THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON SLANG LANGUAGE CHANGE AMONG MINANGKABAU ADOLESCENTS: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY OF GENERATION Z IN PADANG, WEST SUMATRA

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of social media on slang language change among Minangkabau adolescents, with a particular focus on Generation Z in Padang, West Sumatra. Using a qualitative descriptive approach grounded in sociolinguistic theory, data were collected through online questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and observation of linguistic practices on TikTok and Instagram. The findings reveal that social media acts as a major driver of lexical innovation, accelerating the diffusion of slang expressions and encouraging intensive code-mixing between Indonesian, English, and the Minangkabau language. While these practices enhance linguistic creativity and youth identity construction, they also pose challenges to the maintenance of regional languages. This study contributes to sociolinguistic discourse by contextualizing classical theories of language variation and change within Indonesia's contemporary digital landscape.

Keywords : *Social Media, Slang Language, Language Change, Minangkabau Adolescents, Sociolinguistics*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital technology has profoundly reshaped patterns of human communication, particularly among adolescents. Social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram have become dominant arenas for interaction, self-expression, and cultural exchange. These platforms not only facilitate information sharing but also function as powerful sites of linguistic innovation, where new words, expressions, and communicative styles are continuously produced and circulated.

In sociolinguistics, language is understood as a dynamic system that evolves in response to social change. Language variation and change are closely linked to social factors such as age, identity, social networks, and technological development. Adolescents are widely recognized as key agents of language change, as they tend to adopt innovative linguistic forms to express group membership and modern identity (Labov, 1994; Eckert, 2000).

Indonesia, as a multilingual and multicultural nation, presents a particularly rich context for examining these phenomena. Indonesian adolescents are exposed to multiple languages simultaneously, including the national language, regional languages, and global languages such as English. This linguistic environment encourages the emergence of slang language and code-mixing, especially in digital communication.

Within this context, the Minangkabau community of West Sumatra offers a unique case. The Minangkabau language functions as a central marker of ethnic identity and cultural heritage. However, increasing engagement with social media has introduced new linguistic influences that interact with traditional language practices. Adolescents in urban areas such as Padang actively integrate slang expressions derived from social media into their daily communication.

Despite growing scholarly interest in digital language practices, studies focusing on the interaction between social media-driven slang and regional languages in Indonesia remain limited. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating how social media influences slang language change among Minangkabau adolescents and how these changes relate to issues of identity and language maintenance.

Language variation refers to systematic differences in language use across social groups and contexts (Labov, 1972). Over time, such variation may lead to language change, particularly when innovative forms are adopted by younger speakers. Labov (1994) emphasizes that language change often emerges from everyday speech practices rather than formal institutions.

Slang language is commonly associated with youth culture and is characterized by informality, creativity, and rapid change (Holmes, 2013). Slang serves important social functions, including expressing solidarity, humor, and resistance to linguistic norms. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) argue that linguistic practices such as slang are central to identity construction.

The role of social media in language change has been increasingly emphasized in recent studies. Social media platforms facilitate rapid diffusion of linguistic forms through algorithm-driven visibility and networked interaction. Milroy's (1987) social network theory highlights the role of weak ties in spreading innovation, a process amplified in digital environments.

In multilingual settings, slang often involves code-mixing. Code-mixing reflects speakers' linguistic repertoires and social identities rather than linguistic deficiency (Gumperz, 1982). In the Indonesian context, several studies have demonstrated that social media accelerates lexical borrowing and hybrid language practices among adolescents.

However, most existing studies focus on national or urban contexts, leaving regional languages underexplored. This study contributes to the literature by examining slang language change within the Minangkabau community, highlighting the interaction between global digital culture and local ethnolinguistic identity.

METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive design with a sociolinguistic orientation. The study was conducted in Padang and surrounding areas of West Sumatra. Participants consisted of 70 Minangkabau adolescents aged 15–21 who actively use social media platforms, particularly TikTok and Instagram.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure relevance to the research objectives. Data collection techniques included online questionnaires, semi-structured interviews with 12 participants, and observation of publicly accessible social media content. These methods allowed for triangulation of data sources.

Data analysis followed thematic analysis procedures. Linguistic data were categorized into types of slang, sources of influence, and patterns of code-mixing. Ethical considerations included informed consent, data confidentiality, and anonymity of participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings indicate that slang language is extensively used by Minangkabau adolescents in both online and offline communication. Respondents reported frequent use of expressions such as 'bucin', 'red flag', 'FOMO', and 'ghosting', which were primarily acquired through social media exposure.

Code-mixing was a prominent feature of adolescent speech. Many respondents combined Indonesian slang with Minangkabau lexical items or particles, producing hybrid forms that reflect both local identity and global digital culture. These practices were perceived as enhancing expressiveness and peer solidarity.

The findings support sociolinguistic theories that position adolescents as primary agents of language change. Consistent with Labov’s (1994) concept of change from below, slang innovations emerge from youth communities and spread rapidly through digital networks.

Social media functions as an expansive social network characterized by weak ties, which facilitates rapid diffusion of linguistic innovations (Milroy, 1987). The prevalence of code-mixing reflects the negotiation of multiple identities, as adolescents balance modern digital affiliation with local cultural belonging.

While slang usage demonstrates linguistic creativity, it also raises concerns regarding the long-term maintenance of the Minangkabau language. Without deliberate efforts to promote local language use, digital dominance of slang may contribute to gradual language shift.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that social media plays a significant role in shaping slang language change among Minangkabau adolescents. Social media accelerates lexical innovation and

encourages code-mixing, reflecting the dynamic interaction between global digital culture and local linguistic identity.

The findings highlight the need for educational and cultural strategies that integrate digital literacy with regional language preservation. Future research may adopt longitudinal or quantitative approaches to further examine language change in digital contexts.

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