



The Influence of TikTok Social Media on The Emergence of Slang Language Used by Gen Alpha

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ABSTRAK

Dalam era digital saat ini, TikTok telah menjadi platform yang sangat populer di kalangan remaja, memungkinkan mereka untuk berinteraksi dan mengekspresikan diri melalui video pendek yang kreatif. Penggunaan bahasa gaul di TikTok tidak hanya mencerminkan dinamika komunikasi antar pengguna, tetapi juga menunjukkan bagaimana bahasa dapat berubah dan beradaptasi dengan cepat seiring dengan perkembangan teknologi. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif, penelitian ini mengumpulkan data dari konten yang berisi Bahasa gaul Gen Alpha yang diunggah di TikTok, serta melakukan analisis terhadap bentuk-bentuk bahasa gaul yang muncul. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa bahasa gaul yang digunakan di TikTok cenderung bersifat akronim, singkatan, dan penyerapan dari berbagai bahasa, termasuk bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini juga mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang mendorong penggunaan bahasa gaul di kalangan generasi Alpha, seperti keinginan untuk bergaul, membangun identitas sosial, dan mengikuti tren. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan wawasan tentang dampak media sosial terhadap perkembangan bahasa dan komunikasi di kalangan remaja, serta menjadi referensi mengenai interaksi sosial dalam konteks digital. Tujuan dari penelitian ini yaitu: 1. Untuk mengetahui pengaruh media sosial TikTok terhadap munculnya Bahasa gaul yang digunakan Gen Alpha 2. Untuk mengetahui contoh macam macam bahasa gaul yang digunakan gen alpha, 3. Untuk mengetahui pengaruh bahasa gaul yang digunakan gen alpha terhadap eksistensi Bahasa Indonesia.

ABSTRACT

In today's digital era, TikTok has become a very popular platform among teenagers, allowing them to interact and express themselves through creative short videos. The use of slang on TikTok not only reflects the dynamics of communication between users but also shows how language can change and adapt rapidly along with technological developments. Through a qualitative approach, this study collected data from content containing Gen Alpha slang uploaded on TikTok, and analyzed the forms of slang that emerged. The results of the study show that slang used on TikTok tends to be acronyms, abbreviations, and borrowings from various languages, including English. This study also identifies factors that encourage the use of slang among Generation Alpha, such as the desire to socialize, build social identity, and follow trends. This study is expected to provide insight into the impact of social media on the development of language and communication among teenagers, as well as being a reference for social interaction in a digital context. The objectives of this study are: 1. To determine the influence of TikTok social media on the emergence of slang used by Gen Alpha 2. To find out examples of various slang used by Gen Alpha, 3. To find out the influence of slang used by Gen Alpha on the existence of Indonesia.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has become one of the most significant technological innovations in the last two decades. Its presence has changed the way humans communicate, search for information, and express themselves. Many theories and thoughts have been changed by social media, which has changed the world a lot.(Sari, 2018). One of the social media platforms that is currently dominating the digital world is TikTok. Launched in 2016 by ByteDance, a Chinese technology company, TikTok is designed to allow its users to create and share creative short videos ranging from 15 seconds to 10 minutes in length. TikTok's uniqueness lies in the combination of artificial intelligence (AI) technology with an easy-to-use interface, resulting in an interactive and personal experience for each user.

TikTok is not just an entertainment app; it has become a cultural phenomenon that influences various aspects of life, including music trends, lifestyle, education, and marketing. On this platform, anyone can be a creator, and their content has the potential to reach millions of people in a short time. Thanks to TikTok's ability to present content relevant to users' interests through sophisticated algorithms, this application has become one of the most popular in the world, with more than 1 billion monthly active users in 2023. Meanwhile, in 2020, Indonesia contributed 11% of the total 63.3 million TikTok downloads(God, 2021).

The development of information and communication technology has brought about major changes in the media consumption patterns of global society. In today's digital era, video content has become one of the most popular formats because of its visual, concise, and easy-to-digest nature. TikTok emerged amidst this trend by offering a new experience that combines entertainment, creativity, and social interaction.

One of the factors that makes TikTok stand out is its "For You Page" (FYP) algorithm, which is able to present content based on user preferences and habits. This algorithm uses user behavioral data to recommend relevant and interesting videos, creating a highly personalized and addictive experience. In addition, TikTok provides a variety of creative tools such as filters, visual effects, music, and easy-to-use video editing features, allowing users from various backgrounds to produce quality content.

This phenomenon has prompted various studies to understand TikTok's impact on society, including how the platform influences culture, communication, and consumer behavior. With all its contributions, TikTok is now one of the most influential social media platforms in the world, offering various opportunities as well as challenges in the ever-evolving digital era.

2. METHOD

The data collection process uses qualitative data collection techniques and a descriptive approach. The instrument in this study is the researcher himself who acts as a human instrument by emphasizing the search for theoretical sources, then analyzing the theory and data obtained, and interpreting the results of the theory and data, and drawing conclusions. This study also uses the Internet Searching Method and Literature Review, Internet searching is the process of searching for data through online media or internet media to obtain information from references, journals, articles that have continuity regarding the influence of TikTok social media on the emergence of various slang used by Gen Alpha, while in the Literature Review method we observe eight videos on the TikTok platform to find broader information about our research. With the research methods that we have done and have also obtained the results we want have been listed in this paper.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. *The influence of TikTok social media on the emergence of slang used by Gen Alpha*

TikTok has played a major role in the emergence of various slang among Gen Alpha. The TikTok application was developed in China in 2016. TikTok allows users to create short videos ranging from 15 to 60 seconds, using music, filters, and various other creative features. About four years after its launch, TikTok experienced an explosion in popularity. This application is in demand by various groups in Indonesia. TikTok users in Indonesia are monitored to increase every year. Even in the last six years, the number of TikTok users in Indonesia has increased almost 15 times, namely 10 million users in 2018 and reaching 157.6 million in 2024.(Gina, 2024).TikTok ranks at the top of the most popular because it is practical and easy to use. This application has many features, such as adding music, video filters, sticker filters, video effects, voice changer filters, beauty filters, auto caption filters, and comment features. TikTok is one of the leading social media platforms for Gen Alpha, and they spend an average of 80 minutes per day(Ramadan, 2022).

Gen Alpha slang emerged because Gen Alpha grew up in an era of sophisticated digital technology. Social media, games, and the internet have become a big part of their lives. New terms often emerge from these platforms. Gen Alpha has high imagination and creativity. They like to create new, unique and funny words to describe something. Gen Alpha also wants to have their own identity from the previous generation. Therefore, slang is one way for them to show their identity that is different from the previous generation. Platforms like TikTok are the most effective place to spread slang trends. Gen Alpha slang is a reflection of the way today's children think and communicate.

This slang language continues to develop and change along with the times. Some of TikTok's influences on the emergence of slang: 1). Viral content containing viral languages or phrases that spread quickly 2). Content creators who create or popularize new terms so that followers adopt the terms they use 3). The language of content creators consisting of subcultures (for example, K-Pop, Gaming or fashion) who introduce slang that is typical of their community, which then spreads more widely among Gen Alpha 4). The adaptation of foreign languages on the TikTok platform has led to the emergence of slang terms taken directly from English, such as "vibe", "ick" and so on. 5). The younger generation tends to be more experimental with language, creating new words, and abbreviations. This has led to the emergence of various abbreviations such as "FR" (for real), "lmao" (laughing my ass off) and so on.

3.2. *Examples of slang used by the Alpha gene*

In observations that have been made on social media, the language used by Gen Alpha in using social media is a foreign language. In communicating on social networks is also free, this gives rise to a freely varied language that allows users to express themselves more freely and authentically. What is meant by free variation language in this context is like slang, abbreviations, new words and so on.

The following are the results of observations of some slang used by Gen Alpha:

Table 1. Slang and its meaning

Gen Alpha Slang	It means
Mewing	The act of placing the tongue on the roof of the mouth to achieve a sharper jawline
Sigma	Cool; Good
Rizz	Romantic; Attraction
Skibidi	Bad; evil; bad
Fanum tax	Taking other people's food
Stamp	Lie
Sush	Something fishy
Gyatt	The coolest
Ohio	Strange; unusual
Bet	Agreement; readiness
Business	Delicious; yummy
Lore	Background
Ratio'd	When the number of comments or criticism on social media is greater than the number of likes
Mad Lit	Very cool; interesting
Gucci	Good; great
Ick	Not interested; disgusted
Vibe check	Asking about mood; feelings
Bop	A song that is nice to listen to
Not a bop	A song that is unpleasant to listen to
Sheesh	Surprised; amazed
Delulu	Something less realistic
Drip	Stylish; cool
Low vibration	Refers to someone or something that radiates negative energy or has unpleasant energy.
FR (for real)	To be honest; actually

Source TikTok: @danielalvinjr and detikjateng (Azizah, 2024)

3.3. The influence of slang used by Gen Alpha on the existence of Indonesian

Based on the results of the data analysis, it is known that there are several slang languages used by Gen Alpha today. Gen Alpha, as a generation that is very connected to technology and social media, has a unique way of creating its own slang. However, the slang used by Gen Alpha also has a negative side, namely that it is difficult for others to understand so that the message is not conveyed perfectly from the sender to the recipient when communicating on social media, this is because not all people know slang and its meaning, especially ordinary people who are less active on social media. Of course, this is one of the disturbances in the communication process; the disturbance that occurs is in the meaning of the word. So that it results in a shift in meaning, narrowing of meaning, causing multiple interpretations or ambiguity.

Slang has its own meaning that is only understood by certain communities. This is because the meaning of the slang language functions to facilitate interaction between individuals in specific groups on related social media. As a result, if the recipient of the message is in a different group, then it is likely that the recipient will not be able to interpret the message effectively. (Nuraini & Pahamzah, 2021). Therefore, the use of Gen Alpha slang can affect the existence of Indonesian, both directly and indirectly. Here are some of the effects of the use of slang on the existence of Indonesian: 1). Gen Alpha no longer knows standard language so they lose the benchmark and guidance to use good and correct Indonesian. 2). The fading sense of pride in using good and correct Indonesian, because Gen Alpha is used to slang which is now widely used among them (Riadh, 2021).

However, it should be remembered that language is dynamic. Language always develops and changes along with the times. Although slang is now a trend or is popular for use in playing social media, standard spelling remains the guideline in official and academic writing. The influence of slang is not always negative. Slang can also enrich vocabulary and make Indonesian more alive.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate how TikTok, as a dominant social media platform, contributes significantly to the linguistic behavior of Generation Alpha, especially in the use and spread of slang. The emergence of new slang on TikTok is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but a sociocultural one, closely tied to identity construction, group belonging, and digital expression. TikTok's algorithmic infrastructure plays a pivotal role in accelerating the dissemination of slang. Through its For You Page (FYP), content creators with large followings or viral content have the power to popularize new terms rapidly. These terms often originate from subcultural communities—such as gaming, fashion, or K-pop fandoms—and are characterized by linguistic creativity, often in the form of acronyms, abbreviations, or anglicisms (Ramadhan, 2022; Azizah, 2024). For example, the terms “rizz”, “gyatt”, or “mewing” exemplify Gen Alpha's penchant for identity signaling and socio-cultural trends within digital spaces.

This linguistic shift is fueled by Gen Alpha's high exposure to digital content from an early age, making them inherently adaptive to linguistic trends that are rapid, visual, and intertextual. Slang acts as both a symbolic and functional tool: it constructs in-group identity while enabling efficient, emotive communication. This aligns with sociolinguistic theory, which suggests that youth language often evolves as a response to both cultural currents and the desire for social distinction (Nuraini & Pahamzah, 2021). However, the linguistic evolution seen on TikTok also raises important questions about the integrity and sustainability of the Indonesian language. While slang can enrich and energize a language, excessive reliance on non-standard or foreign-influenced expressions may cause a detachment from formal Bahasa Indonesia, especially among younger speakers. Studies have noted that frequent use of such slang can lead to a loss of proficiency in standard language, create communicative ambiguity, and reduce the prestige of native language norms (Riadh, 2021).

More critically, slang's insular nature—where meaning is accessible primarily to those within specific digital communities—can lead to exclusion or miscommunication. For example, terms like “*fanum tax*” or “*low vibration*” may appear cryptic to individuals outside of TikTok culture, thereby disrupting effective interpersonal communication (Nuraini &

Pahamzah, 2021). This underscores the necessity of balancing linguistic innovation with linguistic clarity and inclusivity. Nonetheless, it is essential to recognize that language is inherently dynamic and evolves over time. Slang has historically contributed to the richness and adaptability of languages. The key is to ensure that such linguistic creativity coexists with an appreciation for standard forms, especially in formal, academic, and intergenerational communication contexts. Educational institutions and media literacy programs have a crucial role in fostering this linguistic balance—helping young people to code-switch appropriately between informal and formal registers depending on context (Cahyono, 2022).

Furthermore, this phenomenon is not isolated to Indonesia or Bahasa Indonesia alone. The global nature of TikTok allows for rapid cross-cultural exchange of linguistic practices. This explains the widespread adoption of English-derived slang among Gen Alpha TikTok users, even in non-English-speaking countries. The impact of globalization and algorithmic content curation thus underscores the need for further transnational and comparative studies on the relationship between social media, youth, and language transformation.

In conclusion, the use of slang on TikTok among Gen Alpha is a reflection of broader digital and cultural shifts. While it provides opportunities for creativity and community, it also brings challenges to linguistic heritage and clarity. Stakeholders such as educators, linguists, and parents must engage in these changes thoughtfully, ensuring that innovation does not eclipse linguistic identity and intergenerational understanding.

4. CONCLUSION

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that this slang language emerged influenced by several things, one of the factors that most influenced the emergence of slang among Gen Alpha is the rapid development of technology, making it easier for them to adopt or imitate words or phrases that are popular on social media, especially on the TikTok platform, which of course is familiar to them. The slang used by Gen Alpha has an influence on the existence of Bahasa Indonesia, generally in terms of communicating in everyday life.

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