

# The Impact of Social Media Usage Among Teenagers on the Indonesian Language in The Digital Era

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## Abstract

*Social media, with its advantages and disadvantages, has had a significant impact on the use of the Indonesian language, particularly among teenagers. Social media has shaped and transformed the way society communicates in Indonesian in daily life. The method used to analyze this issue is qualitative descriptive. Data collection techniques include screenshots to capture language usage phenomena on social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter (X), along with note-taking and documentation techniques. The research findings show that teenagers on social media employ linguistic aspects such as code-mixing, the use of informal language, phonetic reduplication and spelling variations, the use of acronyms and abbreviations, as well as emotional markers and symbols. The impact of social media on the Indonesian language includes vocabulary enrichment, degradation of language structure, maintenance of social and group identities, shifts in communication styles, and influences on the sustainability of standard language. Efforts to preserve the Indonesian language can be made through the government's role in drafting policies and regulations that support language preservation in the digital era, educational institutions by adjusting the Indonesian language curriculum to the times, active societal campaigns promoting proper Indonesian usage on social media, and individual awareness and responsibility for using correct Indonesian in social media communication.*

**Keywords:** *Social Media, Digital Era, Indonesian Language, Impact, Linguistic Elements.*

## Introduction

The use of social media in this fast-paced and interconnected digital era has become an integral part of modern society. The presence of social media has brought significant changes to how we communicate, interact, and share information. However, behind the convenience and speed offered by social media, there is also a significant impact on language use, particularly the Indonesian language. As the national language and a symbol of the nation's identity, the Indonesian language plays an important role in uniting the diverse cultures and ethnicities in Indonesia. Nevertheless, the development of social media has posed new challenges in maintaining and preserving the proper use of the Indonesian language. This language is used in various official domains, such as government, education, law, mass media, and other formal communications across Indonesia (Indonesian Dictionary, 2008). The proper and correct use of the Indonesian language is crucial in maintaining unity and preserving the identity of this pluralistic nation.

One of the effects of social media on the use of the Indonesian language is the emergence of new language variations that tend to use shorter, informal word forms and do not adhere to standard language rules. The use of abbreviations, acronyms, and slang terms that are popular on social media often violates the proper grammar and linguistic conventions of the Indonesian language. This can lead to deviations in the use of the Indonesian language and may reduce the quality of communication. Additionally, the increasing use of foreign languages, especially English, on social media is becoming more prevalent. Although this can be seen as a sign of modernity and trendiness, it poses a significant risk of eroding the use of Indonesian as the primary language for daily communication in our country.

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Figure 1. Example of a Dialogue on Social Media (@Instagram) Captured via Screenshot.

If we observe the language use among teenagers or millennials on social media, as shown in Figure 1 above, it becomes evident that various language forms are used simultaneously. The phenomenon of code-mixing between Indonesian, English, and regional languages is clearly present in the language of teenagers, which is heavily characterized by interference, the use of abbreviations and acronyms, as well as other forms of language variation that mark the distinctive language style of teenagers on social media.

Therefore, it is crucial to study and understand the linguistic characteristics of teenage language on social media, the impact of social media use on the Indonesian language, and the efforts that can be made to ensure that Indonesian remains the unifying language, the national language that must be comprehensively used by the Indonesian people. By understanding the dynamics of language change in the digital era, we can take appropriate steps to preserve and safeguard the Indonesian language as a marker of national identity, while remaining open to the development and renewal of the language in line with the progress of the digital age.

This paper will address these issues, contributing to a better understanding of the impact of social media on the use of the Indonesian language in the digital era, particularly among teenagers; expanding knowledge about the dynamics of language change in the context of the development of information and communication technology; raising public awareness of the importance of maintaining proper use of the Indonesian language; providing input for the government, educational institutions, and other stakeholders in formulating policies and programs to preserve the Indonesian language in the digital era; and serving as a reference for providing guidance on the correct use of the Indonesian language on social media.

## Objectives

This paper will address these issues, contributing to a better understanding of the impact of social media on the use of the Indonesian language in the digital era, particularly among teenagers; expanding knowledge about the dynamics of language change in the context of the development of information and communication technology; raising public awareness of the importance of maintaining proper use of the Indonesian language; providing input for the government, educational institutions, and other stakeholders in formulating policies and programs to preserve the Indonesian language in the digital era; and serving as a reference for providing guidance on the correct use of the Indonesian language on social media.

## Methodology

This study on the impact of social media usage on the Indonesian language among adolescents in Makassar focuses on understanding the effects of social media on the language use of junior and senior high school students. The scope of this research includes:

- *Research Subjects:* Adolescents aged 12 to 18, specifically junior and senior high school students in Makassar.
- *Research Object:* The use of the Indonesian language influenced by social interactions on social media, including the use of colloquial language, abbreviations, and mixed language forms.
- *Social Context:* The social environment of Makassar, with its diverse cultural and educational backgrounds, which may influence how adolescents use language on social media.

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design aimed at describing the social phenomenon of Indonesian language use among adolescents on social media. The approach will explore how social media affects the language used by adolescents in their daily lives. The population of the study consists of 438 junior and senior high school students in Makassar. A sample of 45 individuals was selected using purposive sampling, with considerations of their active involvement in social media and social background diversity. The main instruments are a questionnaire and structured interviews containing both closed and open-ended questions to gather information on habits and perceptions regarding Indonesian language use on social media. The questionnaire is designed to identify the influence of slang, abbreviations, and other digital language forms, while interviews are conducted to understand respondents' language attitudes toward the use of Indonesian on social media.

- *Data Collection Techniques:* Data is collected through questionnaires distributed to 438 students, and a sample of 45 individuals who were interviewed to obtain insights into students' perceptions and attitudes toward the Indonesian language. Data collection adheres to ethical research principles, including obtaining written consent from respondents and ensuring data confidentiality.
- *Data Analysis:* The data will be analyzed qualitatively using content analysis techniques to identify patterns and the impact of Indonesian language usage on social media. The analysis results will be presented descriptively to illustrate the influence of social media on language use among adolescents.

*Validity and Reliability:* Data triangulation is employed to enhance the validity and reliability of the study, including interviews, observations, and discussions with language experts.

This research is expected to provide insights into the impact of social media on the Indonesian language in the digital era, particularly among adolescents, and contribute to the field of sociolinguistics.

## Literature Review

The use of social media in the digital era has brought significant changes to various aspects of life, including the use of the Indonesian language, particularly among teenagers. To understand this impact, a theoretical framework that combines concepts from linguistics, sociolinguistics, and digital media is required.

Language change is an inevitable phenomenon in multilingual societies. William Labov (1994) explains that language change occurs in tandem with the development of time and social environments. In the digital era, social media plays a crucial role in accelerating this change, particularly among teenagers who often act as the primary agents of language evolution. Through social media, teenagers introduce new forms of language, such as abbreviations, acronyms, and slang that deviate from the formal rules of the Indonesian language (Labov, 1994; Fishman, 1965).

In the digital environment, teenagers often use more than one language alternately or simultaneously in their conversations on social media. The phenomenon of code-mixing between Indonesian and English, or regional languages, is common. Muysken (2000) notes that in multilingual communities, such as Indonesia, teenagers tend to blend two or more languages to express identity or simply to follow trends. This is particularly evident on social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, where Indonesian is frequently interspersed with English terms, which are perceived as more modern and trendy.

According to McQuail (2010), social media is not only a communication channel but also an agent that shapes linguistic patterns and behavior. Teenagers who are active on social media are more likely to imitate the communication styles prevalent on digital platforms, in terms of grammar, vocabulary, and communication style (Kress, 2003). In this context, social media becomes a primary medium that contributes to the shift from formal to informal language use among teenagers.

Teenagers' language use on social media is often closely related to the formation of social identity. According to Eckert (2000), language is used as a tool to express group identity. In the context of social media, Bell (1984) also explains that teenagers employ slang, code-mixing, and the use of emoticons to differentiate themselves from other age groups and to demonstrate their identity as part of a particular community.

According to Ferguson (1959), diglossia occurs when two language variations exist within a society, one for formal contexts and the other for informal contexts. This phenomenon is evident on social media, where teenagers tend to use informal language and sometimes violate standard language rules, contrasting with language use in formal contexts such as education or government (Chaer and Agustina, 2004). In the long term, the use of informal language on social media can weaken teenagers' ability to use standard Indonesian in formal situations (Ferguson, 1959).

The phenomenon of language shift among teenagers is also evident in the increasing dominance of English on social media, which often replaces Indonesian in daily conversations. Fishman (1991) argues that this shift may occur due to the influence of globalization and the tendency to use languages perceived as more prestigious. In this context, efforts for language maintenance are necessary through education and government policies to ensure that Indonesian continues to be properly used among younger generations (Fishman, 1991).

Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) explain that in the digital era, communication is no longer solely text-based but also includes visual elements such as images, emojis, and symbols. Similarly, Daud (2021) points out that on social media platforms, teenagers tend to use emojis and stickers to convey emotions and enrich the meaning of conversations. This illustrates a shift from traditional text-based communication to more complex multimodal communication (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001).

The impact of social media on language style shifts and the use of the Indonesian language in the digital era is a significant phenomenon. Research by Zuhriyah and Basith (2023) reveals the influence of social media on the shift in the Indonesian language among Pharmacy students at Nahdlatul Ulama Sunan Giri University. Language use on social media tends to be more relaxed, informal, and not bound by standard language conventions. Gustiasari (2018), in her study, also found a shift in Indonesian grammar among Instagram users in 2018. Social media users tend to use more concise, condensed language, often disregarding conventional grammatical rules.

Saragih (2022), in his research, revealed that the development of foreign languages, especially English, in the era of globalization has impacted the Indonesian language. As Daud (2021) stated, the advancement of communication technology, including social media, has influenced the Indonesian language with the introduction of new terms. These terms may come from regional languages, foreign languages, or new creations by social media users themselves. Santi, Mulyati, and Hadiano (2022), in their research, found that on social media platforms like Twitter, millennial teenagers tend to use abbreviations and new word segmentation patterns in communication. These terms arise as an effort to abbreviate and simplify communication on social media, which often has character limits. Zuhriyah and Basith (2023) discovered in their research that there has been a shift in the Indonesian language among university students due to

the influence of social media. The use of foreign languages, especially English, has become more prevalent on social media, potentially displacing Indonesian as the language of unity and national identity.

## Result and Discussion

Based on the data analysis, it was found that the impact of social media use among teenagers on the Indonesian language in this global era shows a dynamic pattern of change. Social media serves not only as a space for expression but also as a linguistic laboratory where language continuously evolves according to the needs and habits of its users. However, these changes also present challenges to the efforts to preserve standard language and formal linguistic norms. Therefore, it is important to understand the linguistic characteristics of Indonesian language use by teenagers on social media, its impact on the development of the Indonesian language, and the measures that can be taken to ensure that the Indonesian language remains a symbol of identity and pride for the Indonesian people.

### *Linguistic Aspects of Indonesian Language Use on Social Media*



Figure 2. Example of a Screenshot of a Dialogue on WhatsApp Social Media

Figure 3. Example of a Screenshot of a Dialogue on TikTok Social Media

The language phenomenon among teenagers shown in Figures 1, 2, and 3 above, in the form of screenshots on social media platforms Instagram, WhatsApp, X (formerly Twitter), and TikTok, highlights several distinctive characteristics of language use among teenagers on social media and in everyday conversations. This phenomenon reveals several linguistic aspects, including:

### *Code-Mixing*

There is a mixing of Indonesian and English in a single discourse or conversation. For example, in Figure 2: "first acound mo" (English and a Makassarese particle). Then, "ndk brtemanki di secondd kuu" (Indonesian interspersed with English terms). This is an example of code-mixing, where elements from two or more languages are combined within a single discourse or sentence. In this case, teenagers tend to use foreign terms such as "first" and "secondd" to refer to their social media accounts. This phenomenon often occurs in bilingual or multilingual communities, where speakers feel more comfortable or consider it more prestigious to use foreign words. In the screenshot shown in Figure 3, we observe the use of Indonesian mixed with English, such as the phrase "be like" and the term "scroll TikTok." This demonstrates the phenomenon of code-mixing, which frequently occurs in teenage communication on social media. It indicates the influence of global culture, where English is perceived as trendier or more expressive in certain contexts.



### *Use of Informal Language Variety*

The language used in the conversation examples above tends to be highly informal. For instance: "ndk brtemanki," which is the non-standard form of "tidak berteman" (not friends), and "ku follow" instead of "saya akan mengikuti" (I will follow). This informal language variety is commonly used in conversations between teenagers, particularly on social media platforms and instant messaging applications. The characteristics of this variety include the simplification of grammatical structures, word shortening (ellipsis), and the use of words that are typical in informal conversational contexts.

### *Phonetic Reduplication and Spelling Variations*

The spelling used in words like "secondd" and "wkwkwkwkkw" reflects creative variations in pronunciation and writing. Phonetic reduplication, such as "wkwkwkwkkw," is a distinctive way for teenagers to express laughter in written form, replacing verbal laughter. Meanwhile, the addition of the letter "d" in "secondd" serves as an emphasis or stylistic variation that does not change the lexical meaning but creates a more "cool" or attractive aesthetic effect for the user.

### *Use of Acronyms and Abbreviated Language*

Words like "mko" for "kamu" (you), "ki" which here can serve as an emphasis or a substitute for "kamu" (you), and the use of "ndd" meaning a lack of confidence or disbelief in Makassarese teenage slang, reflect the phenomenon of abbreviations in teenage language. These abbreviations are often used to speed up communication and are more suited to the fast-paced and efficient format of instant messaging applications.

### *Emotional Markers and Symbols*

The use of emoticons or emojis in conversations (such as 🙄 and 😏) has become an integral part of how teenagers express emotions. In pragmatic studies, this can be seen as a substitute for verbal emotional markers that are typically present in spoken communication. Emojis add emotional nuance to the sentence or phrase being used, helping to clarify the attitude or emotion being conveyed.

### *Dialect or Regional Language Interference*

Some words or phrases like "mko" and "ki" in the examples from Figure 2 may originate from regional languages (for instance, Bugis or Makassar), as well as the use of words like "inget" and "tetep" in the examples from Figure 3, which show interference from local dialects in Indonesian conversations. This is part of the multilingual dynamics in Indonesia, where regional languages often mix with Indonesian, particularly in everyday conversations.

Thus, the language use displayed in these screenshots illustrates the phenomena of multilingualism, linguistic creativity, and language adaptation that occur in their digital and social environments. Teenagers tend to be more flexible in their language use, combining foreign languages, regional languages, and slang to express themselves effectively and convey their social identity. In the linguistic context, this phenomenon demonstrates the dynamic development of language among young speakers, influenced by digital media and their social surroundings.

## 4.2 The Impact of Social Media Use on the Indonesian Language



Figure 4. Example of a Conversation on Social Media X via Screenshot

The language use among teenagers on social media X, as seen in the conversation excerpt in Figure 4, has a significant impact on the development of the Indonesian language. This phenomenon can be analyzed within the framework of sociolinguistics, particularly in terms of language change, language variation, and social identity. Some of the impacts are as follows:

#### *Vocabulary Change and Enrichment*

The use of foreign words or teenage slang on social media creates the phenomenon of "neologism," or new words that eventually become part of everyday vocabulary. Words like "follow," "acound," "see you," "scroll," or terms adapted from foreign languages such as "secondd" reflect the enrichment of Indonesian vocabulary with foreign elements. In sociolinguistics, this is known as the influence of a second language or foreign language on the native language (Fishman, 1965). The repeated use of these terms on social media has the potential to change broader language patterns, especially among young people who are active in digital media. However, despite the enriching aspects, this change also raises concerns about "language purity" or linguistic degradation. In the theory of "linguistic assimilation," excessive foreign language influence can lead to the loss of authenticity or distinctive features of a language (Weinreich, 1953).

#### *Degradation of Language Structure*

The use of informal, concise language full of ellipsis (omission of parts of sentences) can lead to what is referred to as "degradation of language structure." An example from the conversation, such as "ndk brtemanki di secondd kuu" in Figure 1, and the phrase "ga hujan" illustrate the simplification of verbal forms and sentence structures. This phenomenon leads to grammatical simplification, which, according to Chaer and Agustina (2004), can result in a limited understanding of the standard grammatical rules of the Indonesian language. In everyday usage, the language used on social media often does not adhere to the language norms outlined in the Enhanced Spelling System (EYD) or formal grammar. This phenomenon is known as "diglossia," where the language used in formal domains differs from that in informal settings (Ferguson, 1959). Among teenagers, the use of non-standard language on social media may weaken their ability to use formal and standard language in contexts that require it.

#### *Preservation of Social and Group Identity*

Language is not only viewed as a tool for communication but also as a marker of social identity. Teenagers tend to use unique language variations to distinguish themselves from other age groups. The use of specific codes, such as "wkwkwkwk" or the mix of regional languages and Indonesian ("mko," "ki"), serves as a social marker that reinforces the identity of certain communities (Eckert, 2000). In this case, the slang that develops on social media can be seen as a form of "youth language," where teenagers use linguistic forms that are only understood by members of their own age group. This also relates to Labov's (1972) theory of

"speech communities," where a community shares specific language norms that differ from other communities.

### *Changes in Communication Style*

Social media provides space for multimodal communication, where text, images, emojis, and symbols (such as emoticons) are combined to convey meaning. Emojis like 🗣️ or 😊 in conversation excerpts serve as pragmatic markers that replace verbal expressions of emotion. According to Kress (2003), communication in digital media increasingly relies on visual forms and symbols to convey messages. This shifts the way teenagers communicate, from previously text-based interactions to more visual and concise forms.

### *Impact on the Sustainability of Standard Language*

The tendency of teenagers to use informal language and code-mixing may reduce their exposure to standard Indonesian in everyday life. According to Bell's (1984) dominant prestige theory, slang or everyday language widely used on social media can overshadow standard language, especially if the formal language is not intensively taught and applied in formal contexts.

With this phenomenon, the Indonesian language is undergoing a complex process of change, both in terms of vocabulary, structure, and its use in social and digital domains. On the other hand, social media also plays a role in enriching the Indonesian language. The adoption of new terms, whether derived from regional languages or foreign languages, is considered to enrich the vocabulary of Indonesian and reflects the dynamics of the changing times. However, the use of these new terms must still adhere to language norms and politeness to avoid misunderstandings or offending others. The impact of social media on the use of Indonesian is not limited to linguistic aspects but also has broader social and cultural implications. The influence of social media on communication styles and language use can affect the formation of identity and values in society, especially among the younger generation, who are active users of social media.

### *Efforts to Preserve the Use of Indonesian in the Digital Era*

Efforts to maintain and preserve the proper use of the Indonesian language in the digital era involve various parties and comprehensive strategies, including:

## **Findings**

This study found that the use of social media has a significant impact on the Indonesian language used by adolescents, affecting various aspects such as language structure, vocabulary, and pragmatics. The key findings of this research are as follows:

- *Changes in Language Structure:* The use of standard Indonesian tends to be influenced by slang and abbreviations commonly found on social media.
- *Use of New Vocabulary:* Social media encourages the adoption of new vocabulary that is more digital and informal in nature.
- *Language Mixing:* Many adolescents engage in code-switching, using a mixture of Indonesian and English in online conversations. This phenomenon is often influenced by their exposure to global content on social media, which shapes their language style in both writing and conversation.
- *Attitudes Towards the Indonesian Language:* Despite the negative influence on the use of standard Indonesian, most adolescents still show awareness of the importance of using proper Indonesian in formal contexts. However, they are more likely to use a relaxed and flexible form of language in informal contexts, especially on social media.



- *Impact on Language Proficiency:* Long-term use of social media can affect the formal and written proficiency of Indonesian, particularly in academic contexts. However, adolescents are still able to maintain their competence in standard Indonesian when faced with situations that require formal communication, such as exams or school assignments.

These findings indicate that social media plays a significant role in shaping the language used by adolescents in the digital era, both by fostering linguistic creativity and presenting challenges to the mastery of formal Indonesian.

#### *Limitations and Research Gaps*

There are several limitations and research gaps that can be of concern for further research:

##### *Sample Limitations*

This study focuses on the city of Makassar teenagers, and cannot be generalized to other regions in Indonesia. Variations and dialects in Makassar affect the results of this study.

This study examines popular platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter (X), but does not cover new or niche social media such as Discord or Telegram, which are also frequently used by teenagers. This limits the scope of data on the dynamics of Indonesian language use.

##### *Time and Language Dynamics*

Data collection was carried out over a certain period of time, so it does not reflect changes in language use on social media which are dynamic. Language trends on social media can change rapidly following developments in popular culture.

##### *Socio-Economic and Educational Factors*

Research has not explored in depth how socio-economic factors and education levels influence adolescents' language attitudes towards the use of Indonesian on social media.

##### *Multilingualism and Globalization*

The influence of foreign languages such as English or code mixing in adolescent slang on social media has not been analyzed separately, even though this is an important factor in the formation of adolescent language identity in the digital era.

##### *Content and Interaction*

The focus of this study is more on general language attitudes than on an in-depth analysis of the types of content (e.g., text, video, or memes) and forms of interaction (comments, DMs, etc.) that can influence language use.

## **Conclusion**

Social media has had a significant impact on the use of the Indonesian language in the digital era. The shift in language styles, the emergence of new terms, and the increasing use of foreign languages on social media present challenges to preserving and maintaining Indonesian as a language of unity and national identity. However, alongside these challenges, social media also plays a role in enriching the Indonesian language with new terms that reflect the development of the times. Nevertheless, the use of these new terms must still adhere to linguistic norms and politeness to avoid misunderstandings or offending others. Efforts to maintain and preserve the proper use of Indonesian in the digital era require the active involvement of the government, educational institutions, society, the mass media, and the individual awareness of social media

users.

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