THE IMPLICATION OF LINGUISTIC PARADIGM SHIFT IN DIGITAL COMMUNICATION OF GENERATION Z TOWARDS INDONESIAN LANGUAGE PRESERVATION

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Abstract

The linguistic paradigm shift that occurs in Generation Z (Gen Z) in the digital era has significant implications for communication practices and efforts to preserve the standard Indonesian language. Generation Z, who grew up in a digital and global environment, tends to use a relaxed, creative language style, and utilize abbreviations, acronyms, emoticons, and foreign terms in daily communication on social media and digital platforms. This phenomenon reflects an adaptation to the need for fast and expressive communication while also posing a challenge in maintaining the purity of the standard Indonesian language. This research highlights how digitalization and social media culture encourage shifts in language patterns, including the rampant use of non-standard language, code mixing, and the adoption of foreign terms that blur the boundaries between formal and informal language. Nevertheless, awareness of the importance of good and correct Indonesian remains, although it is often marginalized by the demands of instant digital communication. The implications of this paradigm shift demand adaptive language education and literacy strategies so that the preservation of standard Indonesian is maintained in the midst of digitalization and globalization. This research contributes to the understanding of Generation Z's digital linguistic dynamics and the urgency of preserving standard Indonesian as a national identity in the era of digital communication.

Keywords: *Generation Z, digital communication, linguistic paradigm, standard Indonesian language*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesian as the national and official language of the country originated from Riau Malay, and was officially adopted as the

language of unity through the Youth Pledge in 1928. Since the beginning of independence, this language has become the main means of national integration, both in education, government, and mass media (A. S. Nasution et al., 2022).

Basically, there is no Indonesian language, what exists is the Malay language. And the Malay language itself has begun to develop since the 7th century AD in Southeast Asia (Siahaan et al., 2023). Strong evidence supporting this statement is the Kedukan Bukit inscription which is dated 633 AD and this was found in Palembang, South Sumatra. Other inscriptions that support the Malay language are Talang Tuwo in Palembang (684 AD), Kota Kapur in West Bangka (686 AD) and Karong Berani in Jambi (688 AD). The inscriptions above are also supporting evidence of the glory of the Srivijaya kingdom at that time.

According to I-Tsing, a Chinese traveller who had studied Buddhism in Sriwijaya, wrote that there was a language called "Koen-loven" alongside Sanskrit for the language of culture, such as textbooks at that time, and this Koen-loven was Malay. Then the Islamic kingdoms of the archipelago also played a major role in the development of the Malay language.

However, globalization and the development of digital technology bring new challenges to the sustainability of the Indonesian language, especially in the context of the younger generation (J. Nasution et al., 2024). Generation Z (later stated "Gen Z"), who grew up in a digital ecosystem, shows a dynamic language tendency but often ignores formal language rules. They use more foreign languages, slang terms, or short forms that are practical but have the potential to shift the use of standard Indonesian. This phenomenon has an impact not only on linguistic degradation, but also on social values and ethics in communication, especially in the digital space. The use of impolite language even contributes to the increasing cases of cyberbullying (Zhang & Wang, 2023).

The phenomenon of Indonesian mixed above has become commonplace and has been the subject of discussion by linguists in various literature and research articles in sociolinguistic studies. The mixing of a language with another language such as a foreign language is called code mixing (in English code mixing). Code mixing according to is another language situation when people mix two (or more) languages or varieties in a language act (speech act or discourse) without anything in the language situation that requires mixing the language. Code mixing is also defined as the use of language units from one language to another to expand language style or language variety (Jacinda, 2024).

In general, Indonesians are trilingual, or at least bilingual. Many Indonesians speak their mother tongue (local language), then master Indonesian while going to school/work, and possibly learn a

foreign language such as English. Because many people use regional languages such as Javanese, Batak, Aceh, Malay, Madurese, Minang, Dayak, etc. as well as Indonesian, people often speak by switching between these languages. This is called 'code-switching' or code-switching in English. Code-switching is the event of switching from one code to another. That is, a person who speaks first uses Indonesian (call code A), then he switches to Javanese (call code B), then the event of switching the use of language is what is meant code-switching or code-switching that switches from language A to B or vice versa.

Code switching is a phenomenon in which a sp(Novianti & Said, 2021)eaker switches completely from one language to another during a conversation, usually between different sentences or clauses. These switches can occur intentionally to adjust to a particular social context, audience or situation. In general, the purpose of code switching is to adjust to the interlocutor, for example, to make people feel more comfortable with the use of a particular language, and to emphasize or reinforce the meaning of a message. While code mixing is the mixing of two or more languages in one sentence or phrase without switching completely to the other language. This phenomenon often occurs in bilingual societies, where words or phrases from another language are inserted in sentences. Usually, code mixing does not follow strict syntactic rules because speakers focus more on expression or familiarity (Diyanty & Heriansyah, 2021; (Novianti & Said, 2021; Melysa et al., 2022).

Through this descriptive qualitative approach, the researchers hope to gain a full understanding of the challenges of maintaining the authenticity of the Indonesian language, especially in the midst of globalization and the increasingly strong influence of social media (J. Nasution et al., 2025). In its implementation, direct interviews with students were conducted for several main reasons.

1. Students as Representation of Generation Z
   Students represent Generation Z who grew up amidst the advancement of digital technology and social media. Therefore, interviews with them are relevant to understanding the changing linguistic paradigm in the context of digital communication.
2. Exploring Students' Experiences and Perceptions in Depth
   Through interviews, researchers can thoroughly explore students' experiences, habits, and perceptions in using language on social media, especially related to efforts to maintain standard Indonesian.
3. Identifying Social and Cultural Implications
   Interviews allow researchers to reveal the social and cultural implications of changes in communication patterns in the digital era, as well as their impact on the preservation of Indonesian language as a national identity.

4. Students as Agents of Language Change

   Students act as agents of change in shaping language trends among the younger generation. Interviews can reveal how they are the driving force in innovation as well as preservation of standard Indonesian.
5. Finding Student Adaptation Strategies to Standard Language in the Digital Age

   Interviews help researchers find student strategies in balancing practical daily communication with the responsibility of maintaining the use of good and correct Indonesian, as a basis for formulating policies or educational programs.

This study aims to analyze the impact of changes in digital communication patterns on the use of standard Indonesian among Generation Z. By understanding these dynamics, it is hoped that a strategy for preserving the Indonesian language that is relevant to today's digital context can be formulated.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, which is considered appropriate to describe in depth the dynamics of linguistic change in generation Z's digital communication, especially related to efforts to preserve the standard Indonesian language. The qualitative approach allows researchers to understand language phenomena from the perspective of the participants, in this case students of the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UINSU) as a direct representation of generation Z.

The methods used in this research include literature study, observation, and interviews. Literature study was conducted by reviewing various written sources such as books, journals, and scientific articles that discuss topics related to the authenticity and preservation of Indonesian language in a digital context. These sources became the basis for building a theoretical framework as well as tracing developing trends and paradigms.

The observation method was used to observe the real application of Indonesian language use in students' daily lives, both in direct interaction and in their communication activities on social media (A. F. Nasution, 2023). This observation is done openly to capture language practices that arise naturally.

The interview method was used as the main tool to extract in-depth data from students of the State Islamic University of North Sumatra who became research participants. An interview is a conversation between two or more people, where the interviewer asks questions to the interviewee (interviewee) to obtain information, data, or evaluation, such as in the context of job recruitment

(Pahleviannur et al., 2022). Students were chosen as interviewees because they are part of Generation Z who grew up with digital technology and social media. By interviewing students, researchers can explore their experiences, views, and attitudes regarding the use of Indonesian language in everyday digital life. The interviews also provided an opportunity to understand how they respond to the changing linguistic paradigm, as well as the strategies they employ in balancing the use of slang with efforts to maintain standard Indonesian.

In addition, the researcher also used a case study approach by raising real-life examples relevant to the research theme. These cases can come from phenomena that occur in society or students' own experiences in facing language challenges in the era of globalization. The case study research method is a research approach that studies a case in depth to gain a comprehensive understanding of a particular phenomenon or event (Hadi, Asrori, 2021).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

FINDINGS

An analysis of interviews and language tests conducted with 22 students of the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara - UINSU) shows that the understanding and use of formal Indonesian by Generation Z students follows a fairly complex pattern. Although most of the students have learned formal Indonesian in primary and secondary school, their understanding of the structure and vocabulary of the language has declined in their daily use, especially in digital communication. Here are the test results:

1. About 51% of the students could correctly identify standardized words.
2. The remaining 49% even mixed nonstandard words with standard words. Examples of common mistakes include assuming that words like "Terimakasih", "Dimana", and 'Fikir' are standardized forms, whereas according to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), the standardized forms are "Terima kasih", "Di mana", and "Pikir".

Meanwhile, when asked to improve the structure of nonstandard sentences, only 28% of people can make sentences that follow the rules, but the other 72% still have difficulties, especially with the overuse of words, sentence structure, and conjunctions. For

example, most respondents still use the phrase 'agar supaya', even though the form is an unnecessary repetition of meaning.

The bottom line is that most students know the right words, but they still can't change the words.

A. Examples of Vocabulary and Sentences Tested

The table below is the examples of vocabulary and sentences that were tested to participants;

Tabel 1. Tested Words and Formality Status

Tested words	Formality Status
Aku	Formal
Hutang	Formal
Diceritakan	Formal
Menghaturkan	Non-Formal
Standarisasi	Non-Formal (should be: Standardisasi)
Terimakasih	Non-Formal (should be: Terima kasih)
Dimana	Non-Formal (should be: Di mana)
Fikir	Non-Formal (should be: Pikir)
Kreatifitas	Non-Formal (should be: Kreativitas)
Respon	Non-Formal (should be: Respons)

B. Tested Sentence Example

1. "Belajar dengan tekun" → correct.
2. "Agar supaya naik kelas kita harus belajar" → Incorrect, because "agar" and "supaya" are redundant since the words have similar meaning.
3. "Kepada para murid-murid kami persilakan duduk" → incorrect because the word involves redundance and unnecessity.

C. Gen Z Digital Language Style Profile

Through observation and analysis of the use of digital language by university students, it was found that Generation Z's digital communication style is very dynamic, expressive, and shows a distinctive linguistic transformation.

1. Expressive and Concise
   The use of abbreviations such as LOL, OMG, BTW, or phrases like "ini sih gila!" shows Generation Z's tendency to convey emotions directly and quickly. This form is considered more appropriate in fast-paced online communication.
2. Code-Mixing
   A mix of Indonesian and English is common, for example: "Aku beneran nggak expect hasilnya bakal kayak gini." This reflects cultural openness and the influence of globalization on thought and language processes.
3. Slang as Group Identity

Terms such as "mantul", "gaskeun", "bestie", 'noob', "GG" are not just words, but symbols of membership in online communities such as gamers or K-pop fans. This language strengthens the sense of solidarity between members of the digital community.

4. Nonverbal Media as Language Amplifiers

   The use of emoticons, GIFs and stickers serve as substitutes for nonverbal expressions such as tone of voice or facial expressions in text. This helps clarify intent and avoid potential misunderstandings in digital communication.

5. Influence of Viral Culture and Algorithms

   Trending words like "vibes", 'flexing', "auto cuan", and "healing" spread through social media and quickly became part of daily vocabulary, creating a language ecosystem that is responsive to popular culture and virality algorithms.

DISCUSSION

The findings above have several important implications for the preservation of standard Indonesian, including:

1. Decreasing Awareness of Formal Structures

   Many students are accustomed to informal language styles so that they experience difficulties when faced with formal demands, such as scientific writing, official letters, or academic communication. This can also be seen from the tendency to insert digital abbreviations such as FYI, TQ, even in campus emails.

2. Threat of Loss of Formal Variety

   If not balanced by contextual and systematic language education, the standard language variety can be displaced by digital language. As a result, the younger generation has difficulty when they have to move to formal situations.

3. Adaptive Strategy Required

   The preservation of standard language must be adapted to the digital character of Gen Z. This can be done through creative approaches such as: Interactive video-based modules or online quizzes, literacy campaigns through social media and collaboration with content creators who promote standardized language.

Gen Z has grown up in a world full of social media, instant messaging and digital content. They are used to fast and instant communication, such as through WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter/X. As such, this requires language that is concise, concise in meaning, and quick to understand. This has led them to create efficient and innovative language styles.

Gen Z's digital communication style is dynamic, expressive and distinctive as it is shaped by digital culture, driven by the need for self-

expression, influenced by global communities and viral trends, and reflects their identity as an adaptive and creative generation.

Gen Z often uses code mixing and code switching between Indonesian, English and slang in their daily communication, especially in the digital world. This happens and what impact it has on language:

Gen Z does it because it becomes a broader expression. English or slang can convey more specific nuances or emotions. Gen Z is also influenced by social media and pop culture. Gen Z also recognizes that code mixing and code switching is an efficient way to communicate. Sometimes there are English or slang terms that are shorter and more precise than their Indonesian equivalents.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

CONCLUSION

The linguistic paradigm shift experienced by Generation Z in the digital era creates a new reality in language practices, especially in the context of daily digital communication. Language styles that tend to be informal, expressive, and contain a mixture of foreign languages, abbreviations, and visual symbols such as expression icons, are a form of adaptation to the needs of fast-paced communication and full of emotional nuances. However, behind this creativity, there are serious consequences for the sustainability of the standard Indonesian language as a pillar of national identity.

Based on the results of interviews and language proficiency testing of students of the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UINSU) as a representation of Generation Z, it was found that there is a significant gap between the theoretical understanding of good and correct Indonesian language and its ability to be applied in the form of sentences or formal contexts. Although some students are able to recognize standard words, they often find it difficult to arrange them in an appropriate sentence structure. This is exacerbated by the dominance of digital communication styles that are instant and accustomed to the widespread use of code-mixing and popular terms.

This phenomenon reflects a real challenge in efforts to preserve the standard Indonesian language. If not addressed with adaptive strategies, standard language risks being marginalized, especially in an environment dominated by digital culture and social media algorithms. Therefore, preserving the Indonesian language is not enough with a normative approach or conventional teaching, but must be designed contextually, creatively, and close to Generation Z's digital daily life.

An effective preservation strategy should involve interactive media, utilization of technology, and collaboration with digital

content players to revive the use of standard language in a non-patronizing yet authentic form. Language education should also be able to bridge practical communication needs with language responsibilities that reflect the nation's identity. In this way, standard Indonesian will not only survive, but also develop as a language that is adaptive, relevant, and remains rooted in national values in the midst of globalization.

SUGGESTION

Gen Z should understand the difference between slang and standard language. Gen Z should use formal Indonesian (e.g. during presentations, interviews, or official writing). Gen Z is advised to read a lot of quality content such as books, articles, or news from trusted sources. They should also get used to writing in standard language. It is expected that all parties build a culture of reminding each other if there are mistakes in language use, without judgment. Gen Z should also be proud to speak Indonesian and make it part of their digital identity. Moreover, Indonesia language has become the official language of the UNESCO, United Nations (UN).

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