



The Use of Slang on Tiktok Comments in East Kalimantan

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Abstract

This research seeks to investigate the study of slang discourse seen in the TikTok comment sections of East Kalimantan users. It uses a qualitative descriptive design to collect the data from TikTok comments and conduct in-depth interviews with eight participants aged from 16 to 21 years. The analysis uses Allan and Burrige's (2006) framework for categorizing slang, placing larger significance onto types, functions, or perceptions of slang. The results found slang such as slay, anjay, gacor, and rizz are often found among the participants. Some of the slangs tend to borrow from local expression and global internet culture. Slang mostly does the job of expressing moods, jokes, creating group identity, or serving in any easy way to communicate with ease and relevance. This study argues that TikTok further facilitates the growth of slang as a digital platform not only targeting audiences but puts language practices onto the local Gen Z context. This would have implications for further research on how such digital integration influences the language and identity among the youth within the regional contexts of Indonesia

Keywords: *Slang; TikTok Comments; East Kalimantan*

Introduction

The way people speak right now undergoes many changes, especially because of internet influence. One big change is how people use slang language in social media, like TikTok. Slang is the type of informal and easy language that people use to sound more fun, interesting, and following the times. On TikTok, especially in East Kalimantan, the use of slang mostly shows people expressing themselves, especially young people. That is the reason this topic has become interesting and important to study.

The first reason why this topic is important is because slang shows who we

are and how we want the other people to be seen by others. Many people use slang to show that they are part of a group or just following a certain trend. As Putri & Nurhayati (2023) stated that slang is not only just a fun word, but also relates to identity and a social of belonging of gen z users on tiktok. When a person uses slang, they are showing that they understand a trend or a certain style that is also recognized by their group. This is especially applicable in the younger generation, using slang to feel closer to other people. Using slang can make them feel more acceptable and "connected" with their friends or their followers in social media.

The second reason is a quick development of slang. It is among the aspects of language that change most quickly. Within a few days, new slang terms can come along and get popular. According to Crystal (2001), the internet accelerates the spread of new words, and TikTok plays a major role in this fast-paced process. This align with research by Wenas et al, (2024), slang on TikTok is always changing, involving many new terms appearing and older ones being replaced, as well as highly creative and dynamic word generation processes.

The third reason is that TikTok has influenced internet communication. People attempt to make their messages short and easy to understand because the app uses short videos and comments. According to Akbar & Hariyanto (2024), Popular language on TikTok highly impact of how students make communication. This suggests that individuals attempt to communicate in a fun and trendy way as TikTok is a quick and entertaining tool. Slang becomes so helpful because of this. It facilitates users' ability to react, joke, and speak in a trendy or fashionable way. Additionally, it helps them blend in with the TikTok community, which values speed, fun, and creativity.

A different aspect of this study is that it explores TikTok slang in East Kalimantan. The majority of other research just discusses slang in general or its online spread. Eti and Rosalinah (2024), for example, discussed how slang spreads but did not concentrate on how it is used in a particular location. Because it only focuses on East Kalimantan TikTok users, this study is different. In this way, we can discover more about how locals blend their own style while at the same time following international trends. People in different areas may use slang in different ways, depending on their culture, habits, or what is popular in their own region. By looking closely at East Kalimantan, this research adds something new and useful to the study of language and social media.

TikTok users use viral words such as "slay" or "ghosting" in the world, but young people in East Kalimantan usually prefer their local modification. For example, instead of just slaying, "slay parah" is created, or the inclusion of informal words like "gacor." Essentially being "ghosted" means to cut communication and not respond, with some mix of humorous Indonesian expressions like "digantung lalu di-ghosting parah." It's a mix of straight English slang and local words. This integration shows how international digital language blends with Indonesian expressions to form a distinct communicative style that is defined and continuously created by trends and culture.

Slang cannot be called imitated; it needs to be remade so it can accommodate and fit the carrier of the message and humor. These slang expressions themselves prove that it is not just a strange language, it is a matter of self-expression and creativity on their part about the culture, whereas the others view it, within the social area, as a global link and a local variety. This is the space where global interactions can happen.

This topic is also related to how young people nowadays understand and create language. More young people and teens use social media than they do books, television, or other forms of traditional media. As a result, one of their primary language and communication resources is the internet. Because of this, slang is more than simply a passing trend; it may truly reflect the thoughts, emotions, and self-expression of young people today.

As a way to better understand what is happening, this research additionally includes many linguistic theories. Labov (1972) discussed how background, age, and social groups influence language. According to Mustapha & Marzuki (2023), gen z uses slang on TikTok for a variety of purposes, including connection building and emotional expression. This align with idea of the explanation the wide use of slang on TikTok. Words themselves are not important; what matters is the meaning behind them. People may be trying to make a joke, express support, or simply follow a trend when they use slang.

Allan and Burrige (2006) explain that slang has several types. The first type mentioned is fresh and creative, this means completely new words or phrases with no prior examples. Second is flippant, which refers to words or expressions used mockingly. The third type is imitative, meaning words that are borrowed from culture, media, or other languages. Another type is acronym, with slang created from initials, such as "FYP" for "For You Page." The last form is clipping, shortened forms of existing words, like "sus" from "suspicious." These categories further help researchers explore how slang is created and why it gains immediate popularity. Slang helps with developing group identity and can show social and culture meaning deeper. In digital platforms like Tiktok, slang has become more dynamic, and evolving almost every day following trends and online culture.

The shaping of slang by digital interaction and cultural context has been investigated quite thoroughly in recent studies. (Wedananta, et al., 2023) explored how Balinese Gen Z use slang among themselves via Instagram, classifying it by Allan and Burrige's slang framework. The study also showed users creatively mix English and Indonesian owing to both global trends and local expressions, which supports the view that the nature of slang is global but ecologically contextual and adaptive.

Similar observations were made by Jeresano & Carretero (2022) who explored the digital slang of Filipino Gen Z on Facebook and Messenger confirming slang's role in identity shaping, building up confidence on the digital platforms, and expressing solidarity. Yet the study also noticed that the slangs can create gaps in communication between generations and may ultimately affect formal writing skills.

The other study highlights that creativity behind slang in Tiktok shows how digital users can quickly adapt with language change (Wenas et al, 2024). They found that the process of word formation such as blending, clipping, and acronyms is very common to find in the comments section in Tiktok. This will make TikTok a rich environment to learn language innovation. Current study also suggests that TikTok is among the most active platforms for new slang words to arise and spread. For example, (Jaya et al, 2025) found that Gen Z content creators on TikTok create and share new slang terms at an extremely rapid pace, using types such as imitative, acronym, and clipping. The most common use is for referring or commenting on situations in a fun way.

The word formation shows how new slang terms are created. According to Wenas et al, (2024), there are several ways of slang formation in TikTok, such as blending ("brunch" from "breakfast" and "lunch"), clipping ("sus" from "suspicious"), and acronym ("FYP" for "For You Page"). Generation Z often use terms and acronyms for making communication be quicker and more interesting (Tufail et al, 2024). This is showing that digital slang not only makes the language simple, but also making it more interesting and efficient in the past-paced digital platform.

The use of slang is mostly influenced by local culture. According to Wenas et al, (2024), even though TikTok is a global application, the user often mixes the global slang trend with local expression. For example, in Indonesia slang words like "menyala," "gacor," or "kasih paham" show off local creativity that blend with internet global culture. Also, Tufail et al, (2024) found that even Generation Z sharing slang cross country, the culture background still influenced which slang is popular and how it is used.

The study from Eti & Rosalinah (2024) shows several major functions in TikTok. Slang used to create humor, this is showing that people follow the new trends, building social relations, and creating group identity. Digital slang sometimes also works as a "badge" of memberships in the TikTok community. Another study from Dewi (2024) mentions that slang in TikTok can express emotion quickly, such as happiness, disappointment, or approval. Slang is helping users to save time and space keeping the user still expressive and relatable.

Some earlier studies have analyzed digital slang in general or in national context, but not many have focused on specific regional communities. This study focuses on the language of TikTok users in East Kalimantan. The region has its own local culture, linguistic practice, and online interaction. With focus in this area, the research reveals a specific analysis of the ways in which global slang trends become

adapted to fit local identities. This importance since slang is not only influenced by global internet culture, but also by local speech styles, values, and creativity. This research is unique as it explores how a specific subgroup of young people in East Kalimantan reacts to global language trends. It also shows how they modify slang to accommodate their online practice and local culture.

To help guide this research, here are the research questions:

1. What types of slang words are used in TikTok comments in East Kalimantan?
2. What slang words are most commonly used in TikTok comments in East Kalimantan?
3. Why do TikTok users in East Kalimantan use slang in their comments?

Method

This study uses qualitative descriptive research because it aims to describe and analyze linguistic phenomena with the uses of slang on TikTok comments by East Kalimantan users. This method was selected because it is appropriate to reveal meaning, motivation, and also social perception contained in the uses of slang language in depth without involving statistical measurement. Data were gathered during March-April 2025 and come from two main sources, the first one is from TikTok comments that have slang words and the second is from the semi-structured interview results with eight active participants who use TikTok and live in East Kalimantan.

Purposive sampling techniques were chosen for choosing participants because it is selected by specific purpose criteria, for participants who live in East Kalimantan, with the aged 16-24 mix of male and female respondent, actively interact through TikTok's comment section, and know or been use digital slang. The main data will come from TikTok comments that contain slang and will be interviewed to find out more. The interviews were done online through TikTok chat, with a duration of about 25-30 minutes for each participant. Interview guides include questions about the type of slang used, where they know the slang, reason behind the use of slang, and how they perspective of slang in communication.

Before the interviews were done, all the participants were given information and gave their consent to participate. Their identities were maintained confidentiality. Data saturation was achieved in the sixth interview, when no new information was shown, but two more interviews were added to make sure the completeness of data. Data triangulation was done by comparing TikTok comments that have been found and interview results for validity. For analysis data was carried out with content analysis, which is classified type of slang based on Allan and Burrige (2006) categorized, also thematic analysis from interviews for understanding motivation, social function, and perspective of users towards use of slang in TikTok.

Results

Types and Examples of Slang Used

After performing a process of data collection from documentation on TikTok comments and interviews with eight participants in East Kalimantan, various findings were found about the types, sources, reason, function, and also the perception of the use of slang in Tiktok comments. These findings show that the use of slang is not only made into forms of linguistic variation, but also a part of identity, creativity, and social expression from the users.

One of the main findings is the variety of slang types that are used by the participants. Words such as “anjay, gacor, slay, rizz, sigma, GG, cutie, loml, ygy, cmiiw, and fine shyt” often show in TikTok comments. For example, participant P3 stated, “Anjay, gacor, slay, and many others” as a form of slang that is used daily. Meanwhile

P5 said, “besides fr, coz, lol, fyi, idk, btw, urwell, cmiiw, etc” as frequent use vocabulary. This shows that TikTok users not only adapt slang from overseas trends, but also create unique shapes from the local environment. Also, this aligns with the findings of (Jaya et al, 2025) who found that Gen Z often reuses and adapts the words that have existed to fit in new situations.

These slang terms can be divided into a number of categories for easier understanding (Allan & Burridge, 2006):

Table 1. Type of Slang

Type of Slang	Example(s)	Explanation
Fresh and Creative	gacor, anjay	Unique, newly invented words, often local
Flippant	fine shyt	Playful, irreverent, or humorous expressions
Imitative	slay, rizz, sigma	Borrowed from pop culture or global trends
Acronym	FYP, GG, IDK, BTW	Formed from initial letters
Clipping	sus, urwell, loml	Shortened from longer words

Frequency of Slang Usage

Based on the interview results of 8 participants, some slang terms have a higher appearance frequency compared to others. “Slay” was mentioned by 6 of 8 participants, making it one of the most used and showing the strong influence of global trends. “Gacor” was mentioned by 5 participants, showing that variation of local still relevant in the digital communication context in East Kalimantan. Next, “rizz” showed 4 participants' answers, while “anjay” was mentioned by 3 participants.

Other than that, “CMIIW,” “cutie,” “fine shyt,” “sigma,” and “YGY” was mentioned by each of 2-3 participants, showing the more situational usage. Other terms like “ghosting,” “FOMO,” “GG,” “LOML,” “fr,” and “skibidi” was mentioned by

only 1-2 participants, which means its use not yet evenly distributed among teenagers in Tiktok at East Kalimantan, but still reflect their adaption of new trend that appears by global.

The mention of the number shows that combination with popular global slang and local creativity, also preference based on contexts, age, and digital experience of each participant.

Demographic patterns in Slang Use

Based on age and gender the participants showed different preferences in slang usage. For P2, P3, P4, P6, P8 they tended to use acronyms influenced by slang that are popular in global like “slay,” “rizz,” “CMIW,” and “FOMO,” by female participants aged 16-21. While, for P1, P5, and P7, more often used local or fresh expressions like “gacor,” “gasken,” and “menyala” by male participants. Younger participants aged under 19 were more experimental, likely using humorous or clipped slang terms pulled from memes and trends from the internet, while older participants showed a usage balanced from both local and global slang depending on context.

Sources and Reasons for Using Slang

In terms of sources, all the participants agree that they know slang from social media, especially from TikTok and Instagram. As P2 stated, “From social media like TikTok or Instagram then brought into everyday language too”, and P6 mentioned that he knows slang from “social media, usually TikTok”. This supports the findings from Eti & Rosalinah (2024), that the spread of slang faster because of the social media algorithm that encourages word virality and language trend.

The reason for the use of slang is also quite varied. Some of the participants agree that using slang because they feel that it has become a habit, or because it is just as simple as following the trend so as not to feel left behind. P5 mentioned in brief that, “Because I’m used to it”. Also, P4 reveals Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO) if don’t use slang, “Because it’s a trend and many Gen Z people are using it. So my term is fomo and I don’t want to be left behind”.

Function and Perception of Slang

The main function of slang in communication, according to the participants, is to make things faster and easier through the process of interaction, also makes the conversation feel more relaxed. As P3 said, “I think using slang can make communication faster and easier, and also seems casual and contemporary”. The similar thing is expressed by P6 “Because it’s usually shortened so it’s faster to chat”.

The interestingly, almost all the participants showing positif feelings after use slang. P2 said that, "It's fun, especially if someone understands the slang". Also, P6 even mentioned, "It's cool, I feel more comfortable using slang too". This showing that the used of slang give sense of connection and comfort, especially when interacting with fellow Gen Z community.

Slang Trends and Contextual Use

In development, the participants steted that the terms of new slang currently popular are, rizz, sigma, aura, fine shyt, and skibidi. For example, P7 stated, "There are like sigma, aura or rizz also usually popular these days", while P8 adding, "There are some. Like rizz, fine shyt and skibidi".

The other participants supplemented that because slang words are new terms, they are actively helping to update things. P2 said, "Because that slang is popular right now." This suggests that slang is not only being used for fun, but also to keep up with social trends and be accepted into the group.

There were differences in slang use based on the type of content one usually watches. For example, P5 and P6 used English slang words like FR, LOL, and CMIIW, while P2 and P4 used local slang words like ghosting or kasih paham.

Some of the participants explained that they don't always fully know the meaning of the slang they use, yet they use it because it is trending. P4 explained, "Because it's trendy and many Gen Z are using it, since many are using it, I'm afraid of missing out and don't want to be left behind."

The participants expressed that they use slang mainly on the internet, more specifically comment sections. They do not use slang in formal contexts like school or with parents. It shows that slang is mostly used in informal environments, such as TikTok comment sections or chats among peers. None of the participants mentioned using slang in formal settings like schools or with authority figures, which means there is an understanding when to use it in the right context. Slang functions not only as a linguistic tool, but also as a social filter, used to adjust communication based on context whether casual, humorous, or peer-focused.

Discussion

Interpretation and Implementations of Slang Use

Users of TikTok in East Kalimantan do not simply adopt world slang trends; they also modify and innovate to develop their local ones. In fact, there is an active part of youth in forming a linguistic identity specific to their digital or cultural environment. As noted by Jaya et al. (2025), the Gen Z generation is distinguished by the use of old jargon, retrofitting it to new usages, an indication of how creatively they engage languages. This shows that language tends to be quite fluid and dynamic, especially regarding those young people very much caught up in time spent on social media environments.

The influence of TikTok and Instagram, for instance, in making slang popular is evident in the rapidity at which language adopts this term. As Eti & Rosalinah (2024) argue, the algorithmic nature of social media allows for slang to spread and go viral easily. Crystal (2001) emphasized how the connection of internet technology and communication accelerates the process of evolution in languages and their slang. Dewi (2024) adds that slang is no longer simply a linguistic phenomenon, but it translates youth identity and how they are trying to belong in the digital world.

Social functions and Contextual Use of Slang

Slang does not only define a certain kind of language; it also performs social functions. Putri & Nurhayati (2023) stated that slang acts like a marker of identity social in online group like those formed on TikTok. The outcome of this study reinforces this point: it is reported by participants as having used slang because it saved one from isolation, manifesting FOMO (fear of missing out). In a similar vein, Allan & Burrige (2006) captured slang as a tool through which relaxed and effective communication is achieved-consistent with comments of participants regarding ease and casualness it brings to online conversation. Slang also performs emotional and relational functions beyond mere efficiency of communication.

As Mustapha & Marzuki (2023) emphasized, the use of slang among gen z on TikTok reflects to emotions and social ties. In this case, participants would have expressed joy and comfort from use of slang when their peers grew to understand the formulations. Strikingly in this case was the trend in participant awareness of context; slang had its use in informal digital spaces but was reserved in formal settings such as school or family conversations. Syafa'ah & Haryanto (2023) strengthen the idea that slang is mainly learnt from exposure of social media platforms, such as TikTok and repetition and not through formalized education.

Cultural Adaptation and Language Variation

According to Wenas et al (2024), the algorithm of TikTok exposes users with different worlds and local slangs in a linguistically diverse environment and it represents an algorithmic force for users to combine international slangs with the local expressions of their locality. The combination is reflective of the dynamic linguistic space in which globally and locally derived innovations meet.

For example, even as the international slang "slay" or "rizz" were used fairly widely, the users also respected local terms such as "gacor" or "kasih paham," which are clear evidence of cultural adaptation. All these examples testify to the sociolinguistic processes which include contact, borrowing, and digital innovation across regions.

Conclusion

The research focused on East Kalimantan users who use slang in TikTok comments. It found that slang plays an emotive role, promotes social bonding, and makes one appear trendy or "cool." Participants showed that they used slang in their online communication by bringing in slang from both local culture and global internet trends. Slang use also shows how social media platforms, and TikTok, in particular, are actively influencing the linguistic practices of young people. The study, however, has its limitations. The eight participants were chosen from East Kalimantan, thus limiting the generalizability of the findings to populations in other areas.

Interestingly, there are ideas of mixing local slang with global slang; however, clear examples of direct mixing within the same utterance were not found. Therefore, this limits how far mixing can be claimed with the investigated data. Future studies are suggested to have a bigger and more-varied background of participants from discrete areas in comparing linguistic patterns. Deeper semantic layers and sociopragmatic meanings attached to the slang expressions could also be studied and how they change over time.

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