

## Representing Generations Through Slang: A Comparative Study of MTV and Tiktok in Indonesian Pop Culture

### *Merepresentasikan Generasi Melalui Bahasa Gaul: Studi Komparatif tentang MTV dan Tiktok dalam Budaya Populer Indonesia*

Refan Gusti Ramadhan<sup>1</sup>, Syahkira Begum<sup>2\*</sup>, Yanti Rosalinah<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika

[gustirefan@gmail.com](mailto:gustirefan@gmail.com), [ssyahkirabegum@gmail.com](mailto:ssyahkirabegum@gmail.com)\*, [yanti.yaa@bsi.ac.id](mailto:yanti.yaa@bsi.ac.id)

#### Article Information

##### Description

Submission: 25  
November 2025  
Revised: 25  
December 2025  
Accepted: 30  
December 2025  
Approved: 01  
January 2026

##### Kata Kunci

*bahasa gaul;  
identitas  
generasi, MTV  
Indonesia,  
TikTok, bahasa  
anak muda,  
media digital,  
budaya populer  
Indonesia.*

##### Keywords

Slang,  
Generational  
identity, MTV  
Indonesia,  
TikTok, Youth  
language,  
Digital media,  
Indonesian pop  
culture.

#### ABSTRACT

This article examines how slang shapes generational linguistic identity in Indonesia by comparing two media environments: MTV in the early 2000s and TikTok in the current digital era. Using sociolinguistic perspectives on media and youth identity, the study analyzes how each platform influences the creation, spread, and social meaning of slang. MTV, as a one-way broadcast medium, produced relatively stable slang tied to localized adaptations of global youth culture. In contrast, TikTok operates as a participatory, algorithm-driven space where slang changes quickly through abbreviation, blending, code-mixing, and sound alteration. These forms circulate virally and gain meaning through collective user practices. Despite differences in structure and pace, both eras show that slang functions as a marker of group belonging, humor, and generational distinction. The study demonstrates how shifting media infrastructures shape linguistic innovation and the ongoing negotiation of youth identity in Indonesian popular culture.

##### Abstrak

Artikel ini membahas bagaimana slang membentuk identitas linguistik generasi di Indonesia dengan membandingkan dua lingkungan media: MTV pada awal 2000-an dan TikTok pada era digital saat ini. Dengan menggunakan perspektif sosiolinguistik tentang media dan identitas anak muda, studi ini menganalisis bagaimana setiap platform memengaruhi penciptaan, penyebaran, dan makna sosial dari slang. MTV, sebagai media siaran satu arah, menghasilkan bentuk slang yang relatif stabil dan terkait dengan adaptasi lokal dari budaya anak muda global. Sebaliknya, TikTok berfungsi sebagai ruang partisipatif yang digerakkan algoritma, di mana slang berubah cepat melalui pemendekan, pencampuran, alih kode, dan perubahan bunyi. Bentuk-bentuk ini menyebar secara viral dan memperoleh makna lewat praktik pengguna. Meski berbeda dalam struktur dan kecepatan, kedua era menunjukkan bahwa slang berfungsi sebagai penanda kebersamaan kelompok, humor, dan pembeda antar generasi. Studi ini menunjukkan bagaimana perubahan infrastruktur media membentuk inovasi bahasa dan negosiasi identitas anak muda dalam budaya populer Indonesia.



Copyright © 2026 Refan Gusti Ramadhan, Syahkira Begum, Yanti Rosalinah

## 1. Introduction

Slang is a dynamic and creative form of language that reflects social identity, generational characteristics, and cultural change. In Indonesia, slang

has developed differently across generations, and each period is shaped by the media that influence youth culture at the time. Among millennials, slang emerged during the late 1990s and early 2000s when mass media such as television, radio, and magazines became the main sources of youth expression. MTV was especially influential because it introduced global youth culture, new communication styles, and expressive vocabulary to Indonesian audiences. Although specific research on MTV's linguistic influence is still limited, studies on millennial language use show that media consumption played an important role in shaping generational identity and everyday linguistic behavior (Pitrianti & Maryani, 2023; Rusydi et al., 2024).

Slang itself is an informal and flexible register that allows speakers to express identity, group belonging, and cultural values. It often breaks grammatical conventions and standard vocabulary in order to create new forms that signal solidarity within certain communities. According (Mulyani & Puspitaningrum, 2022), slang among Indonesian youth serves as a medium of cultural expression that connects traditional and modern influences. (Adhadi et al., 2024) explain that word-formation processes such as abbreviation, blending, and semantic shift have become increasingly common in digital communication. In addition, (Algofiqi et al., 2025) emphasize that the widespread use of slang among Gen Z speakers shows how adaptable the Indonesian language is in responding to digital culture.

The rise of digital platforms has changed the way slang is created and shared. Social media such as TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter allows new vocabulary to appear quickly and spread to large audiences (Lihardomanihuruk et al., 2025; Nurhidayah et al., 2025) TikTok is especially influential because the combination of audio, text, and video makes slang easy to form and copy. Many expressions that first emerge online eventually enter daily offline conversations. TikTok slang often appears in the form of deliberate misspellings, clipped words, blended expressions, and playful interjections (Amalia et al., 2025) These features reflect the fast, humorous, and highly creative nature of digital youth culture.

When compared to the MTV era, slang in the TikTok era changes more quickly and spreads more widely. Slang used by millennials tended to be stable, local, and community-centered because it circulated through slower mass media. Meanwhile, slang used by Generation Z and Alpha is more global, flexible, and closely tied to online communities that grow through constant interaction (Ilmiah & Pendidikan, 2022; Ramadhani et al., 2025). The contrast between these generations shows how language reflects broader cultural shifts in Indonesia. It also highlights how media and technology influence the way young people create identity, express themselves, and communicate. Studying these patterns provides valuable insight into the relationship between language, media, and generational identity in modern Indonesian society.

## **2. Research Method**

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive design to examine how slang reflects generational identity across two different media contexts. A qualitative

approach is used because the focus of the research lies in interpreting linguistic patterns, socio-cultural meaning, and media influence rather than measuring statistical trends. The study employs a comparative framework to identify shifts between MTV-era slang and TikTok-era slang.

The data consist of screenshots, transcripts, and documented examples of slang collected from: MTV Indonesia programs (MTV *Ampuh*, MTV *Bujang*, MTV Gue *Banget*, and celebrity interviews), available through archived clips and secondary documentation. TikTok content featuring common slang terms used by Indonesian Gen Z and Alpha, collected through publicly accessible videos using relevant hashtags and trending sounds. Secondary sources are also used to support interpretation, including journal articles on slang, digital communication, and media studies published from 2015 onwards.

Data were collected through purposive sampling, selecting slang expressions that: Frequently appeared during each media era, represented distinctive linguistic creativity, and reflected generational attitudes or identity markers. MTV-era slang data were identified through archived footage and textual descriptions, while TikTok-era data were gathered from trending posts, user comments, and explanatory videos on slang terms.

The data were analysed using Miles and Huberman's (1994) qualitative analysis framework, which includes: Data reduction: selecting, categorizing, and grouping slang examples from both eras. Data display: presenting findings in a comparative table to highlight form, meaning, and media characteristics. Conclusion drawing: interpreting how each media period shapes slang formation, spread, and generational identity. Linguistic analysis includes identifying word-formation patterns (abbreviation, clipping, blending, code-mixing) and examining how each form functions socially within its generation.

To ensure credibility, data were cross-checked with journal articles, linguistic studies, and sociolinguistic theories relevant to youth language and media influence. Triangulation was used by comparing primary data (slang samples) with secondary sources (academic literature) to validate interpretations.



### 3. Result and Discussion

Media plays a crucial role in shaping language and generational identity. In the 2000s, MTV functioned as a cultural transmitter that introduced global slang into Indonesia's local context. Through music programs, artist interviews, and fashion shows, MTV popularized several slang expressions such as "*kece*" or "*gaul*". Language change during this period occurred more slowly and stably because communication was still one-directional from media to audience. In contrast, the rise of TikTok represents a participatory platform where users actively create, remix, and spread new slang. This shift demonstrates language democratization, the idea that anyone can coin new words and influence linguistic trends. Examples like "*bestie*," "*capcut moment*," or "*no debat*" spread rapidly due to the platform's interactive and viral nature (Ekayati et al., 2024). In terms of characteristics, MTV-era slang developed gradually and was often inspired by global pop culture (music, film, fashion). TikTok-era slang, however, evolves much faster, reflecting the creativity of digital users who blend abbreviations,





puns, and code-mixing between Indonesian and English (Zai et al., 2024). These linguistic shifts can be explained through two sociolinguistic theories. First, media are not merely channels of language transmission but social arenas where new linguistic varieties emerge. Digital spaces like TikTok enable users to negotiate identity and create innovative forms of communication. Second, evolves through shared practices within communities. TikTok users with similar interests such as storytime or CapCut editing communities form their own linguistic styles, which then diffuse widely across digital culture. Overall, the evolution of slang from MTV to TikTok illustrates how media and digital communities collaboratively shape language. Whereas traditional media once dictated linguistic norms, today's platforms allow for horizontal, participatory creation. This proves that technology not only accelerates language change but also broadens public participation in language formation.

This section presents a comparison between slang terms that emerged from MTV programs in the 2000s and those popularized through TikTok in recent years. The examples are illustrated through screenshots collected from both media platforms, showing how slang reflects generational identity and patterns of linguistic creativity. While MTV-era slang tended to adopt and localize global expressions introduced by celebrities or shows, TikTok slang emerges from participatory user-generated content that spreads rapidly across online communities.

**Table 1**  
**Slang Examples**

NO.	MTV Era Slang	Tiktok Era slang	Meaning and example of use
1.	 <p>The picture of Deby Sahartian explaining slang "Akika" and "Sayonara"</p>	 <p>Screenshot of a content creator using the slang "w"</p>	<p>Variants of self-reference used playfully to show humor. typically feminizes the speaker's voice for comedic effect, while "W" shortens gue/gua/gw for digital convenience. Example:</p>

---

			"Akika lagi ngantuk nich." "W lagi capek banget."
2.	 <p>MTV Ampuh was known as one of MTV Indonesia's shows that frequently used youth slang, including the word "nongkrong."</p>	 <p>content creator that using "w"</p>	Vocabulary describing youth social activity in public spaces. "Nongkrong" is the standard slang for gathering casually. "Nongki/nongs" are playful clipped forms used in social media for a lighter, trendier tone. Example: "Anak muda sekarang demen nongkrong" "Nongki lah kapan kapan"
3.	 <p>The slogan "cekidot bekicot" was a playful catchphrase used in the show "MTV Gue Banget."</p>	 <p>Screenshot of a TikTok video explaining what "Lokit" means.</p>	Imperative expressions that invite someone to look or check something while adding humor in it. MTV-era forms rely on playful phonological manipulation

---

---

			("cek-it-out"), while TikTok's "sini lokit" reflects English borrowing plus distortion. Example: "Penasaran? Cekidot aja "Eh sini lokit video ini"
4			Both terms refer to someone single, but with different social nuance. "Bujang" is older, more traditional Indonesian-Malay and sometimes neutral. "Jomblo" is modern youth slang that carries a humorous, self-deprecating tone about being single. Example: "Nasib seorang bujang gk punya pasangan" "Gini amat jadi jomblo,

---

---

malming  
dirumah  
doang”

---

#### 4. Conclusion

This study shows that slang plays a crucial role in expressing generational identity and social belonging among Indonesian youth. MTV-era slang spread through traditional, one-way media channels, creating relatively stable expressions that emphasized group solidarity and subcultural identity. In contrast, TikTok-era slang develops rapidly in participatory digital spaces, allowing users to create, remix, and share expressions that reflect humor, creativity, and online community engagement.

Despite these differences, both eras share key similarities: slang is informal, creative, humorous, and serves to mark group identity. The evolution from MTV to TikTok illustrates how media environments shape language innovation, social meaning, and intergenerational communication. These findings highlight the interplay between technology, culture, and language, showing that youth slang continues to reflect social change and generational characteristics in contemporary Indonesia.

#### References

- Adhadi, N. G., Amilia, F., Susetyo, A. M., & Jember, U. M. (2024). *Pembentukan singkatan bahasa gaul. 2022*, 120–127.
- Algofiqi, R., Septiansyah, A., Azzahra, S., Padli, M., & Rahman, A. A. (2025). *Bahtera Indonesia: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia. 10*(2), 393–401.
- Amalia, F., Umar, F., & Zakaria, U. (2025). *Penggunaan Slang dalam Komunikasi Virtual Pada Media Sosial oleh Generasi Z. 9*, 5242–5254.
- Ekayati, R., Sibarani, B., Ginting, S. A., Husein, R., & Amin, T. S. (2024). *Digital Dialects: The Impact of Social Media on Language Evolution and Emerging Forms of Communication. 03*(02), 605–609. <https://doi.org/10.55299/ijere.v3i2.986>
- Ilmiah, J., & Pendidikan, W. (2022). *3 1,2,3. 8*(September), 305–315.
- Lihardomanihuruk, L., Ginting, D., Manik, S., Manurung, L. W., Studi, P., Pendidikan, M., & Inggris, B. (2025). *JoAL. 4*(2), 302–308. <https://doi.org/10.52622/joal.v4i2.362>
- Mulyani, W., & Puspitaningrum, A. C. (2022). *Bahasa Gaul Sebagai Media Komunikasi Budaya. 23*, 168–176.
- Nurhidayah, S. A., Malang, U. M., & Malang, U. M. (2025). *Social Media Slang Evolution in Indonesia : A Big Data Analysis of Instagram and TikTok Hashtags. 4*(1). <https://doi.org/10.56397/JLCS.2025.02.02>
- Pitrianti, S., & Maryani, S. (2023). *Analisis bahasa slang di media sosial instagram. 5*(01), 9–16.
- Ramadhani, T., Nayla, D., Simanullang, R., & Sibuea, P. (2025). *Dampak Penggunaan Bahasa Slang Terhadap Penggunaan Bahasa Indonesia pada*

*Komunikasi Mahasiswa di Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara. 4(2), 3749–3753.*

Rusydi, M., Akbar, A., Vebryanti, M., & Tsani, F. N. (2024). *Analisis Perbedaan Penggunaan Gaya Bahasa Antara Generasi Milenial dan Generasi Z dalam Komunikasi Online : Studi Kasus Akun X @ xcintakiehlx dan @ nnauraayu. 8, 27167–27175.*

Zai, F. S., Sihite, M. C. A., Informasi, T., & Nias, U. (2024). *Perkembangan Bahasa Gaul Remaja Milenial. 01(November), 19–24.*