

ENGLISH USED ON SOCIAL MEDIA AMONG INDONESIAN'S NETIZEN: SOCIOLINGUISTICS APPROACH

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Abstract

In the globalization era, social media is very popular in various circles, both in young people and elderly. And nowadays, social media has an important role in the human's life. There are two Social Media which have many users, namely, Facebook and Instagram. Facebook is a kind of social media that has been used by many people in Indonesia. Instagram is a social media that usually used by the users for share a picture, photo and video that added by caption on it. This study was used qualitative method using sociolinguistics approach. The study objects were status and captions on Facebook and Instagram which was indicated include on the criteria material object of the study analysis. The statuses were taken from Facebook's post, while the captions were taken from Instagram's post. This study has identified the relation of the Language use especially English in Facebook and Instagram based on the sociolinguistics approach; age, gender, and educational background. The findings showed that age has an influence on the use of language both formally and informally. Young netizens tend to use informal or slang language. Gender has an impact to the use of English language. The study showed that women's netizen more polite in using the language than men. On the other hand, men tend to use language that seems outspoken and without any boundaries. Educational background has an influence to the use of English language in social media especially Facebook. The study has attempted to show the variations of English used by the Indonesian netizens from different age, gender and educational background.

Keywords: *Sociolinguistics, Age, Gender, Educational Background, Social Media, English Used*

Abstrak

Di era globalisasi, media sosial sangat populer untuk berbagai kalangan, baik pada anak-anak muda maupun orang dewasa. Dan saat ini, media memiliki peranan penting dalam kehidupan manusia. Ada dua media sosial yang memiliki banyak pengguna, yaitu, *Facebook* dan *Instagram*. Facebook adalah salah satu media social yang telah banyak digunakan oleh banyak orang di Indonesia. Instagram adalah media social yang biasanya digunakan oleh penggunanya untuk membagikan gambar, foto, dan video yang ditambahkan dengan *caption*. Penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan sosiolinguistik. Objek dalam penelitian ini adalah status Facebook dan caption Instagram yang diindikasikan memiliki kriteria dengan objek analisis penelitian. Penelitian mengidentifikasi hubungan antara penggunaan Bahasa khususnya Bahasa Inggris di *Facebook* dan *Instagram* berdasarkan pada pendekatan sosiolinguistik; usia, gender, dalam latar belakang pendidikan. Hasil temuan menunjukkan bahwa usia memiliki pengaruh pada penggunaan Bahasa baik secara formal maupun informal. *Netizen* muda cenderung menggunakan Bahasa informal atau Bahasa gaul. Gender juga berdampak pada penggunaan Bahasa Inggris. Penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *netizen* wanita lebih sopan dalam berbahasa daripada laki-laki. Disisi lain, laki-laki cenderung menggunakan bahasa yang terkesan berterus terang dan tanpa ada batasan tertentu. Latar belakang pendidikan juga memiliki pengaruh dalam penggunaan Bahasa Inggris di media social khususnya Facebook dan Instagram. Penelitian ini berupaya untuk menunjukkan variasi dari penggunaan Bahasa Inggris yang digunakan oleh netizen Indonesia yang terdiridariusia, *gender* dan latar belakang yang berbeda

Kata kunci: *Sosiolinguistik, Usia, Gender, Latar Belakang Pendidikan, Media Sosial, Penggunaan Bahasa Inggris.*

Introduction

Communication is the most important thing in social life. As an individual and social creature, human being needs to build communication to cooperate with the others. Human beings use language to communicate or interact with other people. Language not only functions as communication tools, but also functions as the special feature from the social existence. Languages are more than skills; they are the medium through which communities of people engage with, make sense of and shape the world (Phipps & Gonzales, 2004:2)

People use language to express their minds, wishes, and ideas. Language is a means of communication people use to share ideas with others. Language predicts attitude and wishes of the users. In countries where English is neither the first nor the second language, it is taught or learned as the first foreign language for practical necessary uses of communication. English can serve as the language

of instruction in higher education or as a lingua franca among those whose native is not English

In the globalization era, social media is very popular in various circles, both in young people and elderly. And nowadays, social media has an important role in the human's life. There are many kinds of social media platforms that available in the world. However, Facebook and Instagram are the most well-known social media platforms and have many users among all.

Facebook is a kind of social media that has been used by many people in Indonesia. Based on the data from Internetworldstats on March, 2021, the Facebook users in Indonesia reached 175.3 million people. Facebook has an important role for the users because it can be used to share information and also to get new friend or acquaintance even from different countries. Facebook presents a social networking service where users can interact with other users (Hornby, 2010:525). Additionally, Facebook can be used to develop a business, since it is the appropriate place to promote a various merchandise.

Based on the data from Napoleoncat, on November 2021, there were 188 million Facebook users in Indonesia from 68% of its entire population. In which, people aged 25 – 34 were the largest user group, where men is higher than the women.



Figure 1 Facebook users in Indonesia 2021

Source: Napoleoncat.com

Instagram, which first appeared in 2010, was launched as a photo sharing platform and over the time other new features such as video, texting, and story sharing have been added which contributed to its growth greatly (Ellison, 2017). Instagram is a social media that usually used by the users for share a picture, photo and video that added by caption on it. Based on the data, Instagram is one of the social media with the biggest reach among teens. Instagram usually uses by people age 13 - 24. It means, Instagram mostly used by young people.

Share of Instagram users in Indonesia as of April 2021, by age

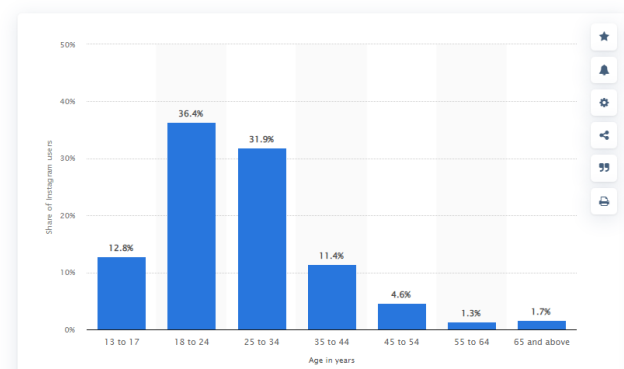


Figure 2 Instagram users in Indonesia 2021

Source: Statista.com

On both social media, the users can make a status or caption. The user of Facebook mostly make their status that describing their daily life or their own feeling. While on Instagram, the user must upload an image or photo then it is equipped with caption or description. In essence, both of social media platform require a writing to convey the intent of the users to their followers. However, there is a significant difference in the use of both social media platform itself.

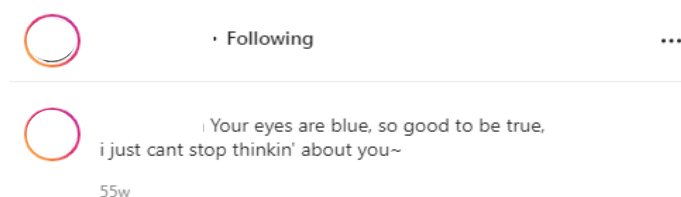


Figure 3 Instagram's post



Figure 4 Facebook's status

The difference in the both of image, it can be seen that the Facebook users tend to use simple, concise, and commonly used language. Whereas, the Instagram users commonly used an aesthetic and full of metaphor language for the caption. This is influenced by the user's social factor in the two social media.

According to Holmes (2001), Sociolinguistics is a term that refers to the study of the relationship between language and society, and how language is

used in multilingual speech communities (p. 05). The relation of English used and Sociolinguistics need to be considered and studied in depth because both of English as language and Sociolinguistics are interconnected. Wardaugh (2006) stated that Sociolinguistics is the study of language use within or among groups of speakers. Several factors that is considered by the group of speakers or community such as the social background; social class, age, gender, ethnic background, and educational background.

Social class is an amorphous term, but can generally be defined as unofficial hierarchical stratification of people in a given society, who are ranked according to their social, economic, occupational, and educational statuses (Vandrick, 2014). The systems of categorization vary, from Marx's bourgeoisie versus proletariat (e.g. Marx & Engel, 1998) to the classic much-discussed three levels of upper, middle, and lower class, to more elaborate schemes such as variations on a six level division into upper, upper -middle, middle, and lower-middle class; working poor; and the underclass (Gilberts, 2018). The social class status strongly affect the people experiences in using English as the second language.

Age is one of the important factor in the use of English as the second language in Indonesia. Since, the current generation have been taught English from an early age, in addition, access to learning English is easy to surf nowadays. It is slightly different from the previous generation who learned English only at school.

Gender is also something we cannot avoid in language use. According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginnet, 2003 (Wardaugh, 2006) state that the force of gender categories in society makes it impossible for us to move through our lives in a non-gendered way and impossible not to behave in a way that brings out gendered behavior in others'. In a simple word 'Gender is a key component of identity'.

The environment or social factor where the people lives also indirectly affects the use of the English language as a second language. For people who live in the environment that most citizen has modern and advanced mindset, using English as a daily language is not a difficult thing. It is well known that language is kind of knowledge that should be learned continuously, not only in a formal education or at school. Sociolinguistics views language as social behavior used in social communication. Language works when the users relate to each other naturally in a social environment. The environment with highly educational background indirectly affect the language use of the speaker. Mukmin (2019) stated that Educational background is a reflection of education that a student experienced. This educational process is usually influenced by a process called the transfer of learning.

Method

This study was used qualitative method using sociolinguistics approach. Ary et al. in Kirana (2010:26) states that descriptive research is designed to obtain information concerning the current status of phenomena. In this study, the phenomena was about the analysis of the English used in status or caption that

has been used by the users of Facebook and Instagram. The study objects are status and captions on Facebook and Instagram which is indicated include on the criteria material object of the study analysis. The statuses were taken from Facebook's post, while the captions were taken from Instagram's post. In addition, the study also aims to analyze and to interpret the English used in a status or caption that stated in Facebook or Instagram, and its relation to social background of the users.

The interpretation was carried out by taking into an account that the context surrounding the object of the study. Objects were analyzed through a process of repeated observation and reading (Maulana, 2021). The process was carried out to find English used in Facebook and Instagram post. Status and captions are analyzed and interpreted to find the English used based on the Sociolinguists approach.

Finding and Analysis

Age related to English used

Facebook status and Instagram caption are common thing in the cyberspace, because both of them are part of social media platforms that are well-known for its many users, including in Indonesia. In some cases, Netizen or Facebook and Instagram users used English in their statuses or captions to show the social class or expertise in using English. For example, on Facebook status on figure 5 below:



Figure 5 Facebook status by adolescence

As the impact of modernization and globalization, in which technology rapidly develop, it makes the young people easily influenced by today's technological advances, by expressing themselves using English in social media status. It can be seen from the Facebook status in figure 5 that the netizen above would like to make post using an English but in Bahasa Indonesiaspelling version. The post itself should be written in English as *"I need mood booster, and again again you broke my heart oh fuck"*. Every Indonesian netizen who saw that post must know how to read it.

Language use on Facebook is a bit conventional as users mostly adopt every day or normal English expression for interactions and profile updates, although the writing style (Olojede, Adejoke& Maria, &Ebim, Matthew

Abua&Abua, &Abioye, Adebola & Tawa.,, 2018). Based on the researcher's observation, the age of the netizen who posted the status is about 17-23 years old. World Health Organization (WHO) stated that the definition youth is aged 10 – 24 years old, in other term it is called as young people. While, according to Youth Bill (*RUU Kepemudaan*), youth or young people is individuals aged 18-35 years old.

The status above was made by young girl who had broken heart. The young girl would like to show her condition to the followers in order to share about her feeling and show her existence. According to Cheshire (2006) in some areas of research, notably the construction of an age related identity in discourse, and social psychological issues of age identity, the relation between language and age has been directly addressed. A young people especially girl is frequently written her feelings in social media status, instead of using formal language, they often used slang language or in Indonesian term is called "*Bahasa gaul / Bahasa alay*". Slang language is included in non-standard language which is only known by certain circles. In addition, non-standard language often uses abbreviation or shortening the words. The use slang language among young people since it is considered to be impressive and understandable by certain circle. The use of English term that is adapted to Indonesian spelling and reading on Facebook's post in figure 5 is intended to convey the post author's true feelings directly to the followers but at the same time disguise the intentions. Based on the researchers' perspective, the post author deliberately used slang language in English then used Indonesian spelling so that only certain people understood the meaning. In this case, the certain circle who can understand it were young people who knew English.

Slightly different from young people or adolescent who use Facebook as social media platforms to express personal feelings and use slang language, adults are wiser in using social media. Adults use Facebook as a place to congratulate others, share activity and store activities memories. Ellis (2013) mentions that there are three aspects who helped adults in second language acquisition; cognitive level, logical thinking skill, and self-monitoring ability. According to Yao (2011) in Devaki (2021), the fact that adults have a potential for logical thinking is one of the main strengths. Adult thinking style tends to be more organized, and indirectly affects language style in communication. In contrast to young people or adolescent, adults' language use is slightly formal and polite in everyday life, including when communicating on social media. It can be seen on the figure 6 below;

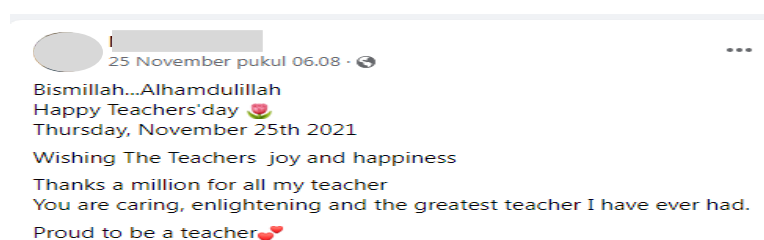


Figure 6 Facebooks' Status Made By Adult

The post's author in the status above is about 40 - 50 years old. In accordance to the previous theory in which adults tend to be more mature in thinking and communicating, it is also can be seen in the post above. The post's author intends to share important moments that are general in nature and not in the form of deep personal feelings. The status in figure 6 was shared right on the Indonesian Teachers' Day Commemoration which is held every November, 25 in each year. The English used in above status is grammatically correct, right in spelling and clearly conveyed its intent and purpose.

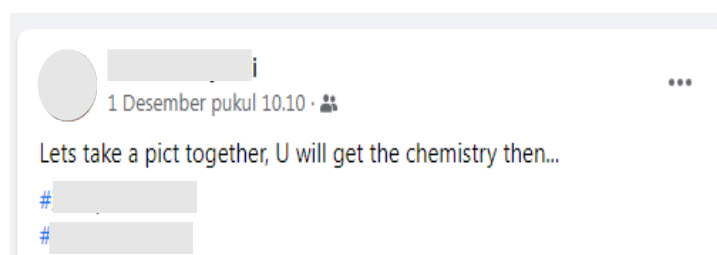


Figure 7 Instagram's post by middle adult

The status in figure 7 was shared by the author in the range aged 30-35 who theoretically include into young-adulthood category. This age period is transition period from early adulthood into middle adulthood. During the transition period, the mindset changes slightly. It is showed above that the post's author updated the status which aim to share certain moment, without involving personal feelings. Due to being in a transitional age from early adulthood into middle or old adulthood, the mindset and communication style are also in the middle between slang and formal standard language. The use of writing style is included in semi-formal language. The author's post in figure 7 used the word 'pict' as an abbreviation of the word 'picture'. The author also using the word 'U' instead of 'you'. The shortening and abbreviation of these words refer to the use of non-formal or non-standard grammar. Non-standard language is a language that is incomplete in its grammatical structure such as no *subject* or *predicate*, besides that there are abbreviations and shortening of words which are also included in non-standard languages.

Gender Related to English Language Use

According to Tannen (2006) in Lina and Hidayat (2019), Language and gender is an area of study within sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, and related fields that investigates varieties of speech associated with a particular gender, or social norms for such gendered language use. A variety of speech (or sociolect) associated with a particular gender is sometimes called a genderlect.

In sociolinguistics studies, the relationship between gender and language use is very influential. Gender is related to the belief process of how men and women should act and act in according to structured values, social and cultural provisions where they are (Ambarita and Mulyadi, 2020).

In Indonesia, women are stereotyped to act and speak in polite, gentle and and not use harsh words in their social communication. Likewise with the men, but in some cases, it is natural for men to speak freely without any restrictions. Indirectly, this affects the language style of women and men in a real life and in social media. Women tend to update status or post using relatively polite language compared to men. This is caused by the construction of Indonesian society which tends to be patriarchal, which indirectly affect women's communication or language pattern on social media and in a real life.

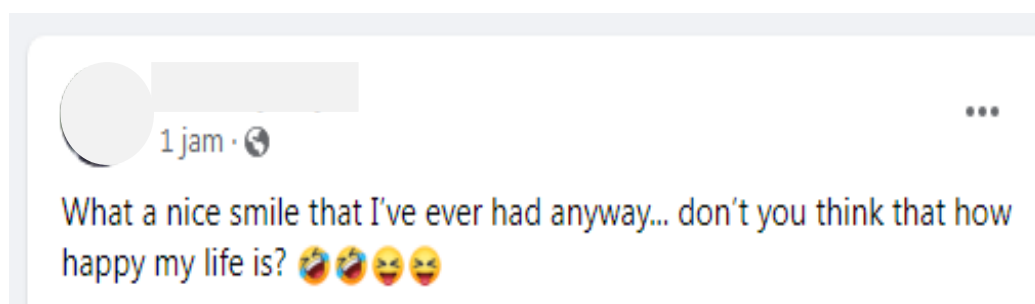


Figure 8 Facebook's post made by woman

The post's status in figure 8 was made by a woman, in this case, it can be seen that the status in figure 8 above using polite word, unprovocative, and purely shows the post's author feeling without intimidate others. It is different to the status in figure 9 below;

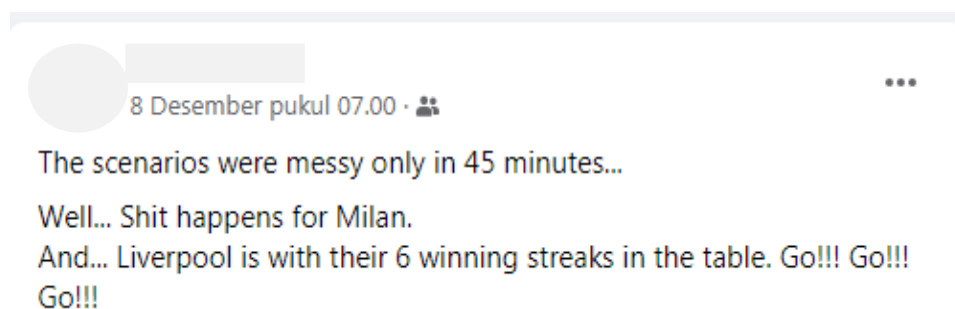


Figure 9 Facebook's Post made by man

The status in figure 9 was posted by a man. Indonesian people which is mostly patriarchal, makes it natural for men have been outspoken in their communication. The use of the word '*shit*' which was a kind of swear words in English, it proves that the men's communication tends to not be limited to the norms of politeness that often attached to women.

Educational background related to English language used

In general, education means the process and efforts to gain knowledge from various sources both formally and informally. Wardaugh (2006) stated that

An educational scale may employ the following categories: graduate or professional education; college or university degree; attendance at college or university but no degree; high school graduation; some high school education; and less than seven years of formal education.

Educational background indirectly affects the person's language style. People with highly educational background tends to use language both in speech and written that has appropriate vocabulary and grammatical correct. This case in line with the Bloomfield's words (1927) in Wardaugh (2006), The popular explanation of 'correct' and 'incorrect' speech reduces the matter to one of knowledge versus ignorance. There is such a thing as correct English. An ignorant person does not know the correct forms; therefore he cannot help using incorrect ones. In the process of education one learns the correct forms and, by practice and an effort of will ('careful speaking'), acquires the habit of using them.



Figure 10 Facebook's post made by High School graduates.

The post in figure 10 above showed that the post's author would like to write an English term in their post. The researcher conclude post's author would like to say 'me and my mother' or in Bahasa Indonesia means 'aku dan ibuku' but it was misspelled by 'me end my mother' which does it means 'aku mengakhiri ibuku', or in English it is almost same with the term 'I kill my mother'. The misspelling above is the result of the author's misunderstanding about how to read and write in English words. The letter 'a' in English is spelled '/ei/' where in Bahasa Indonesia it has same sounds like the letter 'e'. The one of ignorance is influenced by the lack of knowledge or basic education about how to write correctly. Spelling errors and incorrect vocabularies also happen in the following post;

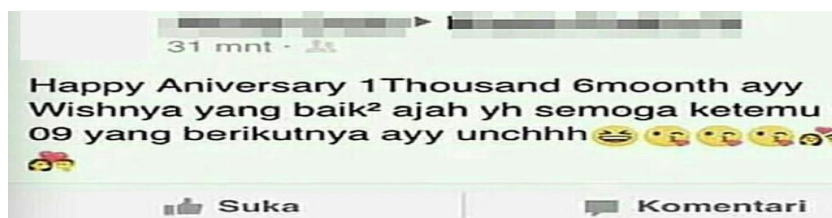


Figure 11 Facebook's Post made by High School Student

The post's author in figure 11 above would like to say '*Selamat Hari Jadi 1 tahun 6 bulan*', in English it must be '*Happy Anniversary 1 year and 6 months*'. The spelling errors in the word '*aniversary*' that should be written with double '*n*' becomes '*Anniversary*'. There are two views regarding to the case above; first, the post's author purely does not know how to write the word '*anniversary*' correctly due to the lack of knowledge. Second, the post's author deliberately ignores the way to write the word correctly.

Another misspelling also was found in a word '*moonth*'. The word '*moonth*' should be written as '*month*' that means '*bulan*' in Bahasa Indonesia. The word month should be given suffix '*s*' becomes '*months*' due to there is a plurality number of months above. The basic rule in English mentioned that to pluralize a noun is by adding the suffix '*-s*' or '*-es*'. The following post in figure 12 showed the grammatical correct. The post's author basically know how to pluralize a noun by adding the suffix '*-s*' after the word '*month*'.

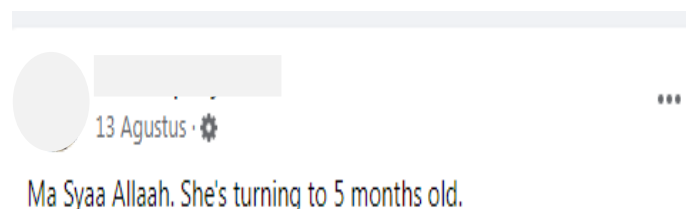


Figure 12 Instagrams' post made by English teacher.

Incorrect vocabulary is also showed by the post's author in figure 11, Instead of used the word '*year*', the author chose to use '*thousand*' that means '*ribuan or seribu*' in Bahasa Indonesia. Referring to the complete sentence on the post in figure 11, it sounds strange since the term '*a thousand*' and '*six (6) months*' appearing together, because it does not make a sense. Again, due to the post's author misunderstanding of how to write the word correctly, this makes a fatal errors. The rightfully vocabularies and grammatical correct is influenced by the understanding level of the speaker or the post's author. English grammar knowledge and vocabulary are not something which can be obtained instantly, but must be through basic and continuous learning.

Conclusion

This study has identified the relation of the Language use especially English in Facebook and Instagram based on the sociolinguistics approach; age, gender, and educational background. Based on the researcher's identification, there are some conclusions that are draws as follows; first, age has an influence on the use of language both formally and informally. Young netizens tend to use informal or slang language. Second, gender has an impact to the use of English language. The study shows that women's netizen more polite in using the language than men. On the other hand, men tend to use language that seems outspoken and without any boundaries. Third, educational background has an influence to the use of English language in social media especially Facebook. The

study has attempted to show the variations of English use by the Indonesian netizens from different age, gender and educational background.

The study showed that Indonesian netizens are quite often use English when updating status or posting in social media. Therefore, English which is used by the young age people must be different with the older people. Young age people tends to use abbreviation or shortening words in their English. While, the older people use written English properly. As well, the English which is used by women is also quite different to men, especially in choosing the vocabulary. Educational background indirectly affects the person's language style. People with highly educational background tends to use language both in speech and written that has appropriate vocabulary and grammatical correct.

The variations in English Language use on social media among Indonesian's netizens based on the sociolinguistics approach need further studied. Thus, the researcher will be able to compare the previous studies with the latest studies. It is intended that the study becomes more reliable.

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