

The Impact of Using Impolite Slang in The Young Generation on Their Politeness in Speech

Chantika Puteri Dewi²
Rentha Naomi Tesauli Sibuea²
Dimas Rijal Muzakki²
Ony Rahmadani²
Diandra Anindya Satriani Budi²
Muhammad Fauzi Abdillah²
Ulinuha Mahyananda¹

¹Indonesian Language and Literature Education, PSDKU Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

²Animal Science Program, PSDKU Universitas Brawijaya, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: ulinnuhamadyananda@unesa.ac.id

Abstract

The rapid development of globalization and technology has significantly influenced the lifestyle and communication patterns of the younger generation. One prominent phenomenon is the frequent use of informal or slang language in daily conversations, both spoken and written, particularly on social media. While slang is often used as a form of self-expression and group identity, its usage sometimes deviates from the norms of politeness, especially in formal contexts. This study aims to examine the impact of impolite slang language on the language politeness of young people. Using a quantitative research method with a survey approach, data were collected from 30 students at the Off-Main Campus Study Program (PSDKU) of Universitas Brawijaya in Kediri, aged 18 to 22. The results show that peer influence and social media are major factors encouraging the use of impolite slang. Although many respondents are aware of the need to use formal language in appropriate contexts, a significant number still face challenges in distinguishing language use based on setting, which affects their ability to communicate properly in academic and formal situations. This study highlights that while slang can foster creativity and social bonding, excessive use particularly of impolite forms can erode the norms of polite communication. Therefore, it is important to develop awareness and guidance that allows young people to freely express themselves while maintaining respectful and appropriate language use. The findings contribute to sociolinguistic studies and support the development of more relevant language education strategies.

Key Word: slang language, youth, politeness, language behavior, social media, formal communication

INTRODUCTION

The era of globalization and the rapid advancement of technology have significantly transformed the lifestyle and communication patterns of the younger generation. One salient linguistic phenomenon emerging from these changes is the increasing use of slang in daily interactions, both in spoken and written communication, particularly across social media platforms. Slang is often employed as a means of self-expression and as a marker of group identity. However, its use frequently deviates from established norms of linguistic politeness, especially when used in contexts that require formality or social decorum.

The present study, entitled “The Impact of Impolite Slang Usage Among Youth on Linguistic Politeness,” was conceived in response to this pressing sociolinguistic issue. A

considerable number of young people remain unaware that habitual use of impolite or coarse slang expressions may negatively affect their ability to employ proper and standard language, particularly within academic or formal environments. This research is therefore essential to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how slang influences linguistic behavior and politeness among the younger generation.

The study aims to contribute to the field of sociolinguistics by examining the relationship between the use of impolite slang and linguistic politeness. It is expected to enrich existing theoretical perspectives on language variation and communication ethics, particularly among adolescents and young adults. The study adopts Leech's Politeness Principle as its theoretical framework to analyze the extent to which slang usage violates norms of politeness in communication.

From a practical standpoint, the findings of this study are expected to offer valuable insights for educators, parents, and the wider community in guiding young people to maintain politeness in language use while preserving their freedom of self-expression through slang. Furthermore, the outcomes may serve as a reference for evaluating and developing Indonesian language teaching materials that better reflect the sociolinguistic realities of contemporary youth communication.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies have addressed similar issues from various perspectives. In general, these works share a common concern regarding the use of slang among adolescents and its implications for the Indonesian language. Slang, as a linguistic resource for self-expression and group identity, has become an integral aspect of everyday interaction among young people. However, its increasing use has also led to deviations from the conventions of linguistic politeness, especially in formal communication settings.

Studies by [Gusnayetti \(2021\)](#) and [Yuliana \(2022\)](#) highlight how socio-technological developments have reshaped communication practices among teenagers, contributing to the rise of slang as a dominant linguistic feature. Both studies raise concerns that excessive reliance on slang may hinder young people's ability to use Indonesian appropriately and correctly, and may even pose a threat to the integrity and prestige of the national language.

This study, however, distinguishes itself from previous works in two key respects. First, it specifically focuses on the impact of impolite slang usage on linguistic politeness, whereas earlier studies tended to discuss the broader implications of slang for the Indonesian language as a whole. Second, this research employs a quantitative approach through questionnaire distribution, differing from the descriptive and literature-based approaches adopted by [Gusnayetti \(2021\)](#) and [Yuliana \(2022\)](#), respectively. These methodological differences generate distinct forms of data and analysis, thereby offering a more comprehensive and empirically grounded understanding of the phenomenon.

Accordingly, this study seeks to broaden the current understanding of how impolite slang usage affects linguistic politeness among young speakers. The research is expected to make a meaningful contribution to the body of knowledge on youth language behavior, particularly regarding the preservation of politeness norms in informal linguistic practices.

In line with the preceding discussion, the study addresses the following research questions: (1) What factors motivate young people to use slang expressions that tend to be impolite in everyday communication? (2) How does the use of impolite slang influence the ability to employ proper and standard language in formal contexts? (3) What strategies can be implemented to reduce the use of impolite slang without constraining linguistic creativity and freedom of expression?

Based on these questions, the study is designed to achieve the following objectives: (1) To identify the sociolinguistic factors that encourage the use of impolite slang among young

speakers. (2) To analyze the impact of slang usage on linguistic politeness in both formal and informal communicative contexts. (3) To propose solutions that enable young people to communicate creatively while upholding linguistic and social norms of politeness.

METHOD

This study adopts a quantitative research design employing a survey approach (Sugiyono, 2016). The primary objective is to measure and objectively analyze the perceptions of young people—particularly university students—regarding the use of slang in everyday communication, as well as to evaluate its impact on linguistic politeness. This approach is intended to yield a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of how slang influences norms of politeness in both formal and informal communicative contexts.

The research relies on primary data obtained from respondents' answers to a systematically structured questionnaire. The data sources consist of students enrolled in the Off-Campus Study Program (PSDKU) of Universitas Brawijaya, Kediri, who actively employ slang expressions in daily interactions, thus providing valuable insights into the phenomenon of slang use among university students.

The population of this study comprises young adults aged 18 to 22 years who are currently pursuing undergraduate studies at the PSDKU Universitas Brawijaya, Kediri. A total of 34 respondents were selected through random sampling across different academic cohorts and study programs to ensure diverse and representative participation. Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire consisting of both closed- and open-ended items, designed to elicit information concerning the frequency of slang usage, the contextual situations in which it occurs, and the respondents' perceptions of linguistic politeness.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, primarily involving percentage analysis and diagrammatic representation, in order to map respondents' response patterns and tendencies. This methodological approach is expected to produce a comprehensive overview of the patterns of slang usage and its potential implications for linguistic politeness norms among university students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Factors Influencing Young People's Use of Slang Language Perceived as Impolite in Everyday Communication

Based on the data presented in Table 1, the majority of respondents (70.6%) indicated that the primary reason for using slang expressions perceived as impolite is environmental influence, particularly from peers and social media. Approximately 32.4% reported using such language to express closeness with friends, while 23.5% stated that they had no particular reason. A total of 14.7% viewed slang as a form of self-expression or a distinctive speech style, and only 5.9% reported using it to follow contemporary trends or popular culture. These findings suggest that the social environment plays a dominant role in shaping the linguistic habits of young people.

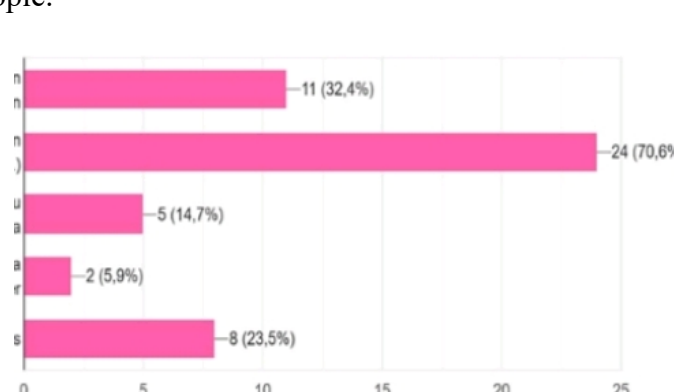


Figure 1. Primary Reasons for Using Slang Language Perceived as Impolite

This result is consistent with the findings of [Pratiwi & Hapsari \(2020\)](#) in *Bahasa dan Sastra Journal*, which demonstrated that slang usage among adolescents is heavily influenced by social interactions within peer groups and social media, where such language serves as a marker of group identity. [Pratiwi & Hapsari \(2020\)](#) further explained that adolescents tend to adopt the speech patterns of their peers to gain social acceptance. Hence, the use of slang expressions that may appear impolite often emerges not from an intention to be disrespectful, but rather as part of social adaptation and group identity formation.

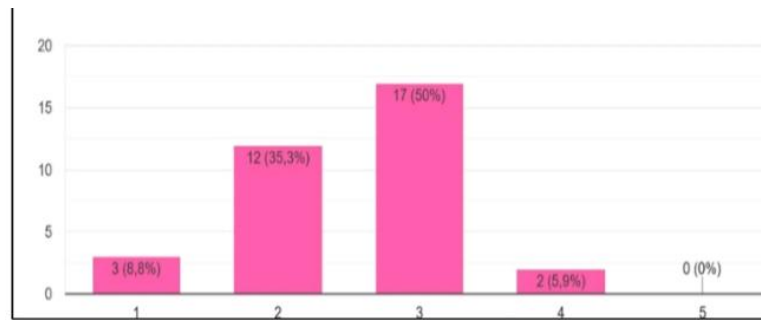


Figure 2. Frequency of Using Slang Language Perceived as Impolite in Daily Conversations

As shown in Table 2, the majority of respondents (50%) reported using slang expressions perceived as impolite with moderate frequency (score 3). About 35.3% indicated low frequency (score 2), while 8.8% rarely used such expressions (score 1). Only 5.9% reported a high frequency of use (score 4), and none selected the highest score (score 5). These data indicate that although the majority of respondents use slang expressions perceived as impolite, the intensity remains moderate rather than excessive.

These findings are supported by [Lestari \(2023\)](#) in *Sosial Humaniora Journal*, who observed that the use of slang—including forms considered impolite—commonly occurs in informal communication among adolescents and young adults as a means of expressing social closeness. [Lestari \(2023\)](#) argued that slang represents a dynamic linguistic phenomenon among youth in constructing identity and solidarity, although it sometimes involves expressions considered inappropriate in formal contexts. The relatively high frequency of slang usage observed in this study therefore reflects a broader shift in linguistic norms toward more relaxed and fluid patterns of everyday communication.

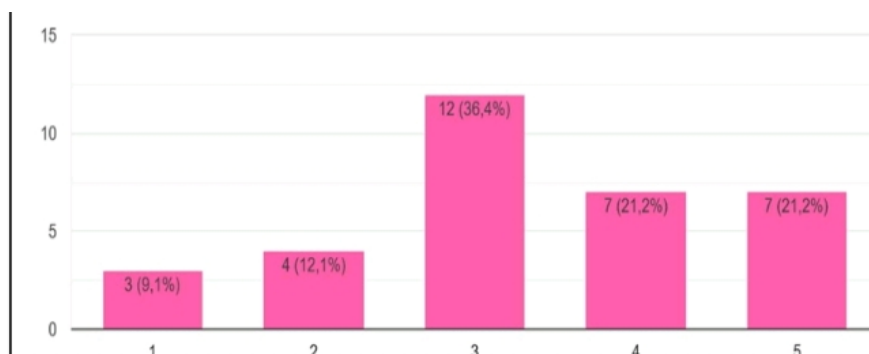


Figure 3. The Role of Social Media in Promoting the Use of Slang Language Perceived as Impolite

The data presented in Table 3 show that social media exerts a considerable influence on the use of slang language perceived as impolite. Among 33 respondents, 36.4% rated the

influence of social media as moderate (score 3), 21.2% as strong (score 4), and another 21.2% as very strong (score 5). Conversely, 9.1% and 12.1% rated it as very weak (score 1) and weak (score 2), respectively. This indicates that most respondents recognize the significant role of social media in shaping tendencies to use impolite language in interpersonal communication. These findings corroborate [Martin & Maulida \(2022\)](#), who identified social media as a primary agent in the dissemination and formation of slang among young generations. [Martin & Maulida \(2022\)](#) noted that viral content employing informal, casual, or even harsh language on social platforms is often imitated and incorporated into daily interactions among young users. This reinforces the notion that social media functions not only as a channel of communication but also as a linguistic force capable of shaping norms of politeness in language use.

The Impact of Impolite Slang Usage on the Ability to Use Standard Language in Formal Contexts

According to Table 4, the majority of respondents (43%) acknowledged the importance of distinguishing language use according to situational context, indicating awareness that linguistic appropriateness varies across settings. However, 25% of respondents reported difficulties in constructing formal sentences due to frequent use of slang, while 6.3% admitted being accustomed to using impolite expressions in everyday communication. This raises concern, as such habits may negatively affect formal linguistic competence, which is essential in academic and professional environments. Meanwhile, 37% stated that they were able to communicate effectively in both formal and informal settings, reflecting a degree of linguistic flexibility, and 15.6% reported that the use of slang did not affect their formal language skills.

This finding is consistent with [Sebayang et al. \(2024\)](#), who reported that excessive use of slang can lead to several negative consequences, including diminished writing and speaking abilities in standard Indonesian, difficulty in comprehending academic texts, and a growing tendency to prefer foreign lexical items over their Indonesian equivalents. These findings highlight the need to manage the use of slang—particularly impolite forms—to prevent a decline in formal linguistic competence within academic contexts.

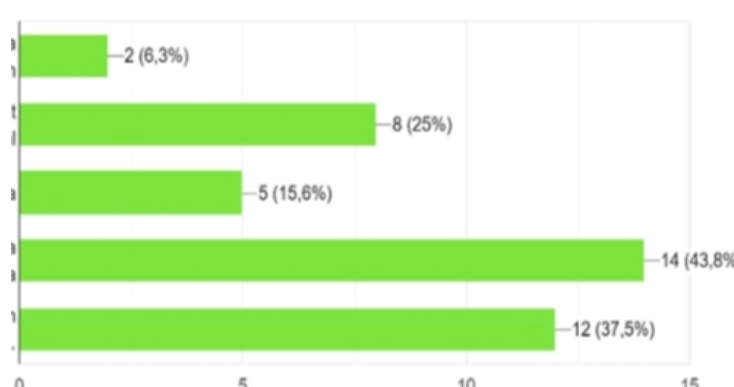


Figure 5. The Importance of Using Standard Indonesian in Academic Settings

As indicated in Table 5, most students demonstrated an awareness of the importance of using standard language in academic environments. Approximately 72.7% of respondents considered the use of standard Indonesian in academia to be “very important,” 18.2% considered it “important,” 3% were neutral, and 6.1% viewed it as “unimportant,” while none selected “not important.” This suggests that although the majority of students recognize the necessity of using proper Indonesian, a small portion have yet to fully appreciate the negative implications of slang usage in formal settings.

These results are in line with [Lestari \(2023\)](#), both of whom reported that some students and academic staff remain insufficiently aware of the importance of using proper Indonesian in academic contexts. Several respondents in their studies also recognized that slang usage represents an inappropriate linguistic habit that requires correction. Suggested strategies include implementing language training programs, enforcing standardized language use in academic documents, conducting awareness campaigns on the importance of proper Indonesian, and developing institutional language guidelines to enhance the quality of academic communication.

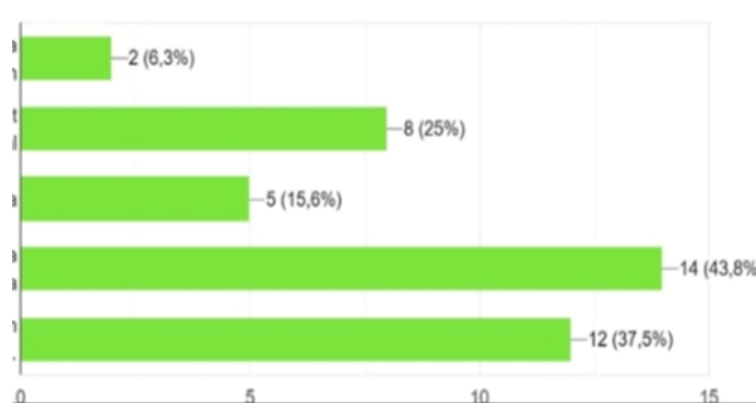


Figure 6. Barriers to Using Standard Language in Formal Contexts

As shown in Table 6, the survey results among PSDKU UB Kediri students revealed that 15.2% often unintentionally use slang, 30.3% experience difficulty finding formal equivalents, and 21.2% feel less confident due to habitual use of casual language. In contrast, 33.3% reported no difficulties, and 36.4% felt comfortable and fluent when using standard language in formal situations. These findings indicate that although some students exhibit proficiency and confidence in formal language use, a notable proportion still face linguistic challenges.

[Saputra & Aida \(2019\)](#) attributed the limited ability to identify appropriate formal vocabulary to insufficient exposure to proper Indonesian and a lack of consistent practice in using formal language in both academic and daily contexts. Therefore, despite the presence of linguistically competent students, the persistence of such challenges underscores the need for enhanced language development and training programs in higher education.

Strategies to Reduce the Use of Impolite Slang While Preserving Linguistic Freedom

As presented in Table 7, 46.9% (15 respondents) believed that linguistic freedom can be distinguished from the use of impolite slang to a considerable extent, 15.6% (5 respondents) agreed that it can be differentiated, another 15.6% disagreed, 12.5% moderately agreed, and 9.4% strongly disagreed.

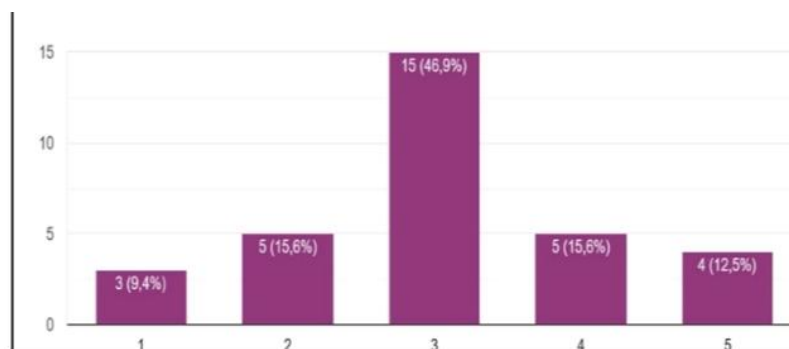


Figure 7. Differentiating Linguistic Freedom from the Use of Impolite Slang

According to [Puspitasari et al. \(2024\)](#), although slang has become a linguistic trend among youth, maintaining the proper use of the Indonesian language is essential to preserve the nation's linguistic identity and integrity.

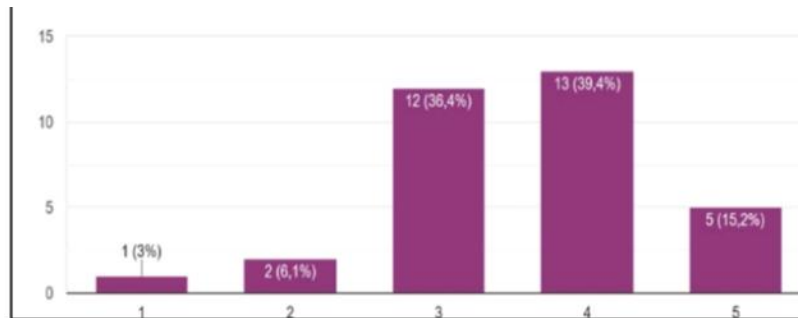


Figure 8. Promoting Politeness Awareness Without Restricting Slang Usage

As indicated in Table 8, 39.4% (13 respondents) agreed that it is possible to foster polite language awareness without prohibiting slang usage, 36.4% (12 respondents) considered it moderately possible, 15.2% (5 respondents) considered it highly possible, 6.1% (2 respondents) believed it was impossible, and 3% (1 respondent) regarded it as highly impossible.

In a related study, [Dewi et al. \(2019\)](#) highlighted the importance of incorporating the principles of linguistic politeness in Indonesian language education at bilingual high schools, emphasizing the need to cultivate politeness awareness within the learning process.

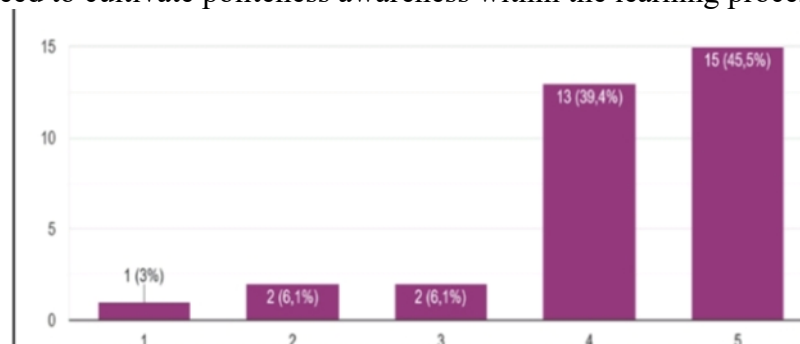


Figure 9. The Role of Social Media in Disseminating Impolite Slang

According to Table 9, 45.5% of respondents believed that social media plays a very strong role in disseminating impolite slang, 39.4% (15 respondents) considered it influential, 6.1% (2 respondents) moderately influential, 6.1% (2 respondents) not influential, and 3% (1 respondent) highly uninfluential.

[Founta et al. \(2018\)](#) in a large-scale study on abusive behavior on Twitter, found that social media platforms are often used to spread offensive, sexist, racist, and aggressive language. This research confirms that social media significantly accelerates and amplifies the dissemination of impolite language across user communities.

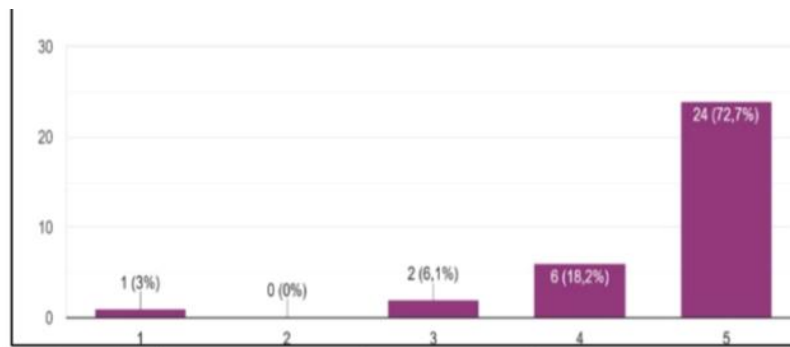


Figure 10. The Role of Education in Enhancing Polite Language Use Among Youth

As shown in Table 10, the majority of students agreed that educational interventions can effectively improve language politeness among younger generations: 72.7% (24 respondents) rated education as highly effective, 18.2% (6 respondents) as effective, 6.1% (2 respondents) as moderately effective, and 3% (1 respondent) as highly ineffective, with none stating that it was ineffective.

This finding supports [Puspitasari et al. \(2024\)](#) who emphasized that although slang remains popular among youth, consistent reinforcement of proper Indonesian is essential for maintaining the vitality and dignity of the national language.

CONCLUSION

The prevalence of impolite slang among the younger generation constitutes a notable sociolinguistic phenomenon that significantly affects linguistic politeness norms. The findings of this study indicate that the primary factors contributing to the use of slang are peer-group influence and social media exposure, in which slang serves as a medium of self-expression and a means of establishing social affinity in everyday communication. Nevertheless, such linguistic practices frequently diverge from established norms of politeness, particularly when transposed into formal domains such as academic contexts.

The study further demonstrates that although most young individuals acknowledge the importance of employing proper and appropriate Indonesian in formal situations, many continue to experience difficulties in adapting their linguistic register to suit the communicative context. These difficulties include the unintentional use of slang expressions, challenges in finding formal lexical equivalents, and a lack of confidence when engaging in formal discourse.

Social media also plays a pivotal role in disseminating and normalizing impolite linguistic styles, thereby reinforcing habits that contravene conventional language norms. Despite this tendency, the majority of respondents expressed optimism that awareness of polite and contextually appropriate language can still be fostered without restraining freedom of linguistic expression through the use of slang.

Accordingly, it is imperative for educational institutions, families, and the broader community to cultivate a balanced understanding between linguistic creativity and the necessity of maintaining politeness in communication. Initiatives such as language training programs, the habitual use of formal language within academic settings, and educational as well as persuasive interventions may serve as strategic approaches to nurturing a young generation that is both linguistically innovative and socially respectful of established norms of politeness.

REFERENCES

Dewi, R., Suwandi, S., & Sulisty, E. T. (2019). Kesantunan Berbahasa dalam Pembelajaran

- Bahasa Indonesia di SMA Bilingual Politeness in Indonesian Language Class at Bilingual High School. *Madah: Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra*, 10(1), 19–36. <http://dx.doi.org/10.26499/madah.v10i1.823>
- Founta, A., Djouvas, C., Chatzakou, D., Leontiadis, I., Blackburn, J., Stringhini, G., Vakali, A., Sirivianos, M., & Kourtellis, N. (2018). Large scale crowdsourcing and characterization of twitter abusive behavior. *Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media*, 12(1).
- Gusnayetti. (2021). Dampak Penggunaan Bahasa Gaul di Kalangan Remaja terhadap Bahasa Indonesia. *Ensiklopedia Social Review*, 3(3), 275–281.
- Lestari, S. (2023). Penggunaan Bahasa Indonesia dalam Komunikasi Akademik di Lingkungan STIE Arpin Palembang. *Jurnal Cahaya Mandalika*, 4(2), 1375–1380.
- Martin, A., & Maulida, D. (2022). Strategi Komunikasi Dinas Sosial dalam Usaha Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Berkebutuhan di Kabupaten Nagan Raya. *Jurnal Inovasi Penelitian*, 3(4), 5689–5694.
- Pratiwi, B., & Hapsari, K. P. (2020). Analisis Kemampuan Berpikir Tingkat Tinggi Melalui Pemanfaatan YouTube sebagai Media Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia. *Jurnal Ilmiah Sekolah Dasar*, 4(2), 282. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jisd.v4i2.24238>
- Puspitasari, F., Siregar, V. A., & Darmiwati, D. (2024). State Losses Due To Corruption. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Literature*, 3(1), 89–95. <https://doi.org/10.53067/ijomral.v3i1.199>
- Saputra, N., & Aida, N. (2019). Keberadaan penggunaan bahasa Indonesia pada generasi milenial. *Prosiding SEMDI-UNAYA (Seminar Nasional Multi Disiplin Ilmu UNAYA)*, 3(1), 368–383.
- Sebayang, R. R., Purba, E., Damanik, S. P., & Surip, M. (2024). Dinamika bahasa gaul dan serapan asing di era digital: Dampaknya terhadap kemampuan berbahasa Indonesia baku. *BAHTRA: Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra*, 5(02), 19–31.
- Sugiyono. (2016). Metode penelitian kuantitatif kualitatif dan R&D. In *Alfabeta, Bandung*.
- Yuliana, Y. (2022). Pengaruh Penggunaan Bahasa Gaul terhadap Bahasa Indonesia pada Remaja Milenial. *Concept: Journal of Social Humanities and Education*, 1(4), 39–48. <https://doi.org/10.55606/concept.v1i4.75>