

## **THE USE OF ENGLISH SLANG ON TIKTOK AND ITS IMPACT ON VOCABULARY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study aims to analyze the use of English slang in TikTok comments and its impact on user vocabulary enrichment. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation of comments on @ivanka\_djo's TikTok account and interviews with ten active TikTok users. Data analysis was conducted using a thematic approach to explore the meaning, function, and user perceptions related to the use of slang. The results show that respondents use English slang on TikTok not only to follow trends, but also to express personal experiences. This slang helps enrich vocabulary, increase self-confidence, and create a sense of community. In addition, the use of slang makes language learning more fun and relevant to everyday life. However, the rapid evolution of slang can sometimes make understanding difficult and lead to misunderstandings, especially outside the TikTok community or with other generations. The dominance of slang also risks reducing the use of formal English, which is important in academic and professional contexts. Therefore, it is important to document TikTok slang in order to benefit language learning and cultural studies in the digital age.*

**Keywords:** Slang, Tiktok, Vocabulary, Digital Communication.

### **ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penggunaan bahasa gaul Inggris dalam komentar TikTok dan dampaknya terhadap pengayaan kosakata pengguna. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui pengamatan komentar di akun TikTok @ivanka\_djo dan wawancara dengan sepuluh pengguna TikTok aktif. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan pendekatan tematik untuk mengeksplorasi makna, fungsi, dan persepsi pengguna terkait penggunaan bahasa gaul. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa responden menggunakan slang bahasa Inggris di TikTok tidak hanya untuk mengikuti tren, tetapi juga untuk mengekspresikan pengalaman pribadi. Slang ini membantu memperkaya kosakata, meningkatkan kepercayaan diri, dan menciptakan rasa kebersamaan. Selain itu, penggunaan slang membuat pembelajaran bahasa menjadi lebih menyenangkan dan relevan dengan kehidupan sehari-hari. Namun, perkembangan slang yang cepat kadang-kadang dapat menyulitkan pemahaman dan menyebabkan kesalahpahaman, terutama di luar komunitas TikTok atau dengan generasi lain. Dominasi slang juga berisiko mengurangi penggunaan bahasa Inggris formal, yang penting dalam konteks akademik dan profesional. Oleh karena itu, penting untuk mendokumentasikan slang TikTok guna mendukung pembelajaran bahasa dan studi budaya di era digital.

**Kata Kunci:** Bahasa Gaul, TikTok, Kosakata, Komunikasi Digital.

## **A. Introduction**

Language is the main means for humans to communicate. Along with the development of communication technology, language forms and variations have also undergone significant changes. The presence of the internet and social media encourages the birth of new forms of communication that are shorter, expressive, and in accordance with the characteristics of the younger generation. One of the more prominent linguistic phenomena in the digital era is the use of slang. Slang is a non-standard form of language variation that is generally used to create intimacy, show group identity, and express emotions in a creative and concise way.

At first, slang was only used by certain groups as a secret language or community identity. However, in its development, slang has become increasingly popular and widespread, especially through social media. According to Mastuti (2008), slang is an informal form of language created by the creativity of its speakers and used to express closeness. Currently, the use of slang is not limited to oral interactions, but is also rampant in written communication on various

digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok.

TikTok, as one of the most popular social media platforms for Generation Z and millennials, has played a big role in the spread of slang. Launched in 2016 and rapidly expanding globally since 2017, TikTok has become a space for creative expression through short videos that are easy to access and share. The comment feature available on each video allows users to interact spontaneously and expressively. It is in this space that various forms of English slang emerge, which are not only used to follow trends but also to convey admiration, humor, and criticism in a more casual way.

This phenomenon is interesting to study because not everyone understands the slang terms that appear on TikTok. Generational differences, the level of digital literacy, and the intensity of social media use affect the extent to which a person is able to understand slang. As a result, the potential for misunderstanding often arises, especially when slang is used in a context different from its literal meaning. For example, the term ghosting, which literally means “to be

a ghost”, in the context of social media is understood as the act of suddenly disappearing from communication. This suggests a shift in meaning that is important to understand.

Furthermore, the use of slang on TikTok is also related to the development of users' English vocabulary. For many young people, TikTok is not only an entertainment medium, but also an indirect language learning tool. Research by Khasanah(2022) and Bujuri et al. (2023) shows that TikTok can increase motivation to learn English because the content is considered more interesting and easy to understand than other platforms such as YouTube. Through daily interactions in the comment section, users are exposed to a variety of new vocabulary that is not always taught in formal education, including idioms and slang. Thus, TikTok has the potential to be a medium that enriches the productive and receptive vocabulary of the younger generation.

The problem that arises is to what extent the slang used in TikTok comment sections is actually understood by its users and whether its use contributes to the acquisition of English vocabulary. In addition, not

many studies have specifically highlighted the use of slang in TikTok comment sections, even though this phenomenon reflects a more spontaneous and authentic communication dynamic compared to conceptualized video content.

Based on this background, this research focuses on analyzing the meaning and function of English slang used in the comments column of @ivanka\_djo's TikTok account, as well as users' perceptions of the contribution of slang in enriching English vocabulary. Specifically, this study aims to (1) Analyze the various meanings and functions of English slang used by TikTok users. (2) Explore TikTok users' perceptions towards the use of slang in enriching their English vocabulary.

Theoretical studies on language variation (Chaer, 2014), the concept of slang (Adams, 2009), and vocabulary learning (Hatch & Brown, 1995) became the basis for analyzing the research data. Language variation is understood as a form of language diversity based on social context, while slang is positioned as a non-standard language variation that represents group identity and linguistic creativity. In the context of learning,

vocabulary is seen as a key element in language acquisition, both receptively and productively.

The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, this research can enrich linguistic studies, especially related to the phenomenon of language development in the digital era. Practically, this research is expected to be a reference for English learners, educators, and the general public to understand the function of slang in digital communication and its impact on vocabulary development. With this understanding, the use of slang can be interpreted not only as part of social media trends, but also as a means of language learning that is relevant to the contemporary context.

## **B. Methods**

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach because it focuses on describing the phenomenon of English slang usage on TikTok without involving statistical calculations. According to Sugiyono (2020), qualitative research emphasizes meaning rather than generalization, making it suitable for analyzing the meaning and function of slang as well as users'

perceptions of its influence on English vocabulary mastery.

The research subjects are user comments on the TikTok account @ivanka\\_djo that contain English slang. Sampling was conducted using purposive sampling, which involves selecting data based on specific criteria. The sampling criteria included:

1. Comments written by users aged 17–30 years.
2. Active users on TikTok
3. Comments containing English slang, and
4. Public comments. From the collected data, 10 relevant comments were selected, and interviews were conducted with 10 active TikTok users to strengthen the data.

Data collection techniques were carried out through observation and semi-structured interviews. Observations were made by recording comments on the TikTok account @ivanka\\_djo that used English slang. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were used to explore the respondents' perceptions of the reasons for using slang, its meaning, and its impact on the development of their English vocabulary.

Data was analyzed using thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2021). The stages include:

1. Organizing the data from observations and interviews
2. Coding the data based on the meaning and function categories of slang,
3. Identifying patterns and main themes that emerge, and
4. Formulating interpretations and drawing conclusions about the meaning, function, and users' perceptions of English slang on TikTok.

### **C. Results and Discussion**

The results of the study show that English slang is often used by TikTok users in the comments section of the @ivanka\_djo account. Based on the observations, several slang terms were found, such as no cap, ghosting, and loop, which have contextual meanings that differ from their literal meanings. This slang is used to express emotions, admiration, humor, and personal experiences in a more relaxed and easily understandable way.

The interview results show that most respondents use slang to follow

trends, express themselves more freely, and adapt to the communication culture on TikTok. Understanding of slang is generally acquired through context and repeated exposure, rather than through formal learning. The majority of respondents stated that TikTok helps them acquire new vocabulary, especially informal expressions that are not taught in school, and makes the process of learning English more enjoyable.

However, the rapid development of slang can lead to misunderstandings, especially for new users or those outside the TikTok community. Although slang can enrich vocabulary and strengthen social relationships, its dominant use has the potential to reduce the use of formal English in academic and professional contexts.

Overall, the use of English slang on TikTok contributes to vocabulary enrichment, increased confidence, and the formation of a digital community identity, but it still needs to be balanced with the use of formal language.

#### **D. Conclusion**

The results of the research show that respondents use English slang on TikTok not only to follow trends, but also to express personal experiences. This slang helps enrich vocabulary, boost confidence, and create a sense of community. In addition, the use of slang makes the language learning process more enjoyable and relevant to everyday life. However, the rapid evolution of slang can sometimes make understanding difficult and lead to misunderstandings, especially outside the TikTok community or with other generations. The dominance of slang also risks reducing the use of formal English, which is important in academic and professional settings. Therefore, documenting TikTok slang is necessary to benefit language learning and cultural studies in the digital age.

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