



Alpha Generation Language Style Shift Due to Social Media Interaction (Case Study of Yayasan Atikan Sunda Junior High School Students)

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of social media on language style shifts among Generation Alpha (Gen-A), with a focus on junior high school students at Yayasan Atikan Sunda in Bandung. The research employs a qualitative sociolinguistic approach, utilizing participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and qualitative data collection through speech and visual symbols such as emojis and memes in daily communication. Findings suggest that social media has a significant influence on the use of slang and visual symbols as elements of Generation Alpha's social identity. However, students continue to maintain the Sundanese language as a marker of cultural identity within the school environment, demonstrating linguistic dynamism. The study's originality is evident in its focus on Generation Alpha in junior high school and its integration of slang and visual symbol analysis, which remain underexplored in Indonesian junior high school contexts. These findings provide new insights into the interplay between formal and informal language use and cultural preservation in the digital era.

Keywords: Generation Alpha, Social Media, Slang, Sociolinguistics

1. Introduction

The development of information and communication technology, especially through social media, has brought significant changes in the way of speaking among the Alpha generation, born between 2010 and 2025 Ramadani & Rokhman (2024). Social media has become the main means of interaction that influences the language style of this generation, which is known for its technological sophistication and freedom of expression Labaco et al. (2024). Not only using slang, Generation Alpha often uses visual symbols such as emojis and memes that are part of everyday communication.

Over time, this slang has become a reflection of the social and cultural identity of Generation Alpha. They express themselves in more creative and informal ways through slang absorbed from social media. However, this phenomenon raises concerns about the erosion of standard language and proper grammar, which are crucial in academic and professional contexts. The widespread use of slang can impact students' formal language skills, particularly in understanding and using correct Indonesian language rules. From a sociolinguistic perspective, language reflects social relationships and group identity. The use of diverse languages in digital communication allows Generation Alpha to adapt to a diverse and dynamic environment.



This research is crucial for understanding the impact of social media on the shift in language styles of Generation Alpha, particularly among students at Yayasan Atikan Sunda Junior High School, as a representative of this generation. This study aims to illustrate the urgency of sociolinguistic studies on how interactions on social media shape the use of slang, its implications in social and educational contexts, and how this phenomenon influences the linguistic development and social identity of the younger generation in the current digital era.

2. Research Method

This research employed a qualitative method with a sociolinguistic approach. This approach was chosen to explore in-depth the social and linguistic phenomena of slang, slang, and visual symbols (emojis, memes) that are prevalent among Generation Alpha. The research focused on students at Yayasan Atikan Sunda Junior High School as a case study to examine the impact of social media interactions on their language styles.

The tools used included a voice recorder for interviews, forms or questionnaires to collect data on perceptions and language use. The primary data sources were students' verbal and nonverbal utterances in everyday interactions on social media, as well as the results of in-depth interviews. The data collection procedures are described as follow.

- Participatory observation on popular social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok to observe the natural use of slang and visual symbols.
- Semi-structured interviews with students to explore their understanding and context of slang terms and informal language expressions.
- Qualitative data collection in the form of conversation recordings, screenshots of messages, and questionnaire results.

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive methods. The analysis phase included transcription. The analysis also utilized theories of language variation and sociolinguistics, which examine the relationship between language and social factors, identity, and culture.

3. Results and Discussions

The following are the results and discussion of the research on the shift in language styles of students at Yayasan Atikan Sunda Bandung Middle School, who have been influenced by social media but still maintain Sundanese within the school environment.

Research has found that students at the Atikan Sunda Foundation Junior High School have experienced a significant shift in their language style due to the influence of social media. Slang and colloquialisms developed on platforms like Instagram and TikTok are widely used in students' daily communication. The use of emojis, memes, and slang terms characterizes their informal language. However, within the school environment, students still demonstrate a strong



commitment to preserving and using Sundanese as part of their cultural identity and local wisdom. Although the use of Sundanese in formal interactions or between teachers and students is relatively limited, Sundanese is maintained in daily communication among students, especially in informal contexts, such as casual conversations and extracurricular activities.

This phenomenon demonstrates the duality of language use, characterized by diglossia. Students use social media-influenced slang as a modern and creative means of communication, while maintaining Sundanese as a symbol of cultural identity and local pride. This language shift aligns with the bilingual or multilingual nature of slang and Sundanese. Schools, which provide Sundanese cultural teaching and activities, play a significant role in preserving regional languages, despite the attractiveness of social media and trends. Furthermore, the role of family and community also influences the tendency to use Sundanese, particularly when the home environment actively uses Sundanese in everyday communication.

A shift in language style has indeed occurred among students at Yayasan Atikan Sunda Middle School, influenced by the use of social media such as Instagram and TikTok. The school's strong culture and values continue to play a significant role in preserving the Sundanese language as a cultural identity. Within the school environment, students consistently use Sundanese in daily interactions, especially in informal contexts such as casual conversations and extracurricular activities. This demonstrates that while informal language styles, including slang, play a role in students' modern communication, Sundanese culture remains preserved and serves as a symbol of pride and group identity.

Examples of shifts in language style found in the field include the use of slang terms that are popular on social media, for example words like:

1. The word "mudah" is replaced with "easy," which comes from the English word "easy," used to describe something that is easy to do. Example sentence: This math homework is ez, I only finished it in 10 minutes.
2. The word "bekas" is simplified to "ex" usually referring to an ex or something from a past. Example sentence: He was my ex-best friend, now we're strangers.
3. The phrase "tidak mampu" is changed to "noob," a term commonly used in the gaming world to describe someone who is less skilled. Example sentence: You're such a noob at playing games.
4. The phrase "tidak berpengaruh" is shortened to "bot," for example, in the sentence "Anda tidak mampu" (you have no influence in the process of completing the assignment) becomes "You're a bot in completing this assignment, try to be more serious."
5. The word "berkarisma" is replaced with the term "rizz," which means having a special attraction or charm. Example sentence: The class president has a high rizz, he easily attracts the attention of his friends.
6. The word "tegas" was replaced with "sigma," a term often used informally to describe a strong, independent attitude or character. Example sentence: She always makes her own decisions; she's a total sigma.



7. The word "buruk" was replaced with "skibidi," a slang term for something that's bad or not good. Example sentence: That movie was skibidi, the story was hard to understand.
8. The word "sahabat" was replaced with "bestie," an informal term for a close friend or best friend. Example sentence: My bestie isn't coming today, she's sick.
9. The word "canggung" was replaced with "cringe," which is used to express embarrassment or awkwardness due to a behavior or situation. Example sentence: I swear she's so cringe!
10. The word "serius" was replaced with "for real," which is used to emphasize the seriousness or authenticity of a statement. Example sentence: For real, are you going to her birthday party?

4. Conclusion

This research shows that social media has a powerful influence in shaping shifts in language styles among Generation Alpha, particularly students at Yayasan Atikan Sunda Middle School. The use of slang, colloquialisms, and visual symbols such as emojis and memes has become an integral part of their daily communication. This variety of language is developing dynamically and creatively, reflecting the social identity, culture, and digital trends of Generation Alpha.

However, despite the shift to informal language influenced by social media, students continue to preserve Sundanese in the school environment as part of their local wisdom and cultural identity. Schools and social environments play a crucial role in maintaining the use of regional languages through learning and cultural activities. This phenomenon reflects diglossia, where students are able to use slang as a means of modern communication while maintaining their regional languages contextually.

Qualitative research methods with a sociolinguistic approach have revealed how digital interactions and social influences shape unique language patterns. Thus, this research emphasizes the importance of maintaining a balance between creative language innovation and the preservation of formal and regional languages in the current context of globalization and communicative digitalization. This study also provides a basis that can be used for developing adaptive and culturally insightful language education strategies.

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