
SLANG AS GENERATION IDENTITY: A STUDY OF FAMILY COMMUNICATION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN BALIKPAPAN

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Abstract	Article Information
<p><i>This study aims to analyze the use of slang in family communication among students, including students' level of knowledge about slang, the intensity of its use within the family, and the forms of slang commonly used in daily communication. This research employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive method. The data were collected through the distribution of questionnaires to 46 students, selected using a purposive sampling technique. The research instrument consisted of a questionnaire containing questions related to language use in family communication, the level of knowledge of slang, and the frequency of slang usage in daily interactions. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive quantitative analysis and presented in the form of tables and diagrams to facilitate the interpretation of the research findings. The results indicate that Indonesian remains the primary language used in family communication among students. However, most respondents demonstrate a good level of knowledge about slang and use it in certain situations. Several slang expressions frequently used in family communication include <i>mager</i>, <i>gabut</i>, <i>sabi</i>, <i>baper</i>, and <i>santuy</i>. These findings indicate that the use of slang within the family is situational and influenced by social relationships among family members as well as the communication context.</i></p> <p>Keywords: <i>Slang Language, Language Variation, Sociolinguistics, Family Communication, Students.</i></p>	<p><i>Received:</i> 07/03/2026</p> <p><i>Revised:</i> 17/03/2026</p> <p><i>Accepted:</i> 19/03/2026</p>

INTRODUCTION

In social life, language plays a very important role as the primary means of conveying ideas, feelings, and information among individuals. Language functions not only as a tool of communication but also as a medium that reflects social identity, cultural background, and the dynamics of relationships among members of society. The development of the times,

especially with the advancement of technology and social media, has influenced changes and developments in the forms of language used by society. These changes give rise to various language variations that are used in specific situations and contexts.

Language is the main tool of communication in social interaction (Utami, 2024). In its development, language experiences variations according to social context, age, and the environment of its speakers. One variation of language that has developed rapidly is slang. Slang is generally used by the younger generation as a form of social identity and expression of intimacy. Language is also a fundamental means used by humans to interact and communicate in daily life. Through language, individuals can express ideas, emotions, and build social relationships with others. However, the role of language is not limited to merely conveying messages. Language also represents personal identity and indicates the social background and group from which a person originates. Each individual or community has distinctive linguistic characteristics influenced by their social environment and culture. As stated by (Chaer, 2010), language does not merely function as a communication tool but also reflects the social and cultural identity of its speakers. This view aligns with (Sumarsono, 2007), who argues that language is an integral part of culture; therefore, a person's language patterns and styles are strongly influenced by the social values prevailing in the society where they live.

The phenomenon of slang usage does not only occur in friendship circles but has also extended into the realm of the nuclear family. This phenomenon is interesting to study because the family is the first social institution in shaping an individual's character and communication patterns. Although many studies on slang have been conducted, most of them focus on the use of slang in peer groups, social media, or communication among teenagers. Research that specifically examines the use of slang in the context of nuclear family communication is still relatively limited. In fact, the family is the first social space where individuals learn to communicate and develop patterns of linguistic interaction. Furthermore, previous studies have tended to emphasize the linguistic forms of slang without examining how the language is used within the dynamics of family relationships.

Research on the use of slang within the family is important because this phenomenon indicates changes in communication patterns between generations within the household. The influence of social media and the development of communication technology allow slang, which was once limited to certain communities, to become more widely used, even within family environments. Therefore, this study is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of slang usage in family interactions and its implications for the development of language and communication culture in society.

Based on this background, this study offers novelty by examining the use of slang in the context of nuclear family communication among university students, particularly in identifying the forms of slang used, their social functions in family interactions, and the factors influencing their usage. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to sociolinguistic studies, especially in understanding how language variations develop and adapt within family environments in the era of digital communication.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language Variation in Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics is a branch of linguistics that studies the relationship between language and society, as well as how language is used in different social contexts. This field highlights how social factors such as age, social status, education, and cultural background can influence language use in everyday communication. Language variation emerges as a consequence of these social differences and shows that language is not used uniformly within society (Asrawi, 2024), sociolinguistics also views language as positioned within society because humans do not exist merely as individuals but as members of social communities. Humans use language as a way of signaling identity with one cultural group and distinguishing themselves from others (Putri, 2024)

From a sociolinguistic perspective, language variation can appear in various forms such as dialects, registers, and language styles. These variations are often used by certain social groups to demonstrate social identity and to build solidarity within their communities. The use of language variation can also reflect the relationship between social structure and the linguistic behavior of speakers.

Thus, the study of language variation is important to understand how language functions not only as a means of communication but also as a symbol of social identity within society.

Slang Language as a Form of Language Variation

Slang is one form of language variation that is informal in nature and is usually used by certain social groups, especially the younger generation. Slang often appears in everyday communication as a form of expression that is more relaxed, creative, and not bound by the rules of standard language (Arifin et al., 2022)

Slang is also frequently used as a means of showing group identity and building social closeness among members of a community. The use of slang enables members of a particular group to distinguish themselves from other groups and to create a sense of solidarity in social interactions (Nur R & Susanti, 2023)

In addition, slang is usually characterized by several linguistic features such as the use of abbreviations, acronyms, shifts in word meaning, and the creation of new vocabulary that develops according to social trends. This language variation generally develops rapidly and often changes along with the development of popular culture and the social dynamics of society (Anjani et al., 2025)

Language Use in Family Communication

The family is the first social environment that plays an important role in shaping an individual's communication patterns. Within the family, language is used as a means to convey information, build emotional relationships, and instill social values among family members.

Social changes and the development of communication technology have also influenced communication patterns within the family. Young people who are actively engaged in social media often bring the language styles they use in their peer groups into family communication. This situation can create new communication dynamics within the family, particularly in interactions between younger generations and their parents.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study aims to analyze the use of slang in the nuclear family communication of students at the Akademi Bahasa Asing Balikpapan. To achieve this objective, the study employs a descriptive approach with a quantitative method that aims to describe the phenomenon of slang usage systematically based on data obtained from the research respondents.

The descriptive approach is used to explain the forms of slang used by students in family communication, the functions of its use in daily interactions, and the factors influencing the use of such language. The quantitative method is chosen because this study collects data through questionnaires which are then analyzed statistically to obtain an overview of the tendencies of slang usage among students.

The research data were obtained through the distribution of questionnaires to students who served as the research respondents. The questionnaire consisted of several questions related to the respondents' experiences in using slang in family communication, their level of comfort in using it, and their views on the use of proper and correct Indonesian.

By using this method, the study is expected to provide a clear description of the phenomenon of slang usage in students' family communication and contribute to sociolinguistic studies, particularly regarding the development of language variation within family environments in the digital era.

Research Type and Approach

This study uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive method. The quantitative approach is employed to obtain an overview of the phenomenon of slang usage based on numerical data collected from the research respondents. The descriptive method is chosen because this study aims to systematically describe the use of slang in students' family communication without manipulating the research variables.

Through this approach, the study seeks to identify the forms of slang usage, the level of comfort in using such language within the family, and the factors that influence its use in everyday communication.

Research Location and Time

This research was conducted at Akademi Bahasa Asing Balikpapan, located in Balikpapan City, East Kalimantan. The selection of this research location was based on the consideration that students at the institution come from various social and cultural backgrounds, which allows for variations in language use in family communication.

The research was conducted through a data collection process by distributing questionnaires to students who served as research respondents through Google Forms.

Population And Sample

The population in this study consisted of all students enrolled at Akademi Bahasa Asing Balikpapan.

The research sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique, which is a sampling method based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. The criteria for respondents in this study were students who still live with their nuclear families or who still maintain intensive communication with family members.

The number of respondents in this study was 46 students, who were considered representative of the research population.

Data Collection Technique

The data collection technique used in this study was the questionnaire method. The questionnaire was designed in the form of both closed-ended and open-ended questions related to the respondents' experiences in using slang in family communication.

Several aspects addressed in the questionnaire include:

1. The intensity of slang usage within the family
2. The forms of slang used
3. The level of comfort in using slang
4. Perceptions toward the use of proper and correct Indonesian
5. Factors influencing the use of slang

The questionnaire was distributed online using a digital platform, making it easier for respondents to provide their answers.

Data Analysis Technique

The data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive quantitative analysis techniques. The data were then presented in the form of tables and graphs to facilitate the interpretation of the research results.

The steps of data analysis in this study include:

1. Collecting and classifying the data obtained from the questionnaires.
2. Calculating the frequency of respondents' answers for each question.
3. Presenting the data in the form of tables and graphs.
4. Interpreting the results of the analysis to explain the phenomenon of slang usage in students' family communication.

Through this analysis technique, the study is expected to provide a clear description of the patterns of slang usage as well as the factors influencing its use in students' family communication.

FINDINGS

This study involved 46 respondents who are students of Akademi Bahasa Asing Balikpapan. The research data were obtained through the distribution of questionnaires designed to identify patterns of language use in nuclear family communication, particularly related to the use of slang by students in their daily interactions within the family environment. The questionnaire contained several questions related to the frequency of language use, the level of understanding of slang, and the respondents' perceptions regarding the comfort of using slang in family communication.

The collected data were then analyzed using descriptive quantitative analysis to observe the tendency of language usage patterns within students' nuclear families. This analysis aims to describe the phenomenon of slang usage in the context of family communication and to identify the factors that influence the emergence of language variations in family interactions.

The Use of Indonesian in Family Communication

The results of the study show that most respondents use Indonesian as the primary language in communication within their nuclear families. This indicates that Indonesian still plays an important role as the main medium of interaction in the daily communication of students' family environments. The use of Indonesian in the family functions not only as a tool of communication but also as a means of maintaining message clarity and facilitating understanding among family members who have different age backgrounds and life experiences.

In addition, the use of Indonesian in the family also reflects the function of language as a unifying tool in social communication, particularly within the family as the most basic social unit in society. Although students as the younger generation are frequently exposed to various language variations, including slang that develops through social media and peer environments, the results of this study indicate that in the context of nuclear family communication they still tend to use a more common language that can be easily understood by all family members.

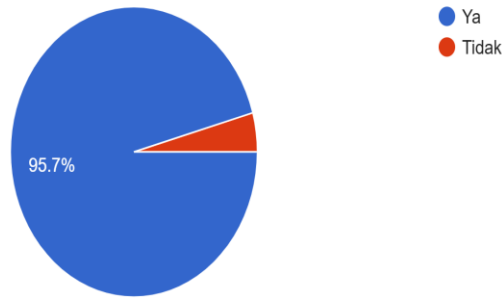
This finding also indicates that Indonesian is still perceived as a more polite, clear, and appropriate language to be used in family communication, especially when interacting with parents or older family members. Thus, although slang develops rapidly among the younger generation, its use within the family tends to be limited and situational.

This can be seen from the following data:

Table I: The Use of Indonesian in Family Communication.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	44	95.7%
No	2	4.3%

Apakah bahasa yang digunakan didalam berkomunikasi keluarga menggunakan bahasa Indonesia?
46 responses



The data findings also indicate that Indonesian remains the primary language used in the nuclear family communication of university students, although other language variations appear in daily communication practices. This finding also shows that although students frequently use slang in peer environments, they tend to adjust their language use when they are in the family environment. This adjustment is carried out as a form of social adaptation and respect for communication norms within the family. In other words, students do not always use slang freely in family settings but consider the communication situation and the interlocutors involved.

Thus, the results of this study demonstrate that although slang develops rapidly among the younger generation, Indonesian remains the main choice in the nuclear family communication of students. This confirms that language use within the family is influenced not only by language trends that develop in society but also by the social and cultural values that prevail within the family environment.

Students' Knowledge of Slang

In Addition To Information Regarding Language Use In Family Communication, This Study Also Reveals Data Related To The Level Of Students' Knowledge Of Slang. This Aspect Is Important To Analyze Because The Level Of Knowledge of a particular language variation can influence the pattern of its use in everyday interactions. Slang, as one form of language variation that develops among the younger generation, is often used as a means of informal communication, especially within peer groups and social media.

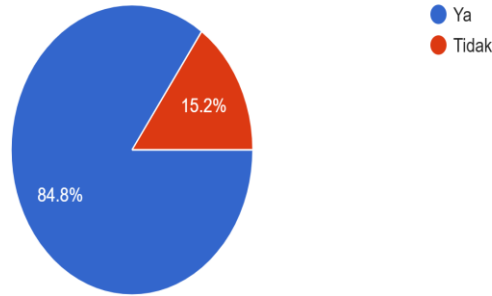
In the context of student life, slang functions not only as a communication tool but also as a means of expressing social identity and building closeness with peer groups. Therefore, students' understanding of slang becomes one of the factors that may influence how the language is used in various communication situations, including within the nuclear family environment.

Based on the results of the analyzed questionnaire, most respondents stated that they are familiar with slang. This can be seen in the following table:

Table II. Respondents' Knowledge of Slang

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	39	84.8%
No	7	15.2%

Apakah anda mengenal bahasa Gaul (Prokem)
46 responses



The results of the study show that most students are already familiar with slang as one form of language variation that has developed among the younger generation. The high percentage of respondents who are familiar with slang indicates that this phenomenon has become part of students' social lives, particularly in daily communication with peers and in interactions on social media.

In sociolinguistic studies, slang can be understood as one form of language variation that emerges due to differences in social groups, age, and social environments. According to (Chaer, 2010) language variation refers to the diversity of language forms that arise due to differences among speakers, communication situations, and the functions of language use in society. In this context, slang develops as a form of social identity expression for certain groups, particularly among teenagers and university students.

The high level of students' knowledge of slang is also closely related to the influence of developments in communication technology and social media. Through various digital

platforms, such as instant messaging applications and social media, slang vocabulary can spread rapidly and be used by many people within a relatively short period of time. (Holmes, 2013) states that the development of modern communication technology has a significant influence on language change, particularly in creating new forms of language used by certain social groups.

In addition, the use of slang can also be seen as a form of linguistic creativity among the younger generation. Slang often emerges through processes such as word shortening, shifts in meaning, or the creation of new terms used in informal communication. (Fuller & Wardhaugh, 2015) explain that language variation often develops as a means for speakers to express social identity and strengthen a sense of solidarity within particular groups.

Nevertheless, knowledge of slang does not necessarily mean that the language is used intensively in all communication situations. Students tend to use slang selectively, particularly in informal interactions. In more formal contexts, such as academic environments or when interacting with older family members, students usually adjust their language use according to the prevailing communication norms.

Thus, the results of this study indicate that slang has become widely recognized among students as part of the dynamic development of language in society. However, its use remains influenced by social context, the relationship between speakers and interlocutors, and the communication situation taking place.

Intensity of Slang Usage in the Family

In addition to examining the level of students' knowledge of slang, this study also investigates the intensity of slang usage in nuclear family communication. Analyzing the intensity of slang usage is important in order to understand the extent to which this language variation is used by students when interacting with their family members. This is because the language used within the family environment is often influenced by social norms, relationships among family members, and the communication situation taking place.

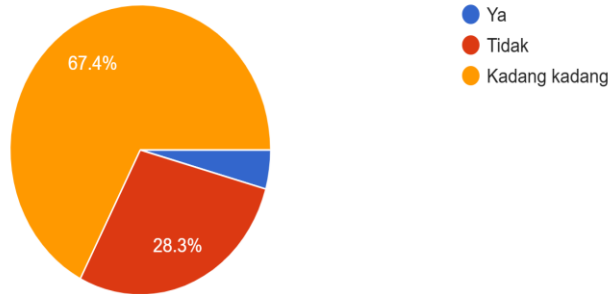
Therefore, this study seeks to identify how often students use slang when communicating with members of their nuclear families. The intensity of slang usage can provide an overview of how students adjust their language choices in the context of family communication. The results of the analysis regarding the intensity of slang usage in family communication can be seen in the following table.

Table III. Frequency of Slang Usage in Family Communication

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	2	4.3%
Sometimes	31	67.4%
No	13	28.3%

Apakah Anda sering menggunakan bahasa Gaul dalam berkomunikasi dengan keluarga?

46 responses



The data indicate that the majority of students use slang situationally, especially in relaxed or informal situations within the family. In everyday life, students as members of the younger generation tend to use slang in their peer environments. Slang often appears as a form of group identity expression and is used to create closeness in informal communication among peers. However, the use of such language is not always the same when they are in the family environment.

The family, as the first social unit in an individual's life, has its own communication norms that often require the use of language that is more polite, clear, and easily understood by all family members. In this context, speakers usually adjust their language choices according to the communication situation and the social relationship with their interlocutors (Fuller & Wardhaugh, 2015).

Recapitulation of Slang Words That Appear

With the use of slang in family communication, the researcher was interested in identifying which words commonly appear in such interactions. Several slang expressions were found, as shown in the table below.

Table IV. Vocabulary Frequently Appearing in Family Communication

No	Slang Words	Frequency of Occurrence
1	Mager	14
2	Gabut	10
3	Sabi	6
4	Sampe	6
5	Baper	4
6	Aja	4
7	Pake	4
8	Gue	3

No	Slang Words	Frequency of Occurrence
9	Emang	3
10	Nugas	3
11	OTW	3
12	Santuy	3
13	Kuy	3
14	Garing	3
15	Gimana	3

Based on the results of the recapitulation, it can be seen that the words “mager” and “gabut” are the slang terms most frequently used by respondents in family communication. These two words are generally used to describe students’ feelings or daily activities, such as laziness or boredom.

In addition, several words such as *sabi*, *santuy*, *otw*, *kuy*, and *baper* also appear quite frequently in respondents’ communication. These words are usually used in relaxed and informal communication situations. This indicates that the use of slang within the family tends to occur when the communication atmosphere is friendly and informal.

In general, the slang used by respondents is mostly related to expressions of feelings, daily activities, and informal expressions in conversation. Nevertheless, the use of slang within the family is not always intensive, as some respondents stated that they still adjust their language use according to the communication situation and the interlocutors within the family environment.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that Indonesian remains the primary language used by students in communication within their nuclear families. This finding indicates that Indonesian continues to hold an important position as a linking language in family interactions. Although students as members of the younger generation are exposed to various language variations, including slang that develops through social media and peer environments, they still consider the communication norms that apply within the family when choosing the language they use. This shows that language use within the family is influenced not only by linguistic trends but also by the social and cultural values that develop in society. This finding is in line with the view that language functions not only as a communication tool but also reflects the social identity and cultural values of its speakers.

In addition, the results of the study indicate that most respondents have a fairly good knowledge of slang. The high level of students’ knowledge of slang suggests that this language variation has become part of the social life of the younger generation. Students who are active in the use of social media and digital communication tend to recognize and adopt

slang vocabulary that develops in society more quickly. This phenomenon supports the sociolinguistic perspective which states that the development of communication technology has a significant influence on language change and the emergence of new language forms in society (Holmes, 2013).

However, the results of the study also show that the use of slang in family communication tends to be situational. The research data indicate that most respondents use slang only under certain conditions, especially in relaxed situations or when communicating with family members who are not significantly different in age. This suggests that students are able to adjust their language use according to the communication context that is taking place. From a sociolinguistic perspective, language choice is strongly influenced by the social relationship between the speaker and the interlocutor as well as the communication situation involved (Fuller & Wardhaugh, 2015).

Another finding in this study is the emergence of various slang vocabulary used by students in family communication, such as *mager*, *gabut*, *sabi*, *baper*, and *santuy*. Most of these words are related to expressions of feelings, emotional conditions, and daily activities. This indicates that slang functions as a more flexible and informal means of expression in communication. In addition, the use of slang can also strengthen emotional closeness between speakers and interlocutors when used in relaxed communication situations.

On the other hand, the results of this study also reveal a process of linguistic adaptation in family communication. Students do not always use slang freely within the family, but rather tend to adjust their language choices according to the communication norms that apply in the family environment. This shows that the family still plays an important role in shaping communication patterns and maintaining the use of language that is more formal and easily understood by all family members.

Overall, this study shows that the use of slang in students' family communication is a dynamic and contextual phenomenon. Slang does not fully replace the use of Indonesian in family communication but is used in a limited way as a language variation in certain situations. Thus, this phenomenon reflects the interaction between the development of language among the younger generation and the communication norms that exist within the family environment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study on the use of slang in the nuclear family communication of students at the Balikpapan Academy of Foreign Languages, it can be concluded that Indonesian remains the primary language used in family interactions. Nevertheless, slang has become widely recognized among students and has become part of the language variation that develops in the daily lives of the younger generation.

The results of the study indicate that most students have a good understanding of slang. This is influenced by their social environment as well as the development of communication technology and social media, which enable the rapid spread of slang vocabulary.

However, the use of slang in family communication is not always intensive. Students tend to use slang situationally, especially in relaxed communication settings or when interacting with family members who are closer in age.

This study also found that the slang expressions appearing in family communication are generally related to expressions of feelings, emotional conditions, and daily activities, such as *mager*, *gabut*, *sabi*, *baper*, and *santuy*. The use of these terms indicates that slang functions as a form of informal expression that can create a more relaxed and friendly communication atmosphere within the family.

Overall, this study shows that the use of slang in students' family communication is dynamic and contextual. Students are able to adjust their language choices according to the communication situation and their social relationship with family members. Thus, although slang is rapidly developing among the younger generation, the role of Indonesian as the main language in family communication is still maintained.

This study is expected to contribute to sociolinguistic research, particularly studies related to language variation within the family environment. Furthermore, future research is recommended to examine the use of slang with a larger number of respondents and to consider other factors such as cultural background, the age of family members, and the influence of digital media on language development.

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