file certainty formulation	Case narrative is framed as already institutionally established before suspect response is completed	3	9.7%	"investigative records"; "police investigation interviews"
Moral minimisation	Appeal to honesty and cooperation	Suspect is pragmatically positioned as morally obliged to confirm, clarify, or cooperate	5	16.1%	"just a normal conversation"; "cooperation and disclosure"
Moral minimisation	Blame or intention minimisation	Conduct is linguistically softened so that admission appears less threatening or more acceptable	3	9.7%	"moral minimization"; "false confessions"
Moral minimisation	Normalisation of wrongdoing	Wrongdoing is framed as understandable, ordinary, or situationally explainable	2	6.5%	"contextual factors"; "suspect disclosure"
Implied consequence	Leniency or benefit implication	Cooperation is linked indirectly to possible advantage without explicit promise	4	12.9%	"threats and promises"; "perceptions of coercion and deception"
Implied consequence	Escalation or sanction implication	Non-cooperation is indirectly associated with worsening legal or procedural consequences	3	9.7%	"coercive measures"; "suspect investigation"
Vulnerability-sensitive pressure	Dependence on investigator wording	Suspect response appears dependent on institutional formulation rather than independent narrative control	1	3.2%	"legal translation"; "procedural inequality"

4.3. From interrogation speech to legal confession text

Confession becomes legally durable when interactional speech is reorganised into a stable textual object. The largest indicator is BAP monologic rendering, accounting for 17.6% of coded textualization markers, followed by confirmatory restatement at 14.7%. These two indicators show that confession-related meaning is not confined to what a suspect says at one moment; it is also shaped by how an answer is restated, arranged, confirmed, and placed into a record. Corpus anchors such as "BAP transcript analysis," "suspect statements before investigators," "signed statement," and "criminal verdicts" indicate a pathway from interrogation exchange to documentary evidence. The main issue is therefore not only voluntariness, but also textual durability.

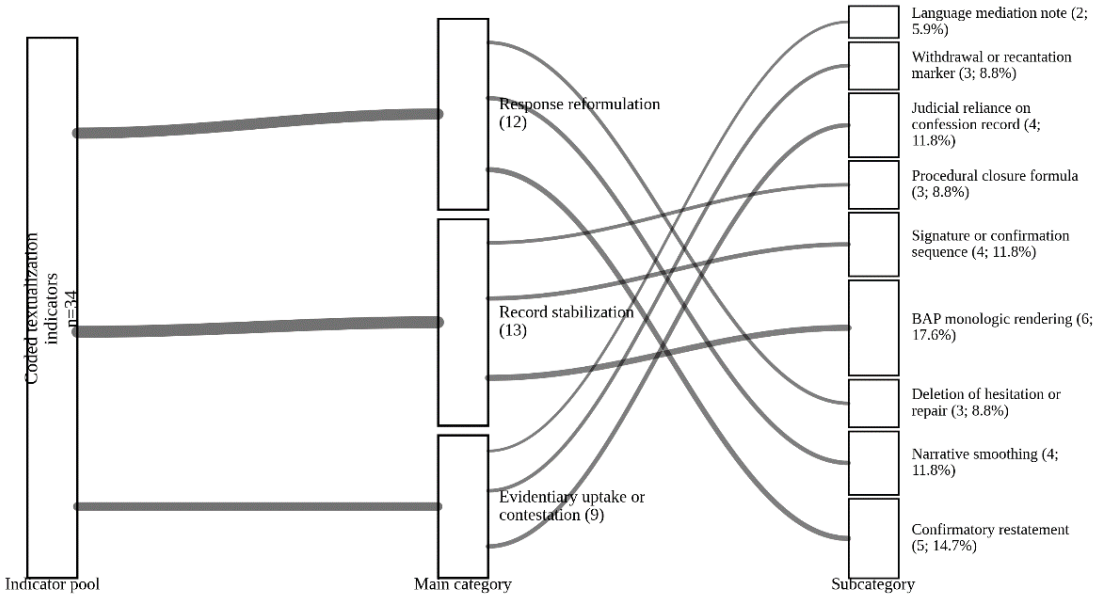


Figure 4. Confession textualization pathway

Figure 5. Confession textualization indicators

The dominant pattern is record stabilization. When BAP monologic rendering, signature or confirmation sequence, and procedural closure formula are combined, they represent 38.2% of all coded indicators. Response reformulation follows closely at 35.3%, showing that legal confession is shaped before and during recording. Indicators such as "deletion of hesitation or repair" and "narrative smoothing" are especially important because written legal records may reduce the visible traces of uncertainty, interruption, or negotiated meaning. The smaller but significant presence of withdrawal, recantation, and language mediation markers shows that confession text may later become contestable, particularly when suspects dispute wording, meaning, or procedural fairness.

This pattern strengthens a central forensic-linguistic claim: confession evidence should be evaluated as a chain of transformations rather than a single speech event. Komter [10] shows that institutional transcripts differ from analytic transcripts because official records select, reorganise, and stabilise interaction for institutional purposes. Filipović [4] similarly warns that admissions may emerge inadvertently through pragmatic framing, while Li [31] demonstrates how confession evidence can become institutionally "indisputable" through textual and procedural mechanisms. Indonesian scholarship on BAP, criminal verdicts, exclusionary rules, and digital coercion further supports this concern [23], [15], [14]. This study therefore treats confession as a mediated legal text produced through questioning, reformulation, confirmation, and uptake.

Table 5. Confession textualization indicators

Main Category	Subcategory	Textualization Indicator	Frequency	Percentage	Corpus Anchor / Short Excerpt
Response reformulation	Confirmatory restatement	Investigator or record form restates suspect response as clearer confirmation	5	14.7%	"BAP transcript analysis"; "question types of police interrogation"; "police investigation interviews"
Response reformulation	Narrative smoothing	Fragmented or dialogic responses are reorganised into coherent case narrative	4	11.8%	"investigative records"; "forensic linguistic evidence"; "criminal verdicts"
Response reformulation	Deletion of hesitation or repair	Hesitation, correction, uncertainty, or repair becomes less visible in written form	3	8.8%	"institutional transcripts"; "academic transcripts"; "BAP wording"
Record stabilization	BAP monologic rendering	Question-answer exchange appears as a stable first-person or official narrative	6	17.6%	"*Berita Acara Pemeriksaan*"; "suspect statements before investigators"
Record stabilization	Signature or confirmation sequence	Written account is made procedurally complete through confirmation or signature	4	11.8%	"signed statement"; "confirmation"; "*pencabutan keterangan*"
Record stabilization	Procedural closure formula	Examination is closed through formulaic legal wording that marks statement as complete	3	8.8%	"examination record"; "procedural safeguard"; "*penyidikan tindak pidana*"
Evidentiary uptake or contestation	Judicial reliance on confession record	Confession-related text becomes available for court reasoning or evidentiary assessment	4	11.8%	"forensic linguistic evidence in Indonesian courtrooms"; "criminal verdicts"
Evidentiary uptake or contestation	Withdrawal or recantation marker	Later challenge, withdrawal, or contestation reveals instability of recorded confession	3	8.8%	"*pencabutan keterangan terdakwa*"; "forced confessions"; "admissibility of evidence"
Evidentiary uptake or contestation	Language mediation note	Interpreter, translation, or linguistic mediation affects how statement is recorded or understood	2	5.9%	"legal translation"; "language rights"; "procedural inequality"

5. DISCUSSION

The prominence of leading, confirmatory, and presuppositional questioning indicates that authority in Indonesian police interrogation operates through linguistic architecture before it appears as overt command. Its implication is functional and dysfunctional at once. Functionally, structured questions may help investigators organise chronology, clarify inconsistencies, and transform fragmented accounts into legally usable information. Dysfunctionally, the same forms may narrow suspects' narrative agency by making denial, uncertainty, or alternative explanation interactionally costly. This finding extends Ramadani et al. [6], Arifianti [7], Sholihatin et al. [8], and Ansori [17], who show that Indonesian investigative discourse is shaped by question type, implicature, and institutional role. It also supports broader forensic-pragmatic work showing that questions may perform accusation, confirmation, or evidential positioning rather than neutral inquiry [4], [10]. The implication is that voluntariness cannot be assessed only by asking whether force occurred; it must also examine whether question design preserved meaningful response space.

The underlying structure behind this pattern is procedural asymmetry. Investigators control topic selection, sequencing, evidential relevance, and record orientation, while suspects must answer within institutional expectations they rarely define. This does not establish a causal claim that leading questions automatically produce confession, but it shows a structural correlation between institutional authority and narrowed participation. Akinrinlola and Lamidi [19], Adegbite and May [18], and Olanrewaju et al. [21] similarly show that police-suspect discourse in comparative settings is organised through role hierarchy, argumentation, and socially marked language strategies. Indonesian materials intensify this problem because BAP practices can make spoken answers legally durable. A possible counterpoint comes from investigative-interview literature, where structured questioning may support clarity and reduce ambiguity when conducted ethically [30], [29]. This study therefore interprets authority not as inherently abusive but as a linguistic condition requiring procedural restraint.

The pattern of evidential framing, moral appeal, and implied consequence suggests that coercive potential often works through pragmatic accumulation rather than explicit intimidation. Its practical implication is significant: an interrogation may appear conversational, cooperative, or morally corrective while still generating pressure that affects how a suspect evaluates available choices. Appeals to honesty and cooperation may support disclosure when embedded in humane interviewing, as Bettens et al. [13] argue, but they may become dysfunctional when combined with case-file certainty, evidential pressure, or implied advantage. Barnes et al. [11] and Holt and Palmer [12] show that perceptions of coercion and confession quality are shaped by how deception, pressure, and confession evidence are framed. This finding therefore complicates a narrow legal view of coercion. It suggests that due process should attend not only to prohibited force but also to subtle pragmatic environments where consent, cooperation, and admission become difficult to distinguish.

The reason this pressure becomes effective lies in how interrogation reorganises uncertainty into accountability. Once evidence is invoked, suspects are not simply invited to remember; they are required to account for discrepancy between their account and an institutionally preferred narrative. Cleary and Bull [2] and Gudjonsson [1] show that confession decisions are shaped by perceived consequences, vulnerability, and situational pressure. Catlin et al. [3], Farrugia [27], and Welner et al. [28] further demonstrate that interrogation methods can affect both true and false confession risks, especially when psychological pressure intersects with suspect vulnerability. However, literature on humane interviewing cautions against treating all pressure-reducing cooperation as coercive. This tension matters for Indonesia: Kasim [15], Pascawati et al. [14], and Yasir et al. [16] foreground admissibility, coercive evidence, and suspect examination reform. Thus, coercion should be analysed as a continuum of pragmatic constraint rather than a binary legal label.

The textualization pattern shows that confession becomes powerful because it survives beyond the interrogation room as a written, signed, and procedurally stabilised object. This has a major evidentiary implication. Once a suspect's fragmented, hesitant, or interactionally shaped response becomes BAP text, it may acquire clarity and coherence that did not exist in spoken exchange. This supports Komter's [10] argument that institutional transcripts differ from analytic transcripts because official documents reorganise speech for institutional use. It also extends Setiyawan's [23] concern with forensic linguistic evidence in Indonesian courtrooms: language does not merely report legal reality but helps produce evidentiary credibility. Yet this finding does not imply that all BAP records distort speech. Rather, it shows that record-making is an interpretive act. The legal risk lies in treating written confession as transparent evidence without examining reformulation, confirmation sequence, hesitation loss, language mediation, or later contestation.

The deeper structure behind confession textualization is the institutional need to convert interaction into durable legal form. Criminal procedure requires records, signatures, and evidentiary continuity; without textual stabilization, investigation cannot move efficiently into prosecution and adjudication. Yet this

administrative necessity creates epistemic compression: turn-taking, repair, uncertainty, and pragmatic pressure may be reduced into a coherent statement attributed to the suspect. Li [31] and Mou [32] show, in comparative Asian contexts, how confession evidence may become institutionally difficult to dispute once produced through procedural and textual mechanisms. Indonesian debates on exclusionary rules and digital coercion echo this concern because admissibility depends not only on evidence type but also on production conditions [15], [14]. This study therefore positions confession reliability as a chain-of-production problem. What matters is not only what was said, but how it was elicited, reformulated, authorised, and later believed.

6. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that legal confession in Indonesian police interrogation is best understood as an interactional and textual product rather than a transparent record of guilt. Its most important lesson is that authority operates through question design, pragmatic pressure, and record-making practices before confession becomes evidentiary text. By linking interrogative authority, coercive pragmatic potential, and confession textualization, this study refreshes forensic-linguistic debate on Indonesian criminal procedure and moves beyond a narrow focus on formal voluntariness. Its contribution lies in offering an integrated analytical model that connects questions, pressure, BAP formulation, and courtroom credibility as one evidentiary chain.

This study is limited by its reliance on publicly accessible documentary materials, which restricts access to complete interrogation recordings, non-verbal behaviour, procedural timing, legal assistance practices, and suspect perspectives during questioning. Because available data are textual and documentary, this study cannot make causal claims about whether particular question forms directly produced confession. Future research should incorporate authorised interrogation recordings, comparative BAP-transcript analysis, interviews with legal practitioners, and vulnerability-sensitive case comparisons involving children, linguistic minorities, and legally unrepresented suspects. Further inquiry should also examine how judges evaluate contested confession records and whether exclusionary-rule reform can better address pragmatic coercion.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

Ivan Riyadi: conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, writing – original draft, writing – review and editing.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Author states no conflict of interest.

AI USE DECLARATION

The author used artificial intelligence tools to assist with the generation of illustrative figures and with the formatting and layout of this manuscript. AI was not used to generate the substantive content, conceptualization, data, analysis, or conclusions of the research, all of which remain the sole responsibility of the author.

INFORMED CONSENT

Not applicable – this study did not involve direct human participants. Data consisted solely of publicly accessible interrogation-related materials, legal-context documents, and secondary scholarship.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

This research did not involve human or animal subjects; it analyzed publicly accessible interrogation-related materials, legal-context documents, and secondary scholarship, and therefore no institutional review board approval was required. Where research does involve human subjects, the author affirms that such research would be conducted in full compliance with all relevant national regulations and institutional policies, in accordance with the tenets of the Declaration of Helsinki, and would be approved by the author's institutional review board or equivalent committee.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The corpus of publicly accessible interrogation-related materials, legal-context documents, and scholarly materials analyzed in this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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