Exploring Cyberculture: A Virtual Ethnographic Perspective on Generation Z Slang on TikTok

Mengeksplorasi Budaya Siber: Sebuah Perspektif Etnografi Virtual Terhadap Bahasa Gaul Generasi Z Pada Aplikasi TikTok

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keywords: slang types, virtual ethnography, cultural artifacts, cyberculture, real-world effects	Generation Z frequently uses slang as a communication medium for daily conversations due to the proliferation of social media. People typically blend various language variations for communication, whether in real-world interactions or in the virtual realm. One such interaction in the virtual world using slang occurs on the TikTok application, both in content creation and in the comment section. This interaction has transformed slang into a cyberculture, facilitating the exchange of identities in cyberspace. This research utilizes a virtual ethnography approach, incorporating four levels of cyber media analysis, to investigate the usage of slang by Generation Z on the TikTok application at various levels. Through observation and interviews with TikTok content creators and Generation Z users, researchers found several types of slang that have become cultural artifacts on the TikTok application, including slang derived from foreign languages, acronyms, abbreviations, and reversed words, as well as slang borrowed from foreign languages. The interactions occurring on the TikTok application also have real-world effects on the informants, such as experiences, relationships, and changes in daily communication habits due to the presence of slang.

INFO ARTIKEL	ABSTRAK
Kata kunci: *tipe bahasa gaul, etnografi virtual, artefak budaya, budaya siber, efek dunia nyata*	*Perkembangan media sosial membuat bahasa gaul menjadi amat populer di kalangan generasi Z karena kerap kali digunakan sebagai media komunikasi untuk percakapan sehari-hari. Biasanya, berbagai variasi bahasa disatupadukan untuk berkomunikasi, baik interaksi yang dilakukan di dunia nyata maupun dunia maya. Salah satu interaksi di dunia maya dengan bahasa gaul terjadi pada aplikasi TikTok, yakni pada pembuatan konten dan dalam kolom komentar. Interaksi ini membuat bahasa gaul menjadi budaya di media siber yang dipertukarkan antarentitas. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan etnografi virtual dengan empat level analisis media siber untuk mengetahui bagaimana budaya siber penggunaan bahasa gaul oleh generasi Z pada aplikasi TikTok dalam berbagai level. Melalui metode observasi dan wawancara dengan konten kreator dan generasi Z pengguna TikTok, peneliti memperoleh hasil terdapat beberapa tipe bahasa gaul yang menjadi artefak budaya pada aplikasi TikTok, di antaranya bahasa gaul dari bahasa asing, bahasa gaul dari singkatan, pemendekkan, dan kata yang dibalik, hingga bahasa gaul serapan dari bahasa asing. Interaksi yang terjadi pada aplikasi TikTok juga membawa efek bagi informan ke dunia nyata, seperti pengalaman, relasi, hingga perubahan kebiasaan berkomunikasi sehari-hari akibat adanya bahasa gaul.*

Introduction

The rise of social networking sites has made it easier to observe the development of new language styles in everyday life, known as "slang." Slang is a mix of different languages, including regional languages, Indonesian, and foreign languages. Originally used by specific groups as a secret code, slang has gained widespread popularity among Generation Z due to the influence of social media, emerging as a common form of both verbal and non-verbal daily communication.

Slang has become prevalent in both real-life interactions and cyberspace, thanks to the rise of social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok. Among these platforms, TikTok has gained popularity in Indonesia for its slang. Users can express themselves through customized music choices and enhance their videos with a variety of music, filters, stickers, and creative sounds. Additionally, TikTok users can comment on videos, and these comments often feature slang. TikTok users draw their slang from a variety of languages, such as regional languages, foreign languages, and playful alterations of Indonesian. This slang tends to become popular on TikTok before spreading to other social media platforms due to TikTok's ability to make videos go viral quickly. Research on Gen Z teenagers' use of slang on TikTok has revealed diverse forms and meanings employed for communication. Furthermore, investigations have identified various forms of slang words, including abbreviations, acronyms, word reversals, and the creation of new words.

The use of slang can create a gap in understanding between younger and older individuals, leading to communication breakdowns (Zein & Wagiati, 2018). Younger people who are socially active primarily understand slang, while older generations may struggle due to differences in age, environment, and educational background (Fitriah et al., 2023). Aditya et al., (n.d.), suggest that people who don't use slang might perceive them as outdated or traditional. Furthermore, M. F. Saputra (2022) has pointed out that new vocabulary introduced through slang can be confusing. The use of slang also makes it difficult for people who are unfamiliar with it to properly and accurately use the Indonesian language, requiring significant time and effort for comprehension (Suleman & Islamiyah, 2018).

The widespread use of slang by Generation Z on the TikTok platform has given rise to a unique language and culture within the online world. As a result, researchers are interested in exploring how Generation Z uses slang on TikTok from a cultural perspective within cyber media (cyberculture). They usually use virtual ethnographic methods and four levels of cyber media analysis. The study will address the following research questions:

1. How does cyberculture manifest itself in the use of slang by Generation Z within the media space of the TikTok application?
2. How does cyberculture manifest itself in Generation Z's use of slang within media documents and media objects on the TikTok app?
3. How does Generation Z's use of the TikTok application reflect cyberculture?

The study by Zhou & Fan (2013) explored the evolution of slang in the United States, considering individual and social factors. The research delved into the social functions of American slang, highlighting its role in asserting self-identity, expressing emotions, and enhancing politeness. The study drew examples from contemporary American slang textbooks, original American films, novels, and dictionaries of contemporary American slang.

The researchers have identified a gap in communication studies related to the ethnography of slang. Previous research in this area has primarily come from literature and linguistics and has not focused on the everyday use of slang, especially among Generation Z. Additionally, there is limited research on the phenomenon of slang on the TikTok application, as most prior studies have looked at the use of slang on platforms like WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram.

In this regard, the researchers observe several differences from previous studies, as this research focuses on the slang used in the TikTok application through a virtual ethnographic study. The selection of the virtual ethnography method is based on four levels of cyber media analysis: the media space

level, media document level, media object level, and experience level. The researchers will also conduct virtual interviews with several TikTok content creators who are part of Generation Z. Moreover, this study concentrates on a unique demographic, namely Generation Z users who actively use the TikTok application and employ slang as a communication tool, a phenomenon not previously examined in prior research. This aspect serves as a foundation for this study, highlighting its novelty compared to earlier investigations. Furthermore, Nasrullah (2020) will contextualize the results and discussion of this research within the framework of cyberculture.

The researchers aim to delve deeper into Generation Z's use of slang on the TikTok app from a cyberculture perspective. The slang frequently used by Generation Z on TikTok is creating new language and cultural dynamics in the cyber realm. This study will help the researchers address questions about cultural trends in cyber media related to Generation Z's use of slang on the TikTok platform.

Virtual Ethnography

Ethnography, according to the KBBI (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia), is the depiction of the culture of contemporary ethnic groups. Ethnography aims not only to observe the current cultural realities of a group and explain their activities but also to understand the historical and prospective aspects of these societal groups. It raises awareness among them about strategies pertaining to leadership dominance as well as the practices of racial, religious, and gender inequalities (Nasrullah, 2020).

Nasrullah (2020) defines virtual ethnography as a type of ethnographic research that takes place in virtual spaces. Hine (2000) describes virtual ethnography as a methodological approach that analyzes the internet and comprehends the behaviors of internet users during their online activities. Conversely, Kozinets (2020) characterizes virtual ethnography as a distinct type of ethnographic research, known as netnography, that aims to reveal computer-mediated interaction patterns.

Several fundamental principles underpin virtual ethnographic research. First, it starts with the premise that the Internet constitutes a unique domain with distinct entities. Second, the cyber-social reality that emerges may significantly differ from offline reality (Nasrullah, 2020).

The researchers use virtual ethnography and four levels of cyber media analysis in this study to examine the use of slang on the TikTok application. The researchers seek to comprehend the exchange of this language and its potential transformation into everyday language. Language is a crucial dimension of culture (Sugiawan, 2022), and the process of interaction in the cyber realm generates trends in slang.

Levels of Cyber Media Analysis

Rulli Nasrullah introduces a method for researching culture and cultural artifacts on the Internet in his book "Virtual Ethnography as Communication, Culture, and Biotechnology Research on the Internet." This method is referred to as the Cyber Media Analysis Method (AMS). It provides a framework and guidance for conducting virtual ethnography consisting of four distinct levels, each offering insights into the nature of virtual communities online (Nasrullah, 2018). Each level can operate independently, but AMS also incorporates elements from offline and on-location research influenced by the ethnographer's perspective (Nasrullah, 2018).

Media Space

The media space unveils the structural elements of citizen journalism, encompassing activities like account creation, content publishing procedures, and visual aspects of media presentation. Virtual ethnographic techniques can gather data pertaining to these aspects. In this approach, researchers not only assume the role of observers but also engage firsthand in the process by creating personal accounts and pages within citizen journalism media platforms.

Media Document

Researchers study the transmission of content and its meanings through cyber media at the media document level. User-generated texts (encoding) become crucial focal points for interpretation (decoding). This level allows cybermedia researchers to explore how users or audiences represent themselves. For instance, texts not only express viewpoints and opinions, but also mirror ideologies, social contexts, political stances, cultural distinctiveness, and even the portrayal of audiences.

Media Object

The third level, known as the media object level, is particularly specific because it allows researchers to observe both individual and collective activities and interactions among users within cyber media platforms. Researchers can obtain data at this level from both the texts themselves and the contextual environment surrounding these texts. Saville-Troike (2003: 3), as cited in Nasrullah (2022), emphasizes that at this level, researchers engage in communication ethnography practices. This involves immersing themselves in the field, making observations, interviewing subjects, participating in community activities, and potentially experimenting to understand how local residents perceive their presence.

Researchers primarily focus on the textual output users produce at the media document level, but at the media object level, they shift their focus to how other users receive and interact with these texts within cybermedia environments.

Experience

The experience level is an important bridge between the virtual and real worlds, especially in understanding why users participate in and create content for citizen journalism media. In addition to motivations, this level also explores whether events in the online world are impacted by the real world or not. Researchers examine the reasons behind content creation and its effects. Furthermore, at this level, researchers can draw connections between phenomena observed online and their real-world counterparts (Nasrullah, 2022).

Cyberculture

According to Nasrullah (2022), culture fundamentally comprises values that emerge through interactions among individuals within the context of their experiences and their interactions with media. These interactions over time lead to the recognition and internalization of values, which can embed themselves in individuals' subconscious minds and either directly or indirectly transmit to future generations.

It is indisputable that culture comprises values that arise from interactions among people within a specific region or country. This cultural framework serves as the foundation and reference point for communication processes among its inhabitants. The emergence of culture in distinct regions fosters diversity, differences, and unique characteristics that set them apart from others. These distinctions can lead to two contrasting aspects: positive attributes and negative consequences.

The internet medium plays a pivotal role in the ongoing development of cyberculture on a global scale. The characteristics of the virtual environment significantly influence life through interactions within cyberspace. Cyberspace, often referred to as cyberspace, can be comprehended through its cultural aspects and artifacts that manifest within it. Initially perceived in cultural studies as a simplistic communication model compared to direct face-to-face interactions, the Internet generation communicates messages or information using text or symbols such as writing or emoticons, which are mutually understandable by both parties (Fauzi, 2018).

Cyberculture in Social Media

In his book "Intercultural Communication in the Era of Cyber Culture" (Nasrullah, 2012), Nasrullah defines the internet as a space where culture is produced, distributed, and consumed. Cyberculture, in essence, explores how culture manifests in cyberspace. Social media serves as a platform through which cyberculture emerges, and it facilitates the development of cybercultural artifacts. Essentially, cyberculture on social media reflects and originates from the real world where users exist.

Content as Culture

In addition to attracting new audiences through new media platforms, content remains central for the growth and development of culture on social media. The audience produces and consumes content, which serves as the fundamental material through which culture evolves. Social media platforms disseminate various forms of content, including written text, photos, videos, sounds, and more. These diverse forms of content contribute significantly to shaping and perpetuating cultural expressions within the digital sphere.

Language in Social Media

In social media, language emerges as a significant aspect of cyberculture. Users create, share, and consume cyberculture through text and other forms of content, which act as cultural artifacts. Technological devices, from a communication perspective, mediate interactions in cyber media, facilitating and representing human communication through technology or machines. Cyber researchers refer to this transformation as "remediation", as it renders certain aspects of face-to-face communication irrelevant in mediated contexts (Graham, 2004). People commonly refer to communication through computer mediums as CMC (Computer-Mediated Communication).

When discussing text in cyberspace, two commonly used terms are "netspeak" and "netlingo." Netspeak refers to writing in a manner that resembles spoken language. This includes modes such as MUDs (Multi-User Dungeons), online chat rooms, or instant messaging platforms, where communication often mimics the casual and informal nature of spoken conversation (Thurlow et al., 2004).

On the other hand, net lingo refers to writing text as if it were spoken language. In this context, cybermedia structures its written text to convey expressions and tones similar to those in verbal communication. Therefore, each word or sentence written in cybermedia appears to mirror the cadence and intonation found in everyday speech (Thurlow et al., 2004). These terms highlight how language adapts and evolves within digital communication environments to resemble either spoken language or conversational styles.

Method

This research employs a qualitative method with a virtual ethnographic approach, specifically focusing on studying virtual groups on the Internet. Through virtual ethnography, researchers aim to analyze how Generation Z utilizes slang on platforms like TikTok. Internet culture influences the evolution of this slang, making it accessible not only to Generation Z but also to all internet users who interact with these platforms. This approach allows for a deep exploration of how digital environments shape language and cultural practices across different user demographics. To ensure the accuracy of the data in this study, the researchers will use source triangulation to test the data's credibility. Source triangulation involves comparing different sources to confirm the validity of the collected data. In this study, the researchers will use interviews with language experts or observers who focus on linguistic phenomena. They will compare the results of the interviews with the experts' opinions on the use of slang in communication activities on the TikTok application.

Virtual Ethnography

Virtual ethnography expands on traditional ethnographic methods, which usually concentrate on groups associated with specific physical locations. In contrast, virtual ethnography, especially on social networks, overlooks geographical limitations. Instead of a physical location, virtual ethnography embraces the idea of space (Prasetya, 2013). The methodological approach focuses on examining social phenomena and user cultures within cybermedia.

Bell (2001, cited in Nasrullah, 2022) states that virtual ethnography is a crucial method for studying cybercultural phenomena on the internet. There are various approaches to internet research in virtual ethnography, depending on individual perspectives on the internet. According to Kozinets (2002, cited in Nasrullah, 2020), virtual ethnography involves two main types of data collection. First, researchers gather data by directly communicating with members of virtual communities. Researchers collect observational data by observing virtual communities. The typical duration for online observations in virtual spaces spans around two to three months. This method allows researchers to comprehensively explore and understand the dynamics of virtual communities and cybercultures.

Virtual ethnography is an approach to observing behavior patterns, lifestyles, and social relationships in the virtual realm of cyberspace. It is commonly used to study users or entities within the internet community. This approach reflects on the implications of communication through the Internet (Nasrullah, 2018). So, using virtual ethnography, the researchers can study how Generation Z uses slang on the TikTok app and how it evolved due to the internet's influence. This means that slang is important not only to Generation Z but also to all internet users. The researchers observed online interactions in the virtual space for about two to three months.

Results and Discussion

Researchers at this level of analysis will focus on the structural aspects rather than the specific platform, TikTok. They will investigate the processes involved in creating a TikTok account, uploading videos, writing comments, following TikTok accounts, and using various features within the TikTok application.

Media Space Level

Key informants in this study have active social media accounts on TikTok. The relevant TikTok features for this research include video creation, stories, live streaming, showcasing, filters, playlists, and captions. These features are essential for understanding how users engage with and navigate TikTok as a platform for social interaction and content creation.

Document Media Level

Researchers have discovered that users actively create and spread slang on the TikTok platform, primarily through TikTok videos. Videos posted on users' TikTok accounts often include slang, making this a key way of creating cultural artifacts. Users typically incorporate popular English or foreign terms that are trending within the TikTok community into their videos. Here are some types of slang identified by researchers through their observations:

Table I Findings on Document Media Level

Slang Type	Findings	Meanings	Context
Slang that comes from a foreign language	"guys"	The term "guys" is taken from English, which means friends or comrades	The term "mates" is commonly used to greet or address multiple people in a friendly or informal manner
	"homie"	An absorption from English which means home atmosphere or a comfortable place	Used to describe a place, such as a restaurant, coffee shop
	"hidden gem"	Derived from English which means something of high value but not widely known to the public	Used to describe a place, such as a restaurant, coffee shop
	"healing"	Taken from English, it means healing to relieve feelings of boredom and fatigue	Used when on holiday or going to a favorite place
Borrowed slang from foreign languages into Indonesian	"gwencana"	Adaptation from Korean which means "it's okay"	Used to ask how someone is doing
	"estetik"	An absorption from English which means beautiful or a good or beautiful place	Used to describe a place, such as a restaurant, coffee shop
	"kalcer"	An absorption from the English word "culture" which means cool, stylish, fashionable	Used to describe someone's style or manner of dressing
	"auto"	Taken from Indonesian "automatic"	Used to express a situation spontaneously or occurring suddenly
Slang from Indonesian or foreign language	"lopyuhh"	Adaptation of writing the word "love you" from English into Indonesian spelling	Used to express what is in the heart
	"beut"	Shortening of the Indonesian word "banget" which means very or really	Used to describe an atmosphere or situation, such as "bagus beut tempatnya", "enak beut makanannya"
	"pw"	Shortening from Indonesian "wuenak position" which means a comfortable atmosphere	Used to describe a place, such as a restaurant, coffee shop
	"gemoy"	Changes in the form of the word "cute"	Used to describe the physical appearance of a person or an item

Object Media Level

Researchers can gather research data at this level by examining texts within cybermedia or the contextual information that surrounds them. Therefore, in addition to conducting observations, researchers will inquire about how interactions unfold within the comment sections of TikTok videos and how entities communicate using slang. Several types of comments were identified on each uploaded TikTok video, as follows:

Table II Findings in Object Media Level

Type of Comments on Each Post	Findings
Using foreign language	"cute"
	"spill"
	"chill"
	"OMG"
	"bestie"
	"ril"
	"worth"
Using Slang	"cuaks"
	"bjir"
	"bejir"
Using Slang from Abbreviations, Shortenings, and Reverse Words	"b aja"
	"sabi"
	"pw"
	"gercep"
	"bet"

Experience Level

The level of experience and experiential narratives provide a broad portrayal of societal or community dynamics in the real world. At this level, researchers explore the underlying realities related to the language used in TikTok videos and also analyze the motivations and impacts involved (Nasrullah, 2022). The researchers conducted online interviews with four key informants who are Generation Z content creators on TikTok. The interviews focused on their motives and experiences in becoming content creators.

Motives

Each informant possesses distinct motivations for assuming the role of an entity and content creator, ranging from external requests to personal hobbies and the utilization of free time.

"Kalo TikTok awalnya aku disuruh sama orang…"

'For TikTok, initially, someone told me…"

"Aku awalnya iseng-iseng aja ngespill…"

'At first, I causally just wanted to know…'

"...waktu itu ada satu video aku yang naik, terus dari situ ada brand yang ngereach aku dan mulai deh dari situ pada minta barter..."

'...at that time, one of my videos went up, then from there a brand reached out to me and starting from that period they started asking for barter...'

"Kalo di TikTok sih sebenernya apa ya, aku tuh tipe orang yang suka ngeabadiin suatu momen gitu.. dan aku juga bisa dilihat sebagai content creator karena aku hobi sih kayaknya. Dan ngisi waktu luang juga sih".

'What is it really like on TikTok? I'm the type of person who likes to capture a moment like that.. and I can also be seen as a content creator because it's like my hobby. And fill up my free time too.'

Benefit

Each informant also gains benefits upon becoming an entity and content creator on TikTok. These benefits include salary, fees, relationships, free product samples, and experiences.

> *"ya gaji itu pasti karena kan dari endorsement, dari live juga ada. Terus dari ngonten di TikTok ini aku bisa ketemu orang yang hebat..."*

> 'Yes, the salary is certain because it comes from endorsements, there is also some from live. Then from because of the content on TikTok, I can meet great people...'

> *"jadi dapet fee juga, dapet free product juga dan juga diendorse sama brand-brand lain..."*

> 'So, I get a fee, I get free products too and also get endorsed by other brands.'

> *"Kalo buat materi ada, karena ada beberapa brand yang dapet fee juga... hal-hal kek gitu kan aku jadi ketemu orang baru, ketemu temen baru".*

> 'For material, I get it too, because there are several brands that also get fees... things like that allow me to meet new people, meet new friends.'

> *"aku join affiliate juga jadi udah di ke TikTok Shop-in gitu. Biasanya sih dikirimin produk gratis..."*

> 'I also joined the affiliate program, so I'm already on TikTok Shop-in. Usually I get free products (sent by the endorsement)..."

Slang Usage on a Daily-basis

The use of slang on TikTok also influences how informants communicate in their daily lives. They acknowledge using slang regularly for communication purposes. They find it facilitates easier understanding and conversation with others, as well as enriching their vocabulary.

> *"...tapi kalo ngobrol sama temen berdampak banget…"*

> '...but if you chat with friends, it really has an impact...'

> *"kalo menurut aku manfaat sih ada lah ya.. kek sekarang aku tau nih oh ini kata ini tuh artinya gini. Selain itu sih aku juga ngerasa lebih deket sama orang..."*

> 'In my opinion, there are benefits, okay? Now I know, oh, this word means something like this. Apart from that, I also feel closer to people...'

> *"Ada dampaknya... kalo misalnya aku ngerti bahasanya kayak misalnya tadi skena bakal lebih nyambung aja"*

> 'There is an impact... if, for example, I understand the language like the scene above, it will be more connected.'

> *"Kalo dari aku emang sih di TikTok juga banyak perbendaharaan bahasa buat aku…Banyakan yaa tau dari TikTok sih yang kayak gitu..."*

> 'From me, on TikTok there is also a lot of new vocabulary for me... mostly, I know a lot of those vocabulary from TikTok...'

> *"yang aku suka tuh perbendaharaan kata aku jadi banyak"*

> "What I like is that my vocabulary has expanded"

> *"Kalo orang ngomong ke aku pake bahasa gaul aku jadi ngerti gitu"*

> *'If people talk to me using slang, I understand that'*

Discussions

Over time, traditional media has gradually shifted to more renewable forms, such as social media (Nasrullah, 2012). User-generated content—where users create and disseminate all content—is one characteristic of social media (Nasrullah, 2012).

TikTok as Social Media

According to Castells (2010, cited in Nasrullah, 2022), the phenomenon of content being produced and consumed by the same entity can be described as "mass self-communication." The informants manage their own accounts, demonstrating this phenomenon. Consequently, the informants themselves create content and respond to comments through their respective TikTok accounts.

User-generated content, where users themselves create and share all material, is an important feature of social media (Nasrullah, 2012). Castells (2010, cited in Nasrullah, 2022) describes the production and consumption of content by the same entity as "mass self-communication." As a social media platform, TikTok operates on a networking principle that interconnects accounts through followers and followers. This connectivity allows accounts to receive real-time updates from connected users via technological devices, creating interaction opportunities among them.

Mayasari (2022, cited in Anandayan & Adiprabowo, 2023) identifies the media space level as the environment where communities interact through accounts serving as information sources. Abdurahman & Aulia (2020) argue that social media serves as a medium for interaction within a new cultural context. Social media, therefore, portrays entities playing a role in shaping social and virtual interactions (Anandayan & Adiprabowo, 2023). Thus, Nasrullah (2022) perceives cybermedia as a component in the creation of cultural realities within the media space.

Content as the Primary Locus for Cultural Growth and Development

The informants upload the videos they create to their individual accounts, which are accessible to the public. According to Nasrullah's (2012) perspective, the audience generates and consumes content on social media, making video content on TikTok a platform for the evolution of slang. The general public both produces and consumes TikTok videos.

Then, Marc Smith (1995, cited in Nasrullah, 2022b) delineates several facets of communication in the cyber world. First, communication or interaction within the cyber world does not necessitate physical presence or similarity among cyber media users as long as the functionality of interaction through cyber media is maintained. Second, interactions in cyber media can be customized by users when connected to the network. Third, interactions within the cyber world primarily take place through textual media. Fourth, these interactions do not require similarities in terms of status or level of knowledge.

Slang as a Cultural Artefact

The media document level is instrumental in analyzing the production and dissemination of texts and their meanings over the Internet (Nasrullah, 2022a). The process of encoding, where users construct texts, and decoding, where they interpret these texts, is a critical focus at this level. Researchers delve into cultural artifacts, scrutinizing the creation, distribution, and consumption of culture via internet networks and the relationships forged among users. Researchers have identified the use of slang in TikTok videos as a prominent cultural artifact.

Clark (1997) asserts that language serves as an artifact that not only enhances communication effectiveness but also facilitates the transformation of complex ideas into more accessible forms. In essence, language supports cultural reproduction, enabling learners of a foreign language to indirectly engage with cultural aspects embedded in native speakers' speech. Therefore, grasping the cultural context of language is crucial for learners.

Mulyana (2008) defines slang as a collection of words or expressions with unique, non-conforming, or specialized meanings, often diverging from conventional usage within specific subcultures. Additionally, Ertika et al. (2019) elaborate that slang represents a deliberate variation of language, particularly among teenagers or young adults, aimed at fostering familiarity and reinforcing group identity.

Various Slang as a Communication Tool on the TikTok Application

Researchers have identified various slang terms used by Generation Z in their communication on the TikTok platform, observed both in content creation and in the comments section. Some of these slang terms originate from foreign languages, borrowed languages, reversed words, and shortened forms. According to Saputra & Aida (2019), slang represents a blend of Indonesian, foreign languages, and regional dialects, commonly adopted by teenagers and younger generations. This linguistic fusion contributes to the proliferation of new vocabulary that substitutes Indonesian words.

As discussed in the study by Budiasa et al. (2021), slang serves as a language variation frequently encountered in social media communication. Language functions as a primary tool for interpersonal interaction, expressing opinions, conveying information, and establishing self-identity (Kridalaksana, cited in Budiasa et al., 2021). Social media platforms have become pivotal in the evolution of slang, facilitated by their role in shaping new lifestyles among teenagers. These platforms allow users to connect with like-minded individuals based on shared interests, hobbies, and professions. Consequently, social media effectively propagates newly emerged slang, thereby integrating it into the vernacular of social media discourse (Budiasa et al., 2021).

Mariyam Farzand's research from 2023 is consistent with this discovery. The research, titled "Evolution of Internet Slang and Its Impact on English Language Communication," explains how the Internet and digital communication platforms enable the spread of Internet slang, leading to a transformation in the way people interact and communicate online.

Yuwono, a lecturer at the Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Cultural Sciences (FIB), University of Indonesia (UI), highlighted that globalization has influenced Indonesia's younger generation to frequently use slang from foreign languages, especially English, in informal written communication. Advancements in social media and technology further influence this trend, shaping the characteristics of contemporary slang. These adaptations align with the concise language requirements of written communication mediums. The University of Indonesia published this information.

Sarwono (2004, cited in Kristianti, 2021) revealed that millennial teenagers create slang, a distinctive language characterized by words and sentences altered or exchanged in a manner understood only within their peer group. Meanwhile, Yuwono noted that contemporary slang characteristics are influenced by the development of social media, facilitated through technology and information infrastructure, thereby conforming to the concise language requirements typical of written communication (University of Indonesia, 2023).

Slang languages have emerged as a result of abbreviations or shortenings of both Indonesian and foreign languages. The author identified this type of slang in TikTok videos uploaded by informants. Examples include words like "beut" (shortened from "banget"), "pw" (an abbreviation of "wuenak position"), "lopyu" (a playful rendition of "love you"), and "gemoy" (derived from "gemas"). This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Gunawan and Susanti (2023) titled "The Use of Slang on Instagram Among Adolescents," which suggests that this linguistic phenomenon may represent a shift from standard language to non-standard grammar.

Data from Databoks further substantiates the emergence of this linguistic diversity, indicating that Indonesia ranks second globally in terms of linguistic diversity, following Papua New Guinea, with a reported 720 languages. Consequently, Indonesians are inclined to innovate slang language. The proliferation of slang is also attributed to the advancement of electronic media, particularly online platforms facilitating information exchange, where users predominantly belong to diverse ethnic groups

within Generation Z (Pati, 2023). According to Putri et al. (2021), slang arises from the creative endeavors of its users, who generate language in various forms.

Putra et al. (2016), cited in Cahyaningsih & Sabardila (2022), posited that the emergence of linguistic variations contributes to diversity and stems from the unique communication styles of individuals. These variations manifest as a multitude of languages, which evolve into everyday usage and eventually transform into slang. According to Zagoto (2021), slang is prevalent across various media platforms. Researchers identified such slang on TikTok social media, particularly in the comments section. These comments incorporate English words such as "cute," "spill," "chill," "OMG," "bestie," "ril," and "worth." Users use these terms to comment on or reply to other users' comments.

Partridge (1950) identifies 15 factors that promote the use of slang: (1) Just for fun or joking, (2) To display oneself or boast, often as a form of competition or response, (3) To appear different and contemporary, (4) To enhance attractiveness, (5) To avoid making mistakes or to surprise, (6) To skip small talk and get straight to the point, (7) To enrich vocabulary, (8) To demonstrate solidarity and realism, (9) To soften or emphasize rejection in meaning, to reduce excessive seriousness in conversation, to alleviate tragedy or misfortune, (10) To demonstrate superiority, (11) For ease of social interactions, (12) To foster deeper intimacy, (13) To signify belonging to a particular group, (14) To distance oneself from those outside their group, (15) To maintain confidentiality.

This study observed that informants use slang for humor, to appear contemporary, to expand their vocabulary, to lessen seriousness in conversation, and to facilitate social interactions.

Finally, researchers discovered comments using slang derived from abbreviations, shortenings, and word reversals. Examples include "b aja," "sabi," "pw," "gercep," and "bet." This finding aligns with the research of Putri et al. (2021), which identified slang such as "bet," "gercep," and "sabi" on the TikTok platform. Additionally, Yulianti et al. (2023) documented various types of slang used by teenagers on TikTok, including acronyms or shortened forms like "jakbar" for West Jakarta and "salting" for incorrect; absorbed slang such as "kiyowo" from Korean, meaning cute, and "server" from English, meaning path; and slang fragments like "bet" from really and "thor" from the author.

Cyberculture Through Three Approaches

On the one hand, cyberculture offers emotional gratification to users of social media, while on the other hand, it fosters a distinct culture that diverges significantly from the norms of the formal offline environment (Uyun, 2020). Jenkins (2006), cited in Uyun (2020), asserts that cyberculture introduces a post-space consciousness where cultural activities unfold in a virtual realm unrestricted by physical boundaries. Bell (2001: 42, in Nasrullah, 2022) underscores the transformative impact of the internet, adapting alongside advancements in computer technology and becoming integral to modern lifestyles due to its expanded technological functionalities. Bell categorizes cyberculture through three lenses: material, symbolic, and experiential. The material perspective views the Internet not only as a conduit for communication but also as a platform for work, entertainment, leisure, information retrieval, and commercial transactions. Information from informants regarding their motivations and outcomes on TikTok illustrates this material approach.

Cyberculture Through Material Approach

The current view of the internet sees it not only as a means of sending and receiving messages but also as a tool for work, entertainment, leisure, information, and commercial transactions. Individual interviews reveal that people use TikTok for entertainment, pursuing hobbies, and finding information. The internet has evolved beyond just transmitting messages and now includes functions such as entertainment, leisure, and information. Research indicates that TikTok is popular for both entertainment and informative content. Users have reported acquiring new knowledge through TikTok, and Generation Z frequently utilizes it for educational and inspirational content. Access to a wide range of information resources and

digital content via computer-connected networks facilitates learning through the Internet. The research underscores the Internet's role in facilitating learning processes and serving as a medium for information provision and exchange.

Hine proposed that we should view the internet not only as a network of computers communicating in their own language, but also as a social phenomenon. This perspective involves examining the internet's historical evolution and assessing its significance and utility in society.

Cyberculture Through Symbolic Approach

The symbolic approach examines how the internet impacts people's experiences and aspirations in cyberspace (Nasrullah, 2022a). This perspective is evident in the responses of individuals who create content on TikTok. These individuals have acknowledged that active use of TikTok has brought them benefits and experiences such as earnings, endorsements, collaborations with brands, and new relationships that have contributed to their personal growth. In the information society, people are increasingly engaging in interactions mediated by computer screens, forming relationships from screen to screen rather than face to face. Rohayati (2017) further describes social interactions in virtual societies as involving dissociative and associative processes. Dissociative processes involve competition or conflict among members within virtual communities, while associative processes facilitate collaboration within and between virtual networks.

Cyberculture Through an Experiential Approach

Cyberspace is believed to provide direction or patterns of interaction between individuals with technology devices and among individuals through these devices (Nasrullah, 2022). Informants interact on the TikTok application using slang, demonstrating this experiential approach. It is evident that informants frequently write, reply, or exchange messages through direct messages using slang. Noviatri (2015) found that words used in electronic mass media and print media significantly contribute to word production. Simangunsong (2016) mentioned that the phenomenon of social media usage, both individually and collectively, increasingly demonstrates the benefits of social media for interpersonal communication. Furthermore, the research conducted by Harahap and Alfikri (2023) indicates that the emergence of the internet and social media, along with other environmental factors, has led to this linguistic phenomenon.

Conclusion

This study focuses on how Generation Z uses slang on the TikTok app. The research used virtual ethnography and four levels of cyber media analysis. Data was collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The study found that slang is an important cultural tool used for communication and content creation on TikTok. The app's networking principles make it easy for users to create and consume content, turning videos into cultural artifacts. TikTok's features allow for creative video creation, and its algorithm helps slang spread quickly. Social media, including TikTok, not only serves as an information source but also as a platform for cultural evolution, particularly for emerging cultures like slang. The study identified five reasons for slang usage, including humor, contemporary appearance, vocabulary enrichment, conversational lightness, and facilitation of social interactions, as outlined by Patridge (1950).

After exploration and observation, it has been identified that slang serves as a cultural artifact in this research context. Slang is both produced and consumed through TikTok video content and comments that utilize it. The identified types of slang include expressions borrowed from foreign languages, lexical borrowings, word shortenings, and word reversals.

The use of slang is closely connected to the reasons and results of its users. In this research, the reasons for using TikTok among participants included seeking information, looking for jobs, pursuing hobbies, and engaging in leisure activities. The effects and advantages of being a TikTok user and using

slang include gaining material benefits, forming relationships, improving vocabulary, and influencing daily communication habits.

Suggestions for future research include conducting further studies on slang used by Generation Z on other applications or exploring slang from other generations. Slang is gradual and will evolve as long as people create and use it. Additionally, the continuous advancement of technology will lead to new developments in the future, resulting in ongoing changes in slang trends that vary across different time periods.

This research can help content creators produce content that uses slang by showcasing its effects, which can then be emulated by other content creators and entities in their content production. Additionally, it is hoped that linguistic phenomena such as slang will receive attention from the government, as they represent a phenomenon that enhances creativity and enriches language, particularly the Indonesian language.

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