



# Language Variations: A New Trend of Language Use Among Teenagers in Social Media

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**Abstract.** This research is based on the language variation used among teenagers in one of the social media platforms, Twitter. This research is focused on the language variations created by changing the form of the words in Bahasa which has become a new trend on Twitter. The purpose of this study is to find out the patterns, meanings, and factors that cause language variations among teenagers. A descriptive qualitative method was used in conducting this research. The data collected is based on the words referring to the new trend mentioned in Twitter's tweets. The data were analyzed by using language variations theory proposed by Akmajian (1998) and Adams (2009). The finding shows that a new trend of language use appears to dominate the language use among teenagers which is nowadays triggered by the development of communication technology rapidly growing. The development in the way they communicate is shown as their identity as they are involved as the participants of the community of practice.

**Keywords:** Language Variations · Word Forms · New Trend · Twitter

## 1 Introduction

As the modern era has built technology to a higher level in many aspects of our daily life, such as providing media for education, transport facilitation, medication, communication, etc., communication through social media has become a basic need for communities. There are many platforms on social media which enable people to communicate with friends, family, and even other people overseas. One of the well-known social media platforms currently used, especially for teenagers in Indonesia, is Twitter. Twitter is one of the social media platforms that is commonly used by a range of people worldwide. There are many features that enable the user to post and access almost everything that is related to their predilection. According to General Twitter Statistics, there are a total of 1.3 billion Twitter accounts, 330 million of which are considered monthly active users [1]. There are 500 million tweets sent every day. The growth of Twitter's popularity has reached Indonesian teenagers since 2006. Twitter has a feature where people can easily find the trending topic through the keywords provided in the search item.

As the communication medium, Twitter has expanded into daily needs. The teenagers and other users have no limitations in expressing their thoughts, ideas, and feelings. Teenagers are considered young people who are full of emotions, ideas, and unlimited

energy to create innovation in which they try to associate their existence through the way they use language on social media. People reflect on their speech to be recognized as they are showing their identities such as age, gender, social background, ethnicity, and even the contexts in which they are using the language [2]. The variety of language used on social media mostly comes in an informal form of language. There are some types of language variations] namely lingua franca, pidgin, creole, jargon, slang, and taboo languages [3]. However, this research focuses on the language variation that is classified as slang. The study focuses on the patterns, functions, and factors that may cause teenagers to use such a variety of language as it has emerged as a new trend in teenagers' discourse on social media. There are many kinds of word variations found in Twitter's tweets, namely *mengsedih* (sad), *sans* (relaxed), *handsome* (*gans*), *bucin* (love slave), *gercep* (fast motion), *gaje* (unclear), *gils* (crazy), *cans* (beautiful), *hyung* (brother), *sanmor* (sunday morning). The study focuses on the new trend that is mostly used on Twitter. The popularity and the intensity of usage of those words have become fascinating topics to study.

## 2 Theoretical Framework

Language varies in the way speakers try to represent themselves. The establishment of identity through language has brought a new perspective on how language forms social relations. One of the varieties of language used in this research is slang language. Slang is the term for rejection of the standard rules in language [4].

### 2.1 Language Variations

Language use in social context varies depending on the community, situation, and even time and place. In this context, language use among teenagers on Twitter has indicated the variety of languages they use on a daily basis. Teenagers do not speak the same way and they have no limitations in expressing their thoughts, especially on social media platforms. The variety of languages they mostly communicate in is informal language. Informal means it does not follow the word formations in standard language. Standard language enables readers or hearers to get the point of what other people are trying to deliver. This trend has brought an influence through the expressions they try to represent. By changing the prefix that is not proper with the root words, they are trying to associate their existence with the contemporary language.

The most common forms found on Twitter are adjective variations with the prefix *meng-*, which is supposed to be a constructed verbal category; derivation is the addition of a word-forming affix followed by a phonological change, orthographic change, semantic change, and word-class change [5]. Blending, clipping, and shortening are the other word formations used as the new trend on Twitter.

### 2.2 Slang

Slang can be categorized as informal words or phrases that are mostly used in some particular contexts, namely song lyrics, speech among teenagers, and other social groups.

There are many kinds of slang as it is formed by linguistic processes that are morphologically studied, namely; coinage, clipping, abbreviation, back-formation, compounds, acronyms, blends, cockney, public-house slang, workmen's slang, commercial, and also standard slang. However, this study focuses on how the words are formed, more specifically the patterns of the words, and how they are classified as a variation of language use on social media. Slang is mostly used among teenagers and college students in general, and it has prominent features [3, 6]. The first one is that slang is part of informal styles of language use. Slang is like an art form in clothing, fashion designs, murals, and song lyrics in popular music. The last feature is slang associated with a particular group of people. "One way to characterize slang is as a special kind of intimate or in-group speech. Slang is a kind of jargon marked by its rejection of formal rules, its comparative freshness, its common ephemerality, and its marked use to claim solidarity [4]".

Using slang is a kind of casual, playful, and joking way of rebelling against standard language forms [7]. Slang outlines social spaces. Attitudes toward slang help identify and construct social groups and identities [7]. These all suggest that slang is a dynamic and creative form of language use within communities that are based on the notion of contextual appropriateness. It is also implied that mutual solidarity and understanding among parties should also be taken into account.

### 3 Method

The primary data for this paper was taken from posted Tweets on Twitter, which were selected based on the words containing slang as the new trend in language use on social media. To collect and analyze the data, qualitative descriptive with content analysis was applied. The following steps were also taken. Firstly, the words found were classified and categorized based on the trend of their use. Then the trending words most commonly used were marked in order to ease their categorization. In the next phase, 20 words as the data of the paper were listed and divided into three variations according to the word forms, functions, and implied meanings. Finally, the data were contextually interpreted based on data classification and analysis by confirming theories and socio-discoursal evidence that may influence their use.

### 4 Result and Discussion

There are some common mistakes made regularly, which seem to be a new trend among teenagers on social media. The first one is an affix error. A new trend that has begun since the beginning of the year 2021 and is commonly used in WhatsApp stickers, Instagram comments, tweets on Twitter, and other social media platforms. The affix error that is commonly found on Twitter and regularly becomes trending is the prefix *meng-* which is basically used in Bahasa as an active verb both for transitive and intransitive verbs. Prefix *meng-* will stay as its basic form if it is followed by verb categories that begin with one of the five vowels (a, i, u, e, o) and the other five consonants (g, h, k, q, and x). Syntactically, the word classifications are changed due to the variations that the teenagers used to create those words. The category of a word changes since they use *meng-* as the prefix of adjective categories. Moreover, this new trend deviates from the standard

language, which is shown through the expression of emotions on Twitter. The following data are representations of recent Twitter claims:

*Mengsedih*

Bila @bette\_rflyy: *sorry Jae, I'm extremely busy today so I can't watch you (cry emoticon) **mengsedih***

Cindy.XR @princebujangs replying to @ncitybase\_: *I like you but you don't like me (cry emoticon) **Mengsedih** (cry emoticon)*

Mariah @kolekpisangcau replying to @hai\_hello6: *the book of us : Empty wallet (cry emoticon) **mengsedih***

Levi @juuustLevi: *I wanna hit u but I think u have someone else :')* “**mengsedih di bawah nigara**”

Mimi @ddeonuyeou: *it's the end of era and I still haven't received 2 of my albums \***mengsedih***

Bila is the name of the writer who mentioned the word *mengsedih*. Bila used English as s/he wrote the tweet to express how s/he felt about something. However, s/he mentioned *mengsedih* at the end of her/his sentence. Despite the prefix *meng-*, *sedih* means sad. In Bahasa, *sedih* begins with *s*. The prefix is supposed to be *menyedihkan*. This shows that based on the standard language in Bahasa, the prefix *meng-* changes the word category from *sedih* as an adjective into a verb *menyedihkan*. However, this trend does not change the word category from adjective into verb because *mengsedih* still has the same meaning as the adjective.

*Mengsenang, mengmwarah and mengmleyot*

Hae @hxxcxy: *tersiksa lu m, yahaaaaaaa*

**Mengsenang, monmaap** atas oknum m

Gaa @jieharucityx replying to aniyoo gifteu: **mengmwarah mengsenang mengmleyot**

R E X I @\_mas\_mas\_biasa replying to @mochi\_minuet: *muka seperti tidak **mengsenang***

Ara @riuphoria replying to @sunbrghtn: **AKU SELAMA INI DIINGAT SHU OEMJI EOWOWOWO / mengsenang**

Suka Main Saham @\_namjoonn replying to @Taehyungk1m\_: *Avv **mengsenang** (love eyes emoticon)*

Because *senang* begins with the suffix *-s* in Bahasa, the letter *-s* is supposed to be replaced by *-nye* as in *menyedihkan*, because the prefix *-meng* transforms an adjective into a verb in Bahasa word formation. However, this word acts as an adjective instead of a verb while it has the prefix that is supposed to change it into a verb.

In KBBI, the words that start with *l*, *m*, *n*, *r*, or *w*, the prefix has to be *me-* without any combination or replacement, as in *sedih* becomes *me-nye-dihkan*. The word *mengmwarah* has the basic word as *marah* which means “angry”. When the word *marah* is added by a prefix, there has to be an affix that follows, which is an *-i*. As in *marah*,

the appropriate affixation is *me-marah-i*. The mistake does not end there since there is an addition of *-w-* in the middle of the *ma*-syllable.

*Mwarah* is formed to give an emphasis in the syllable *ma-*. As in Javanese, we can find the exaggeration of expression in the addition of a sound in pronouncing and expressing a word. For instance, *buanget*, *mwarah*, *guede* have something to do with their dialect and accent that cause the sound change in their speech.

There is also another case like *mengsedih* which can be formulated as *meng + sedih* (*adjective*). Another case is *mengbabu*. The basic form of *mengbabu* is *babu* which means *slave*. As it was mentioned in some tweets recently,

*Mengbabu*

nnda @sariiwangii: *happy Sunday, selamat mengbabu*

ramyv @roamyun: *lest mengbabu*. Brb!

Rin. @le\_echan: *mari mengbabu*

Since *babu* means slave, which acts as a noun, this word of *mengbabu* once again does not fulfil the standard language. This prefix does not change the identity or function of the word. *Mengbabu* is intended to be a verb as it contains the noun *babu*, which refers to the meaning of its word. A slave is supposed to be working. So *mengbabu* in this context refers to a verb. *Mengbabu* is supposed to be *membabu* with the prefix *mem-*, and it does not follow any suffix because words beginning with *b*, *f*, *p*, or *v* are preceded by the prefix *mem-*.

*Menggabut*

. Bininya Yoonmin . @1612Rewa: *Menggabut*

*I vote #TheGroup #BTS at the #PCAs 2021 @BTS\_twt*

DIN. Sibuk skull bgt @ta.: *every night menggabut hahaha*

@nugunde\_: *menggabut at its finest*

Sel. @shelladday: *as always aku menggabut*

Fafa @thisbyunie replying to @doyifiting: *I'm menggabut right now*

Paul @bebeksarapp: *Menggabut server down yeah (respond to an app)*

*Menggabut* contains more than one-word form. It has the prefix *meng-*, shortening including clipping and blending. The basic word of *menggabut* is *gabut*. *Gabut* is a blending of *ga* for *gaji* (salary) and *but* is for *buta* (blind). Basically, *gabut* is an expression of boredom. This expression was initially used to express that one is supposed to work to get a salary. However, if one does not work yet, one still gets a salary. Moreover, the meaning of *gabut* expands to be an expression of boredom because one has nothing to do.

*Mengkece*

Ismanryn @ditmakk: *MENGKECE DULU (respond to video of a band)*

Inad! @HaeJenxx: *cakepp... mengkece*

CECE. EPO CB TREASURE @ru...: *mengkece bersama jendela kosan*

@flywithosh: **mengkece** jaketnya abnag hskskks

*Kece* is slang that comes from some adjectives, and the meaning is implied based on its context. *Kece* refers to *keren*, *cantik*, *ganteng*, and *kaya*. *Kece* is the word that comes from the pronunciation of English word “catchy”, which can be translated to be cool, attractive, interesting, and mostly used to express positive opinions about an object. The sound *-tchy* from *catchy* transform into *-ce* which is formed as the characteristic of the arbitrary and the conventionalized language. *Kece* is not listed in KBBI since it is formed based on the agreement among the teenagers and is mostly used in informal conversation, which is basically used in daily communication.

*Gils*

Momo @seongmoning: *lanjutnya “kau tuliskan cerita tentang engkau dan dia” gils galau bgt yampun momooooo (crying emoticon).*

Darbb @Darbb10: HEH !! GUE SALFOK SAMA KAMUU GANTENG BANGET **GILS**

Zu\_nei @zul\_nei: *gpp tembak aku aja gpp, sans (angel emoticon)*

zenBIGWIN @Amarilliy: *dia cans sekali bukan ?*

sintyapm @PmSintya: *Kim Taehyung Kumis tipis aja udah buat hati gue jantung tetep gans kok bang walaupun punya kumis (laughing emoticon)*

HEARTBREAK MINHO @majutigalangkah: *Kimkibum please looh tu gans banget tauuuu (love eyes emoticon KEY #SHINee #SMCU\_EXPRESS @SHINee*

These words are classified as content words or adjectives: *gils*, *cans*, *gans*, and *sans*. Every word is clipped from its unit into one syllable. *Gils* is from *gila*, *cans* means *cantik*, *sans* means *santai* and *gans* means *ganteng*. It does not matter how many syllables are in a word, it will be clipped into the first three units and added with suffix *-s*. Apparently, there is no other words found with these patterns used on Twitter except for these adjectives.

*Menggemoy*

Pocari estea @justzerotwo: **menggemoy** (respond to a chat screenshot)

ni @moonjuniee: **MENGGEMOY BANGETT** (sad emoticon)(respond to movie scene screenshot)

Aiguu @yourxmilkyway: **menggemoy**

Yie VOTE MAMA! SEMANGKA ...: **menggemoy** (kissing emoticon) (respond to pictures of KPOP idol)

Nesya @Nesyasifa: *kenapa kamu tuh menggemoy kan sekali sih, ponakan aku aja kalah imut sama kamu mah.lov lov buat mas ganteng. (heart with an arrow) (respond to a KPOP Idol’s picture)*

*Gemoy* is not a word listed in KBBI (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia), which means that this word is a creation of another word. *Gemoy* comes from the word *gemas* in Indonesian, which can be inferred to be lovable, cute, or adorable. The slangy word from *gemas* turns into *gemay* as the form of exaggeration, which turns into the final slang word, *gemoy*. The pattern of *meng-* + *gemoy* (*gemas as an adjective*) is supposed

to be appropriate. However, the prefix *meng-* there is supposed to be followed by the suffix *-kan* as its function is to change an adjective into a verb. *Menggemaskan* can be translated as the verb annoy in English. However, as it is mentioned in the posts, the context in which it is used acts as an adjective even though it is preceded with the prefix *meng-*. As a result, the prefix *meng-* has no effect on the function or meaning of the word.

Generally, there are two factors that motivate the use and creation of slang [5]. Factors such as gender, age, and occupation generally motivate an individual or particular group of people to use slang. They use slang in order to meet the communication needs of their community. The other factors that motivate the creation of slang are the social environment. The culture of following the trend on social media has become a habit among teenagers. However, the use of a variety of languages that can be categorized as slang is not limited to those factors. At least one of the fifteen reasons for the use of language variation classified as slang exists [8]. Slang is used to “be exclusive for the trademark or branding for the speakers’ identity” and, psychologically, “slang helps relieve their stress and the users’ strong feelings” [5]. According to patterns, functions, and meanings in language variation that have been discovered in Twitter’s tweets, the researcher found two factors that cause the new variation in language use. The first one is “To soften the tragedy, to lighten or to “prettify” the inevitability of that or madness, or to max the ugliness or the pity of profound (e.g., treachery, ingratitude); and/or thus to enable the speaker or his author or both to endure, to “carry on”; and “induce either friendliness or intimacy of a deep or durable kind (same remark);” [8]. “Slang is always with us, reinvented with each new generation [7]” The popularity of slang as an ongoing trend in language use has proved that language is dynamic and its variety develops as the era keeps moving forward.

## 5 Conclusion

There are three patterns found on Twitter as new variations of language use among teenagers on social media. The first one is the word-forming of the additional prefix *meng-* that is mostly followed by an adjective. The prefix in those words does not change the function of the word itself. By adding the prefix *meng-*, the word still functions as an adjective. The next variation is clipping and adding suffixes. Most of the words used in this case are still functioning as adjectives. It does not really matter how many syllables are in the word, it will be cut into one syllable (three letters) and added with a suffix *-s*. The appliances of the suffix here do not change the function of the word either. This case is also included in back-formation and shortening. However, in this case, the unit that was added was not included in the reduced form of the unit. The last section with the new variation is blending and reduplication. Shortening involves clipping a part of the unit and may be followed by the combination of the other reduced form [5]. It can be concluded that the pattern of shortening and backformation contained in the language use among teenagers cannot be included as part of the standard word formations. The patterns are mostly the representation of playful and more casual language forms as they are used to show the social cohesiveness, intimacy, and solidarity of the participants in the social group.

**Acknowledgments.** In accordance with the third Annual Conference on Education and Social Sciences (ACCESS) in “Emerging Roles of Education and Social Sciences Post Pandemic” of 2021 articles, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your effort as the reviewer and provider of this honorable opportunity that has been given to the authors.

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