

THE INFLUENCE OF SLANG LANGUAGE ON SOCIAL MEDIA ON COLLEGE STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF FORMAL LANGUAGE

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Abstrak Perkembangan teknologi informasi dan komunikasi, khususnya media sosial, telah memengaruhi pola interaksi dan penggunaan bahasa siswa. Salah satu fenomena yang muncul adalah tingginya penggunaan bahasa gaul (slang) sebagai sarana ekspresi diri dan identitas kelompok. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh penggunaan bahasa gaul terhadap kemampuan berbahasa Indonesia formal di kalangan siswa, dengan fokus pada aspek kosakata, tata bahasa, dan pemilihan register formal. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif dengan desain survei deskriptif. Sampel terdiri dari 100 siswa aktif di Bangka. yang dipilih secara acak. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner, tes bahasa formal, dan wawancara. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan analisis deskriptif dan uji korelasi Pearson. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa 75% siswa menggunakan bahasa gaul sering atau sangat sering. Penggunaan yang berlebihan berpengaruh negatif terhadap pemahaman bahasa formal, terutama dalam pemilihan kosakata, struktur kalimat, dan penyesuaian register formal. Analisis korelasi menunjukkan hubungan negatif signifikan antara intensitas penggunaan bahasa gaul dan kemampuan berbahasa formal ($r = -0,65$, $p < 0,05$). Siswa yang menggunakan bahasa gaul secara moderat cenderung mampu menyesuaikan komunikasi formal lebih baik. Kesimpulannya, meskipun bahasa gaul berfungsi sebagai sarana ekspresi dan identitas kelompok, penggunaannya harus seimbang agar kemampuan berbahasa formal tetap terjaga. Temuan ini menekankan pentingnya kontrol penggunaan bahasa informal untuk mendukung komunikasi yang efektif dalam konteks akademik dan profesional.

Kata kunci: bahasa gaul, bahasa Indonesia formal, siswa, media sosial, korelasi

Abstract - The development of information and communication technology, particularly social media, has influenced interaction patterns and language use among university students. One emerging phenomenon is the high use of slang as a means of self-expression and group identity. This study aims to analyze the influence of slang use on students' formal Indonesian language proficiency, focusing on vocabulary, grammar, and the selection of formal registers. This research employs a quantitative approach with a descriptive survey design. The sample consists of 100 active students from South Bangka selected randomly. Data were collected through questionnaires, formal language tests, and interviews. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive analysis and Pearson correlation. The results indicate that 75% of students use slang often or very often. Excessive use negatively affects formal language comprehension, particularly in vocabulary choice, sentence structure, and formal register adjustment. Pearson correlation analysis shows a significant negative relationship between the intensity of slang use and formal language proficiency ($r = -0.65$, $p < 0.05$). Students who use slang moderately are better able to adjust to formal communication. In conclusion, although slang functions as a means of expression and group identity, its use must be balanced to maintain formal language proficiency. These findings highlight the importance of controlling informal language use to support effective communication in academic and professional contexts.

Keywords: slang, formal Indonesian language, social media, correlation

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media can be understood as a set of communication and collaboration tools that enable various types of interactions previously difficult for the general public to access (Maru'ao, 2020); (Dewi, 2025). As a means of communication and collaboration, social media serves as a platform for users to share information across different fields. In addition,

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social media can be utilized to build professional networks, as well as for educational and entertainment purposes. These platforms provide a space for people to engage in various forms of communication and disseminate information to all segments of society (Ananda, 2023).. According to J. Mike Jacka and Peter R. Scott, social media is a collection of web-based technologies that allow content democratization, enabling individuals to present content from consumers to publishers. Meanwhile, R. Shari Veil, Tara Buehner, and Michael J. Palenchar define social media as a form of human communication characterized by participatory, open, conversational features that build communities and create interconnectedness (Fadhila & Sudjana, 2018); (Arhire, 2023).

Dahlia et al. (2022), Social media has various influences and impacts on its users, both positive and negative. The positive impacts include enhancing individual creativity in content creation, facilitating the sending and receiving of messages from various parties anytime and anywhere, and providing other benefits (Cahyono & Perdhani, 2023);(Khanh, 2021). However, the presence of social media also brings negative effects, such as the risk of internet addiction due to excessive use, and the potential for users to become more withdrawn and less socially interactive with others (Zulkifli et al., 2022). In addition, social media use among teenagers often poses more risks than adults realize (Hermida, 2019).

Slang, or bahasa gaul, is a variety of language used by specific groups with vocabulary that often carries meanings different from their conventional definitions. Generally, this form of language is used by teenagers or social communities as a distinctive expression of identity. Tasliati (2020), explains that slang is usually employed in informal situations and tends to adapt to current linguistic trends. Kusmaryono et al. (2024), This language variety often introduces new vocabulary or alters the meaning of existing words, making it sometimes difficult to understand for those unfamiliar with its use. Meanwhile, Kridalaksana (2008), in *Kamus Linguistik* states that slang is a language variation created by certain social groups as an internal means of communication among their members. Aprizal (2020), In addition to serving as a medium of interaction, slang also functions as a symbol of group identity or even as a form of resistance against other groups. In Indonesia, slang has become a part of youth culture and has gained increasing popularity alongside the development of social media and modern communication technology. According to Fauziah et al. (2025), the use of slang among teenagers is greatly influenced by the social and cultural environment they face in their daily lives. Moreover, slang also serves as a means of demonstrating solidarity and togetherness among members of youth groups. However, its use is not without drawbacks, one of which is the potential decline in teenagers' ability to use the Indonesian language properly and correctly.

The excessive use of slang can have an impact on the decline of one's proficiency in the Indonesian language, particularly in aspects of grammar and vocabulary that adhere to proper linguistic rules (Fadilla et al., 2023). This condition may affect the effectiveness of communication, especially in formal contexts such as education and the professional world. Isgiaro et al. (2020), found that a high intensity of slang use can reduce mastery of grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure, and may even affect the ability to correctly understand and interpret Indonesian texts. The findings explain that the more frequently students use slang, the less they use proper and correct Indonesian in their daily conversations. Furthermore, findings from Anik et al. (2021), reveal that students who are accustomed to using slang often face difficulties in understanding lecture materials delivered in standard Indonesian. This is because slang tends to be casual and informal, making it less suitable for academic settings that demand formality. Based on this phenomenon, the researcher

considers it necessary to further examine how slang influences the use of the Indonesian language among university students (Hamidah et al., 2020).

The phenomenon of slang use among university students has become increasingly prevalent alongside the development of communication technology and social media (Ntumba et al., 2023), (Alfiah, 2017). Slang is often used as a means of self-expression and group identity; however, excessive use can affect the ability to use formal Indonesian. In addition, research by Haerazi & Irawan (2020), Batubara & Arifin (2022), revealed that students who frequently use slang tend to have difficulty understanding lecture materials delivered in standard Indonesian, due to the differences in language style used in academic contexts versus everyday conversation.

Similar findings were reported by Gustiningsi et al. (2024), who stated that students' reliance on slang can reduce their ability to communicate formally, both in writing and orally, potentially affecting their academic performance. Based on this phenomenon, this study aims to further analyze the influence of slang use on students' Indonesian language proficiency, focusing on aspects of grammar, vocabulary, and correct sentence structure (Xhoxhaj, 2025). The results of this research are expected to provide insights into the importance of balancing language use so that students can communicate effectively in various situations, both formal and informal.

2. METHOD

2.1 Type of Research

This study uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive survey design.

2.2 Population and Sample

- **Population** : Students in South Bangka
- **Sample** : 100 students randomly selected from various faculties.

2.3 Data Collection Techniques

- **Questionnaire** : To measure the intensity of slang use on social media.
- **Formal Language Test** : To assess students' understanding of formal language.
- **Interview** : To obtain in-depth information regarding the impact of slang use on formal language comprehension.

2.4 Data Analysis Techniques

- **Descriptive Analysis** : To describe the intensity of slang use and understanding of formal language.
- **Pearson Correlation Test** : To examine the relationship between slang use and formal language comprehension.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

a. Overview of Research Subjects

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This study involved 100 active students from south Bangka who are actively engaged on social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter.

Gender : 55 female, 45 male

Age : 14-18 years

Frequency of Social Media Use:

<1 hour/day: 10%

1–3 hours/day: 35%

3–5 hours/day: 40%

5 hours/day: 15%

The majority of students use social media for informal communication, either with friends, study groups, or online communities.

b. Intensity of Slang Use

Based on the questionnaire, the data on slang usage frequency are as follows:

Frequency of Use	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Very Often	45	45%
Often	30	30%
Sometimes	15	15%
Rarely	10	10%

Analysis:

- 75% of students use slang frequently or very frequently.
- The dominant forms of slang include popular abbreviations, current terms, emoticons, and informal sentence variations.
- These results indicate a social phenomenon where slang has become a daily language among students on social media, consistent with Rajagukguk et al. (2025), who reported a high dominance of slang in daily student conversations.

c. Students' Understanding of Formal Language

Results from the formal language test show the following average scores:

- Maximum score: 100
- Minimum score: 55
- Average score: 72

Distribution:

- High (≥ 85): 15% of students
- Medium (70–84): 50% of students
- Low (< 70): 35% of students

Analysis:

- Students who frequently use slang (more than 3 hours/day) tend to have lower scores (< 70) in formal language comprehension.
- Students who rarely use slang have higher scores.

d. Relationship Between Slang Intensity and Formal Language Comprehension Pearson Correlation Test:

- $r = -0.65$
- $p < 0.05$

Interpretation:

- The r value indicates a moderate to strong negative correlation between the intensity of slang use and formal language proficiency.
- The higher the frequency of slang use, the lower the students' understanding of formal language.
- These findings support the study by Namang, Bura, & Bora (2024), which highlights the negative impact of slang on formal language skills.

3.2 Discussion

a. Vocabulary Aspect

- Students who frequently use slang experience difficulties in selecting formal vocabulary.
- For example, terms like “btw” (by the way), “btp” (banyak tipe), or other current abbreviations are often used in academic writing, reducing language accuracy.

b. Grammar Aspect

- Errors in formal sentence structure increase among students who predominantly use slang.
- Example: The sentence “Gue mau ngerjain tugasnya nih” literally translated in an academic report becomes non-standard, e.g., “Saya mau ngerjain tugas nih,” which is still informal.

c. Formal Context Comprehension Aspect

- Students who frequently use slang find it difficult to adjust their language register in academic communication.

Interview result:

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“When writing essays or reports, I sometimes still think of words I often use in chat, so I get confused choosing the right formal words.” – Student F1

d. Impact on Learning Motivation

- Students who are too comfortable with slang tend to have lower motivation to write formally.
- Conversely, students who use slang moderately can adjust to formal language registers better.
- This aligns with Nguyen & Doan (2023), who found that excessive exposure to informal language can reduce awareness of the importance of formal language in academic contexts.

e. Synthesis of Findings

- The intensity of slang use on social media is very high among students (75% often/very often).
- Students' understanding of formal language is negatively affected by slang use, particularly in vocabulary, grammar, and formal register selection.
- There is a significant negative correlation between slang use and formal language proficiency.
- Students who use slang moderately are better able to adjust to formal communication, highlighting the importance of controlling informal language use to maintain formal language skills..

4. CONCLUSION

The development of information and communication technology, particularly social media, has changed the interaction patterns of university students, including in language use. Social media has become the main platform for students to communicate, express themselves, and build group identity through slang. Slang, which is informal in nature, has become part of youth culture and is widely used in everyday communication.

The results of the study show that the use of slang among students is very high, with 75% of respondents using slang often or very often. Excessive use negatively affects formal Indonesian language skills, especially in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and the selection of formal registers. Students who frequently use slang tend to have difficulties in choosing formal vocabulary, constructing proper sentence structures, and adjusting their language style in academic contexts. These findings are also supported by formal language tests and interviews, which indicate interference of informal language on formal language proficiency.

Pearson correlation analysis shows a significant negative relationship between the intensity of slang use and students' understanding of formal language ($r = -0.65$, $p < 0.05$). The higher the frequency of slang use, the lower the students' comprehension of formal language. However, students who use slang moderately are better able to adjust to formal communication, highlighting the importance of controlling informal language use.

Overall, this study confirms that although slang functions as a means of self-expression and group identity, its use must be balanced to maintain formal language proficiency. This is crucial to support effective communication in various situations, both

formal and informal, as well as to enhance students' academic performance and professional competence in the future.

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