

The Influence of Slang on the Decline of Language Literacy in the Young Generation of Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Background. The increasing use of slang among Indonesian youth has raised concerns about its impact on language literacy and formal communication skills.

Purpose. To examine the influence of slang on language literacy decline among Indonesian youth and its implications for formal language skills, social identity, and intergenerational relations.

Method. A mixed-method study was conducted in Jakarta, Surabaya, and Medan, employing in-depth interviews, surveys, and social media content analysis. Data were collected from 150 respondents to assess slang usage patterns and their impact on formal language capabilities.

Results. The study revealed that 80% of frequent slang users struggled with formal language in academic settings, while 65% reported diminished essay-writing abilities. Additionally, 70% identified slang as integral to their social identity, though 60% experienced communication difficulties with older generations. Social media platforms significantly influenced slang adoption, with 90% of respondents regularly using slang on Instagram and TikTok.

Conclusion. The findings demonstrate a significant correlation between frequent slang usage and declining formal language literacy among Indonesian youth. This trend affects academic performance and intergenerational communication, highlighting the need for balanced language education strategies that preserve formal literacy while acknowledging youth linguistic identity.

KEYWORDS

Formal Language Skills, Slang, Language Literacy, Social Media, Young Generation,

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INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly developing digital era, slang has become an integral part of everyday communication, especially among the younger generation. The use of slang is not only limited to oral communication but has also spread to social media, online platforms, and instant messaging applications. Slang is often considered a form of expression of social and cultural identity by the younger generation (Azhari, 2020). However, there are concerns that excessive use of slang can have a negative impact on formal language literacy skills, which are needed in academic and professional contexts (Rosita, 2022). Language is one of the main tools used by humans to communicate and acquire knowledge.



Language literacy, especially literacy in formal language, plays an important role in the development of cognitive and academic skills. Along with the widespread use of slang, there are indications that the ability of the younger generation in formal language is declining. Previous research by Hamidah (2020) showed that excessive exposure to non-formal language, such as slang, can lead to a decline in grammar and writing skills in standard language. This impact becomes more evident in academic contexts where formal language is essential for scientific writing and professional communication (Prabowo, 2021).

However, the use of slang also has positive aspects, such as creating solidarity and collective identity among certain social groups (Rakhmawati, 2022). However, it is important to pay attention to the balance between the use of informal language in social interactions and the need for formal language literacy. This study aims to examine in more depth the influence of slang on the decline in language literacy among the younger generation of Indonesia, with a focus on how the frequency of slang use on social media affects formal language skills in academic and professional contexts.

In the realm of sociolinguistic and ecolinguistic research, slang is seen as a social phenomenon that reflects the dynamics of language change in society. According to ecolinguistic theory, language is influenced by the social and cultural environment in which it develops (Santosa, 2019). Therefore, the increase in the use of slang among the younger generation can be seen as a reflection of broader social change. However, this study also underlines the need for further research into how this trend impacts formal literacy skills, which are critical in academic and professional workplace contexts (Azhari, 2020).

This study is very relevant in the current context, considering the development of technology and social media that accelerate the spread of slang. This study makes an important contribution by analyzing how the trend of using slang affects formal language skills, which has not been studied in depth. Based on previous research, this study fills the gap in the literature by providing empirical insight into the relationship between slang and formal literacy in Indonesia, which has not been widely discussed by other researchers.

This study uses a mixed approach to explore this issue, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive picture of the influence of slang on the decline in language literacy. In-depth interviews, surveys, and social media content analysis are used to identify the frequency of slang use and its impact on formal language literacy. The hypothesis tested in this study is that the higher the frequency of slang use on social media, the greater the negative impact on the formal literacy skills of the younger generation.

Language is one of the most important elements in human life. As a means of communication, language not only functions as a means to convey information, but also reflects the identity and culture of the language users. In Indonesia, the phenomenon of the use of slang is increasing, especially among the younger generation. This slang often appears in various social media and digital platforms, which affects the way people communicate daily. This phenomenon has raised concerns about how the use of slang affects the quality of formal language and social interactions of the younger generation. Slang in Indonesia has developed rapidly in recent decades. New terms continue to emerge, mostly from the influence of social media and communication technology. This slang is often considered a symbol of modernity and group identity by the younger generation. However, on the other hand, excessive use of slang can result in the degradation of formal language skills, especially good and correct Indonesian. Research shows that slang affects formal language skills, especially among students. In Indonesia, the emergence of slang among the younger generation has become an increasingly prominent phenomenon, especially along with the development of technology and social media. This slang is often considered more relevant and

"cool" among teenagers, but it also raises concerns about its impact on their ability to use formal language. Therefore, it is important to further research the impact of slang use on the linguistic and social development of the younger generation in Indonesia.

Previous studies have examined the use of slang as an expression of social identity and a symbol of resistance to formal language authority (Pratiwi & Wulandari, 2021). However, there are still limitations in exploring how the intensity of slang use affects the formal language skills of the younger generation, especially in academic and professional contexts. For example, Dwi et al.'s (2020) study discusses more of the sociolinguistic aspects of slang, but does not examine in depth how this affects the ability to communicate formally. This study aims to fill this gap by focusing more on the long-term impact of slang on formal language competence. There are three main relevances of this study. First, slang in the digital era has become a phenomenon that continues to grow and plays a role in shaping the identity of the younger generation. Second, social media as the main platform for spreading slang allows slang to develop rapidly and massively, expanding its scope to various regions and social circles (Rahmat & Susilo, 2022). Third, the intense use of slang has the potential to reduce formal language skills, especially in academic and professional situations, which can have a negative impact on the educational and career development of the younger generation (Lubis, 2021). Therefore, this study is important to provide recommendations regarding the balance between the use of slang and formal language. The novelties of this study lie in the approach that combines ecolinguistic analysis with sociolinguistics to identify the interaction between slang use and changes in formal language skills (Wibisono & Kartika, 2023). This study will also examine the role of social media more specifically in accelerating the spread of slang, as well as its impact on social norms and cross-generational interactions. Thus, the results of this study are expected to provide new insights into the broad impact of slang on the social and linguistic development of the younger generation in Indonesia, as well as practical recommendations for educators and policy makers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a mixed methods approach that combines qualitative and quantitative methods to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the impact of slang use among the younger generation of Indonesia. Qualitative methods will be used to explore the views, perceptions, and subjective experiences of the younger generation regarding slang, while quantitative methods will be used to measure the frequency and context of slang use and its impact on formal language skills (Savitri & Dewi, 2020). This approach is in line with previous research that suggests the use of mixed methods to understand linguistic phenomena in more depth (Suhardi, 2023).

The data collection steps are carried out in several stages. First, an online survey of the behavior of the younger generation in communicating in various major cities in Indonesia, including Jakarta, Padang, and Medan. A questionnaire will be designed to collect information on the frequency of slang use, the context in which it is used, and their perceptions of the influence of slang on formal language skills. In addition, in-depth interviews will be conducted with selected respondents to explore further their personal experiences regarding the use of slang. Similar studies have shown the effectiveness of surveys and interviews in collecting rich qualitative data (Pramudito & Kuncoro, 2022).

After the data is collected, the next step is data analysis. Quantitative data obtained from the survey will be analyzed using statistics to identify patterns and trends in slang use among respondents. This analysis will include descriptive statistics as well as regression analysis to evaluate the relationship between slang use and formal language skills. On the other hand, Wahyuni

& Ardiansyah (2021) qualitative data from interviews will be analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, where researchers will identify themes and patterns that emerge from interview transcripts. This mixed method of analysis provides a more holistic understanding of the slang phenomenon and its impacts.

The population in this study were young Indonesians aged 15 to 24 years who live in big cities such as Jakarta, Surabaya, and Medan. These three cities were chosen because they have high levels of social media use and represent a diverse urban population (Prabowo, 2021). The study involved 150 respondents who were selected using a purposive sampling technique. The selection of this sample was based on the criteria that respondents must actively use social media and slang in everyday communication, both verbally and in writing (Rosita, 2022). Samples were taken from high school and college students to see a comparison of slang use at various levels of education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this study, data analysis was conducted using a mixed approach that integrates quantitative and qualitative analysis. Quantitative data obtained from online surveys have been processed using statistical software to produce descriptive statistics that provide an overview of the behavior of slang use among the younger generation. The following is a table regarding the use of slang by the younger generation in communicating in several major cities in Indonesia, including Jakarta, Padang, and Medan:

City	Popular Slang Terms	Context Use	Frequency Daily Use	Impact towards Formal Language
Jakarta	<i>Goks</i> , <i>Mantul</i> (Really Awesome), <i>Baper</i>	Social media, everyday conversation	80%	Decline in formal writing skills among students
Field	<i>Come on</i> , <i>come on</i> , <i>Sabi</i> (You can)	Environment socializing , online media	70%	The use of regional vocabulary is decreasing in formal communication
Medan	<i>Cok</i> , <i>Cemana</i> , <i>Kelen</i> (You guys)	Informal communication, everyday conversation	75%	The use of local and national slang has an impact on standard grammar.

Table 1. Use of Slang by the Younger Generation in Communication

Data on slang usage were collected through a survey distributed to 150 respondents in three major cities: Jakarta, Padang, and Medan. The questionnaire contained questions related to frequently used slang terms, contexts of use (such as social media, everyday conversations, and school environments), and the frequency of slang usage in a day. In addition to the survey, in-depth interviews were conducted with 30 selected respondents to gain a deeper understanding of the motivations behind slang usage and its impact on formal language skills.

The use of slang among the younger generation of Indonesia, especially Gen Alpha, is growing rapidly with the influence of global culture, technology, and social media (Kuraedah & Azaliah, 2020). This phenomenon not only influences the way of speaking, but also forms a new social identity. Examples of slang such as “Skibidi Toilet,” “Aura,” “Mewing,” “Sigma,” and various other language trends on platforms such as TikTok and YouTube show that young Indonesians are increasingly influenced by the rapidly changing global digital culture. However, the

emergence of this phenomenon also brings concerns that the younger generation is starting to lose their attachment to their national language and cultural identity.

The New Language Phenomenon and Its Influence on Alpha Gen Identity

Generation Alpha (Gen Alpha) is a group born in the digital era, where they are exposed to global content from an early age. Slang such as "Skibidi Toilet," a trend on TikTok, or terms such as "Sigma" inspired by a certain mindset, become part of their daily lives. This phenomenon has the potential to shape the behavior and mindset of the younger generation, as well as create a new language that is sometimes difficult for previous generations to understand.

This slang often contains not only words or phrases that deviate from standard language, but also contains new social and cultural meanings that come from a global context. Gen Alpha tends to adopt viral language trends on social media without paying attention to the origin or values contained therein, thus creating a distance between them and the national or local language. As a result, the national identity that is built through the Indonesian language is starting to be eroded by the influence of foreign languages and global slang that dominate their daily lives. The following is a table containing new vocabulary that is popular among Gen Alpha.

New Vocabulary	Origin	Meaning	Example Sentence
Skibidi Toilet	Social media (TikTok)	A viral trend involving dancing or comical actions in videos inspired by the song "Skibidi"	<i>"Hey, check out this funny Skibidi Toilet video!"</i>
Aura	Games or term in pop culture	Depicts a person's strong presence or energy, often associated with charisma or magnetism.	<i>"He has a positive aura that makes people comfortable."</i>
Mewing	Health trends (YouTube)	Placing technique tongue on the roof of the mouth mouth For to form more jaw Good	<i>"I 've done it try mewing for my jaw more formed ."</i>
Sigma	culture (Internet)	Refers to an independent personality type, not following the social flow, often associated with emotionally strong men.	<i>"He's the sigma type, always going his own way without caring about what other people think."</i>
Noob	Slang in the gaming world	Beginner who is not yet skilled at doing something, often used in the context of games	<i>" Don't angry , he's a noob, just playing this game ."</i>
Simp	culture (Internet)	A person who overly adores or sacrifices himself for someone who does not reciprocate his feelings	<i>"He's really friendly with that celebrity, always commenting on all her posts."</i>
Ghosting	English (slang)	The act of cutting off communication with someone without explanation, often in the context of a relationship.	<i>"I didn't expect him to ghost me after we were close for a month."</i>
Flexing	culture (Internet)	Showing off wealth, achievements, especially on social media	<i>" Look , he keeps flexing . with car luxurious ."</i>

Table 2. New Vocabulary Popular Among Gen Alpha

This table illustrates the phenomenon of the emergence of new vocabulary used by Gen Alpha, which is mostly influenced by internet culture, games, and social media. This vocabulary reflects the dynamic development of language in accordance with the lifestyle of the younger

generation who are very connected to the digital world. This table shows how Indonesian-English slang words are used in everyday life, reflecting the dynamic language changes among the younger generation, especially due to the influence of global culture and social media.

The study found that social media is the main platform for the spread of slang among the younger generation. In Jakarta, more than 80% of respondents said that they first became acquainted with slang terms from platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter. This finding is in line with global trends, where social media plays a significant role in the formation of slang (Utami, 2022). Although many slang terms are national in nature, such as *mantul* or *baper*, there are significant regional variations. In Medan, the use of local slang such as *cok* (friend) is still very dominant. This shows that although social media has popularized slang terms widely, local influences remain strong in some areas (Hutapea, 2021, & Budiassa, 2021). The study also found that excessive use of slang affects the ability of the younger generation to use formal Indonesian. In Jakarta, 65% of respondents admitted to having difficulty writing essays or formal reports because they were used to using slang. In Padang, the decline in the use of regional languages is also one of the impacts of the dominance of national slang in everyday conversation. Despite concerns about the degradation of formal language, the use of slang also has a positive influence in shaping the social identity of the younger generation. The use of slang allows the younger generation to feel "connected" to their social group, creating a sense of solidarity and togetherness. This finding shows how slang functions as a symbol of group identity (Suharto, 2023).

Challenges to Local Language and Culture

The ever-growing slang, with its massive absorption of foreign languages and internet trends, has caused a linguistic identity crisis for the younger generation. This challenge becomes apparent when the Indonesian language, which should be a unifying tool and national identity, is increasingly losing relevance among the younger generation. Terms such as "Mewing" (the practice of jaw formation through tongue positioning techniques) and "Sigma" (a characteristic of an independent man who does not follow social trends) replace local or national vocabulary that is more relevant to the Indonesian cultural context.

In addition, regional languages are increasingly marginalized, because young people prefer to use international slang rather than traditional vocabulary that has been passed down from generation to generation. This phenomenon makes the richness of local cultures and languages, such as Javanese, Sundanese, Minang, and others, increasingly rarely used and are feared to become extinct in the future.

Impact on Education and Social Interaction

In the context of education, excessive use of slang can have a negative impact on literacy skills and understanding of formal language. Young people who are accustomed to communicating with slang or terms derived from popular culture may have difficulty when having to express themselves in formal language at school or work. In addition, the use of slang can also hinder the development of critical thinking skills, because the language often does not reflect deep or structured meaning.

Social interactions are also affected, especially in intergenerational relationships. Parents or teachers who do not understand the slang used by young people may feel alienated and have difficulty communicating. This creates a wider communication gap between the younger generation and the older generation.

Government and Community Efforts to Overcome the Language Identity Crisis

To face this challenge, the Indonesian government must take active steps in maintaining the identity of the national language amidst the rapid flow of global languages. There are several strategic that can taken , among others:

Strengthening Indonesian Language and Literature Education in Schools : Curriculum Indonesian language must reinforced For emphasize importance use good and correct Indonesian. In addition, education Language the area must also integrated in a way more systematically so that the next generation young still know and appreciate inheritance culture local.

National Campaign for Preserving National and Regional Languages: The government , through the Ministry of Education and Culture , can stage campaign involving social media For interesting interest generation young to use good Indonesian . By utilizing platforms that are often used by young people such as TikTok and Instagram, this campaign can display creative content that promotes the beauty of Indonesian and local languages.

Collaboration with Influencers and Content Creators: The government can collaborate with influencers and content creators who have great influence among Gen Alpha to promote Indonesian and national cultural values through creative content. They can create videos, memes, or trends that popularize the use of Indonesian or regional languages in a way that is interesting and relevant to the lives of young people.

Content Regulation on Social Media: While freedom of speech is maintained, social media platforms must be invited to work together to minimize content that is detrimental to the development of Indonesian language and culture. Regulation of content that has the potential to damage national values needs to be improved without limiting creativity.

The Role of Family and Society

In addition to the government, families and communities have an important role in maintaining language identity amidst the rampant use of slang. Parents and the social environment must be active in providing an understanding of the importance of using good Indonesian in the right situations, without having to eliminate flexibility in the use of reasonable slang. The encouragement to continue using regional languages in everyday life must also be strengthened so that the richness of local culture is maintained.

Solutions for the Young Generation: Language as National Identity

The main solution for the younger generation is to build awareness that language is not only a means of communication, but also an identity that reflects the values and culture of a nation. By instilling this awareness, the younger generation is expected to be able to adapt to the global language without abandoning the Indonesian language as a proud identity. The use of slang does not need to be eliminated, but it needs to be balanced with the use of formal and local languages to remain relevant in an increasingly global society.

In addition, regression analysis was used to evaluate the relationship between the frequency of slang use and formal language skills. The findings showed that 78% of respondents admitted to using slang in everyday conversation, and 62% of them felt that the use of slang did not affect their ability to speak formally. However, the regression results showed a negative relationship between the use of slang and Indonesian language test scores, with a p-value <0.05, indicating that the higher the frequency of slang use, the lower the respondents' formal language skills (Pramudito & Kuncoro, 2022).

Qualitative analysis was conducted on the interview data, where interview transcripts were processed to identify key themes that emerged. Qualitative findings indicate that many respondents felt that slang provided identity and a sense of togetherness among peers. However, there was also

concern that excessive use of slang could make it difficult for them to communicate with older people or in formal contexts. One respondent said, "When I talk to my friends, I often use slang. But, when I'm at school, I feel like I need to try harder to speak correctly" (Suhardi, 2023). These findings suggest that although slang has a social function, its negative impact on formal language skills cannot be ignored. This table shows respondents from three major cities in Indonesia, namely Jakarta, Padang, and Medan and the frequency of slang use in everyday communication.

City	Amount Respondents	Percentage Slang Language Users	Frequency Use	Formal Language Ability (Average Test Score)
Jakarta	50	80%	Every day	72
Field	50	70%	3-4 times a week	78
Medan	50	75%	Every day	75

Table 3. Frequency Of Slang Use In Everyday Communication

From the table above, it can be seen that the city of Jakarta has the highest percentage of slang users, and the frequency of use is also more frequent compared to other cities. However, the average formal language test score in Jakarta is the lowest, indicating a significant negative impact of slang use. This is in line with findings showing that slang can interfere with formal language skills and weaken more formal communication (Wahyuni & Ardiansyah, 2021).

Based on research results obtained from 150 respondents regarding the influence of the use of slang on language literacy in the young generation of Indonesia:

Aspect Study	Percentage Respondents (%)
Difficulty Using Formal Language in Academics	80%
The Influence of Slang on Essay Writing and Formal Assignments	65%
Slang as Part of Social Identity	70%
Communication Gap with the Older Generation	60%
Use of Slang on Social Media	90%

Table 4. Aspects that Influence the Use of Slang on the Language Literacy of the Young Generation of Indonesia

This table illustrates the impact of slang on various aspects of respondents' formal language skills and social interactions. Overall, the results of this study provide important insights into the impact of slang use on the younger generation in Indonesia. Although slang plays a role in strengthening social ties among peers, its potential negative impact on formal language skills and communication in academic and professional environments is a concern that needs to be addressed seriously. This study provides a basis for recommendations for educational policies and practices to create a balance between the use of slang and the preservation of good and correct formal language (Setiawan, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The increasingly dominant slang among Indonesia's younger generation poses a major challenge to the national linguistic and cultural identity. To overcome this phenomenon, synergistic steps are needed from the government, society, and families. Strong language education, creative campaigns, and regulation of social media content can be a solution so that Indonesia's younger generation remains proud to use Indonesian and regional languages, while still being able to enjoy the flexibility of slang in everyday life. The results of a study of 150 respondents showed that 80% of those who frequently use slang in everyday communication have difficulty using formal language in academic settings. In addition, 65% of respondents admitted that the use of slang worsens their ability to write essays and formal assignments. The study also found that 70% of respondents felt that slang was part of their social identity, but this caused a communication gap with the older generation, where 60% of respondents admitted that they often had difficulty communicating effectively with parents or teachers in formal language. Social media has been shown to play a major role in accelerating the spread of slang, with 90% of respondents stating that they frequently use slang on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok.

The use of slang among the younger generation of Indonesia, especially Gen Alpha, has had a significant impact on the way they communicate and shape their identity. Slang, which is increasingly influenced by global pop culture and social media, has introduced new vocabulary that not only reflects the creativity of the younger generation, but also causes a shift from formal language and regional languages that are increasingly marginalized. Phenomena such as "Skibidi Toilet," "Mewing," "Sigma," and other terms show that Gen Alpha tends to create new languages that spread quickly through digital platforms. However, although this reflects technological advances and openness to global influences, excessive use of slang can trigger an identity crisis, where the attachment to the Indonesian language as a symbol of national unity begins to erode. To overcome this challenge, it is important for the government, educators, and families to collaborate in maintaining a balance between the use of slang and good and correct Indonesian language education. Language awareness campaigns, strengthening the language education curriculum, and utilizing social media to promote national and local languages are some of the steps that can be taken to ensure that the younger generation remains connected to their national identity without having to lose creativity in language.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Author 1: Conceptualization; Formal analysis; Methodology; Writing - original draft.

Author 2: Validation; Writing - review & editing; Data curation; Investigation.

Author 3: Validation; Writing - review & editing; Data curation; Investigation.

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