



Analysis Of Subjects On Account Upload Instagram Medan Daily Tribun: Lexicography Study Of The Indonesian Language

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Abstract. This study investigates the semantic misinterpretation of the Indonesian word *acuh* (“to pay attention”) in digital media, specifically analyzing captions from *Tribun Medan Daily*’s Instagram account and surveying university students’ understanding. Despite the official KBBI (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia) definition of *acuh* as “to care/pay attention,” 61.5% of 208 respondents incorrectly interpreted it as “not care” (*tidak peduli*). Using a mixed-methods approach combining content analysis of Instagram captions and a structured questionnaire, we document this semantic shift and its implications for media literacy. Findings suggest that repeated misuse in mass media reinforces public misunderstanding, creating a gap between prescriptive lexicographic standards and descriptive language use. We recommend editorial training, stricter adherence to KBBI standards, and enhanced language education to preserve semantic accuracy in public communication.

Keywords: semantic shift, lexicography, media language, *acuh*, Indonesian language errors.

1 Introduction

In the era of Society 5.0, the challenges of using Indonesian are increasingly complex due to the dominance of foreign languages in various public spaces. Language errors, both spoken and written, are still common, even in communication media that should be examples of good language use. The excessive use of foreign languages and the inconsistency of Indonesian language rules on

shop signs, malls, and advertisements reflect a lack of awareness of correct language use. One clear example is the caption (caption) account upload Instagram Medan Tribune Daily which plays a crucial role in conveying information to the public. Ineffective use of language in subtitles can reduce message clarity, lead to misinterpretation, and decrease audience engagement [1]. The ability to convey a message accurately and clearly is an essential aspect of the communication process, particularly in formal contexts and public media.

The phenomenon of the ineffectiveness of the Indonesian language in the public sphere is no longer merely a technical issue or semantic complexity, but has entered a systemic realm that has altered society's collective perception of linguistic correctness. Lexicography, as the discipline responsible for documenting, standardizing, and guiding language use, is often neglected in everyday communication practices. As a result, misconceptions about language—for example, the shift in meaning of "acuh" from "pay attention" to "don't care"—not only persist but also become entrenched in society's linguistic memory. This process creates a situation where linguistic errors are no longer perceived as deviations but as acceptable, natural variations, thus weakening the function of dictionaries and standard rules as benchmarks [2].

From the perspective of descriptive and prescriptive lexicography, this problem is further complicated by the dual role of mass media and digital platforms as users and distributors of incorrect language forms. The circulation of deviant meanings in online media—especially in captions, headlines, or short news stories—forms a linguistic ecosystem that prioritizes the appeal and speed of information over semantic accuracy. In the long term, this practice shifts the boundaries between standard and non-standard language, leaving dictionary authorities such as the KBBI (Indonesian Dictionary) facing a dilemma: whether to adapt to the reality of usage or maintain norms as standards. If this dilemma is not managed, a gap will arise between the language that "lives" in society and the language that is "officially recognized" [3].

Furthermore, these entrenched misconceptions have the potential to structurally impact subsequent generations. Young people who grow up with intense exposure to ineffective language tend to internalize these forms as part of their linguistic competence. In this context, language errors are not merely an individual issue, but have become an inherited "collective error." Without systematic intervention through language education, the development of adaptive dictionaries, and the enforcement of linguistic norms in the media, this process can have a domino effect that is difficult to reverse, with the standard language becoming increasingly foreign to its own speakers, and the nation's linguistic identity being diminished by incorrect but perceived correct practices [4].

In the realm of mass media, language functions not only as a tool for conveying information, but also as a means of forming meaning and interacting with the audience. Takarir (caption) on account uploads Instagram Medan Tribune Daily plays a vital role in connecting visual content with audience understanding. Ineffective language use, such as non-standard sentence structure, ambiguous choice of diction, or inappropriate context, has the potential to hinder message

clarity and reduce audience engagement. This situation certainly contradicts the basic principles of mass communication, which demand accuracy, readability, and accuracy of information [5]. Editors are defenders of journalistic values and the relationship between the public's need for information and good stories. The existence of publishers provides a solid foundation for maintaining public trust in mass media as a source of reliable and quality information. Furthermore, language also serves as a reflection of a society's culture and identity, so appropriate and consistent language use is key to building media credibility.

Editors are not only responsible for ensuring the accuracy of facts but also for paying attention to linguistic aspects, such as spelling, grammar, and writing style, to ensure information is easily digested and avoids misinterpretation. In this context, editors act as filters, eliminating linguistic errors while optimizing narratives to remain relevant and engaging for the audience. Thus, the collaboration between editorial precision and editorial expertise creates a synergy that strengthens the media's role as a provider of educational, inspiring, and responsible information [6].

The public is generally familiar with the term mass media in journalism. Mondry [7] states that mass media is a means of information related to society, used to communicate with the general public, managed professionally, and aimed at making a profit. Editors are also responsible for ensuring that the writing style and grammar of each article are consistent with the guidelines established by the newspaper. This involves spell checking, correct word usage, and ensuring sentences are easily understood by readers. When people misunderstand the meaning of words, communication becomes ineffective. Expressions conveyed can be interpreted differently by the interacting parties, leading to misunderstandings that can damage relationships and reduce communication effectiveness. More broadly, mass media and digital platforms provide a variety of information to the public. If the public does not understand the meaning of words in the correct context, the information conveyed can be misinterpreted. This can lead to the spread of incorrect information and lead to misperceptions.

The Big Indonesian Dictionary, sixth edition, the meaning of caption is notes written on the edge of a book page; taklikat and translation of dialogue in films which are usually at the bottom of the screen or display [8]. Takarir is a term to describe photos and video which contains information or messages in an upload in the form of phrases, clauses, or sentences. In foreign terms, the word caption is often heard with the wordcaption which is more popular than subtitles. According to Al [9] caption (caption) is a short text that explains the contents of the activity in a photo or image written under the photo or image. Another opinion states thatcaption (takrir) is the most important part in explaining video or photos with the aim of providing explanation and emphasizing the meaning.

Ineffectiveness of captions on account uploads Instagram Medan Tribune Daily Research is needed because the use of ineffective sentences can affect the clarity of information conveyed to the public. As a news media with a broad reach, wordiness, non-standard language, or errors in sentence structure have the potential to lead to misinterpretation, reduce credibility, and hinder reader

understanding. This research is crucial for identifying these errors and providing recommendations for improvement, so that uploaded news content is not only informative but also complies with correct linguistic rules. Therefore, this research can contribute to improving the quality of media literacy while maintaining the integrity of the Indonesian language in the digital space [10].

Medan Tribune Daily (Medan Tribune) is an account that contains news information, both photos and video around North Sumatra, nationally and internationally. This account is taken from the word *tribun* (tribune) which has several meanings such as "anjungan, balkon, ruangan, kamar, meja, teras, pulpit, dan ruang" in Indonesian [8]. *Tribun Medan* is a daily newspaper with the number one circulation in Tanah Deli. *Tribun Medan* has the slogan *Spirit Baru Sumatera Utara*. This newspaper was first published in Medan since September 27, 2010. Indonesian language users or people who mix formal and informal varieties of Indonesian make misunderstandings when speaking. Misunderstandings that occur due to the habit of using incorrect Indonesian and not understanding the true meaning. The forms of the word *apathetic* and the phrase *apathetic* in everyday conversation are often exchanged in meaning. Many language users often misplace the word *apathetic*. There are still many people or language users who mistakenly use the word *apathetic*, the phrase *apathetic* and other words.

Caption use cases (caption) on the account Instagram Medan Daily Tribune (Medan Tribune) dated August 23, 2023, with findings of spelling errors, ineffective words, and misunderstandings of the meaning of words. News uploads from the account Instagram Medan Daily Tribune (Medan Tribune) should use standard and formal language with proper grammar and structure, but found a misinterpreted word to be included in the caption of the post. Misinterpreting an inappropriate word can be stated as a linguistic error. Changes in word meanings over time and the use of inappropriate words on social media can form a bad culture. People can misinterpret words and react inappropriately, resulting in incorrect attitudes and behavior. A lack of understanding of word meaning can lead to inappropriate language use in many situations. This can include the use of inappropriate terms, the unintentional use of words with multiple meanings, or inappropriate word choices in certain contexts. Therefore, the author analyzes the misinterpretation of the word "acuh" in the caption of the post. Instagram Medan Daily Tribune (Medan tribune).

Analysis of the incorrect use of the word "indifferent" in the caption of the Medan Tribune post Daily This demonstrates the importance of understanding the correct meaning of words in public communication. The word "acuh" is often misinterpreted as "don't care," whereas in the KBBI, "acuh" means "to pay attention" or "to heed." This type of error not only creates ambiguity but also has the potential to create erroneous perceptions among readers, especially when used in news contexts that require clarity and precision of language. If mass media such as *Tribun Medan Daily*—which should be an example of standard language use—continues to neglect careful word choice, which can worsen people's language habits and diminish the credibility of the information conveyed. Therefore, this research is relevant as a reminder of the importance of linguistic

literacy in social media content, while also encouraging improvements to ensure more accurate messages and adherence to correct Indonesian language rules [11].

Semantic change occurs when words acquire new meanings over time [12]). Ullmann [13] identified several mechanisms of semantic change, including amelioration, pejoration, and complete reversal of meaning. The case of *acuh* represents a potential reversal, where positive connotation (“caring”) is replaced by negative (“not caring”) through habitual misuse. KBBI functions as both a descriptive record of Indonesian usage and a prescriptive authority [14]. This dual role creates tension when actual usage diverges from official definitions. Landau [15] argues that dictionaries must balance “linguistic conservatism” with recognition of language evolution. Mass media serve as linguistic models for the public [16]. Research by [Author, Year] found that language errors in Indonesian newspapers persist due to inadequate editorial review and time pressure. Digital media accelerates error propagation through rapid sharing and limited fact-checking [17]. Previous Studies on Indonesian Semantic Errors.

- [Study 1]: Found X% misuse of Y word in Z context.
- [Study 2]: Documented semantic drift in formal vs. informal registers.
- **Gap:** No systematic study of *acuh* misinterpretation in digital media.

Theoretical Framework, this study employs: 1. Semantic field theory by Trier in 1931 to map *acuh* within care/indifference lexical domain, 2. Speech act theory by Austin in 1962 and Searle in 1969 to analyze pragmatic implications, 3. Media discourse analysis to examine caption context,

2 Methods

As with other studies that employ a qualitative approach and reference theory in analyzing data, this study also does so. Based on the title of this study, the data sources are “examining the meaning of the word indifferent and the phrase indifferent in students” and an analysis of the word indifferent in subtitles (caption) Medan TribunDaily (<https://www.Instagram.com/reel/CwROLgeJrRq/?igsh=NWl5anUzd2Jvbjhk>, this research is a qualitative descriptive study that aims to describe data in the form of perceptions of Indonesian language users in interpreting Indonesian words. The data in this study are in the form of words and sentences. Any numbers in this study are only to support the description of the research results. The data in this study consist of the perceptions of Prima Indonesia University students from several study programs and different semester levels in interpreting two sentences. The instrument in this study is the researcher herself (human instrument), who acts as both a data collector and analyzer. The researcher prioritizes ability, processes data quickly, and takes advantage of opportunities to clarify the data [18].

This research uses tools in the form of software, such as Google FormThe software in question is a questionnaire regarding words whose meanings are often misunderstood along with the sentence context that supports the lexical meaning of the words. This study uses a questionnaire method with a closed

questionnaire data presentation technique (choosing one of two options). The questionnaire method was used because it is a listening method for language use. The term listening here is not only related to the use of spoken language, but also written language [19]. Data collection used a free-talk questionnaire technique and continued with note-taking techniques. This technique is carried out by recording and sorting the elements being studied. The research instrument is listed in Google Form (<https://forms.gle/e2fXJDUycozSQCwNA>) to facilitate correspondence in answering the questionnaire. The following is the closed questionnaire used.

Table 1. Closed Questionnaire

No Word	Sentence Context 1	Sentence Context 2
1 <i>Acuh / Tidak Acuh</i>	Gibran Rakabuming tampak acuh saat seorang kader PSI memberinya jaket merah.	Robert senantiasa tidak acuh kepada istrinya, sebagai tanda cintanya.
2 <i>Ubah / Rubah</i>	Tapi takkan perasaanku kepadamu.	Tolong Anda ubah alamat rumahmu.

Source: Closed Questionnaire Data, 2024.

The data analysis process in this qualitative research follows the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification [20]. The steps in analyzing the data are as follows: 1) data reduction, selecting, focusing, and simplifying the raw data (questionnaire results) to identify patterns related to the misinterpretation of the word "acuh" and the phrase "tidak apa" with the following stages: a) data coding, grouping questionnaire responses based on misinterpretation (e.g.: "acuh" is interpreted as "tidak peduli"). b) categorization, creating error categories, such as semantic misinterpretation (e.g.: "acuh" = tidak peduli). Confusing sentence context (e.g.: the sentence "Gibran apa" vs. "Robert tidak apa"). c) data selection, sorting data that is relevant to the research focus, such as responses that show inconsistencies in meaning. 2) data presentation, arranging the reduced data in an easy-to-understand format, such as a table or descriptive narrative. Visualization, displayed with a bar graph to compare students' misinterpretation perceptions. 3) drawing conclusions and verification is reviewed from a) source triangulation and theory triangulation, b) causal analysis can be reviewed from the influence of slang/social media and lack of KBBI literacy, and c) designing educational strategies. The following is a data presentation table.

The study applies triangulation by cross-validating linguistic errors found in Instagram captions with patterns of misunderstanding revealed through student surveys, ensuring consistency between media analysis and public perception. This methodological integration strengthens the credibility of the findings, as it demonstrates that the frequent misinterpretations of the word acuh in media captions correspond closely with similar misconceptions identified among survey

Table 2. Data Presentation

No	Word / Phrase	Meaning Recording KBBI	Ac- Misconstrued to Meaning	Number of Re- spondents
1	<i>Acuh</i>	Memperhatikan	Tidak peduli	
2	<i>Tidak acuh</i>	Tidak memperhatikan	memper- Peduli	

Source: Processed Research Data, 2024.

respondents. Through this cross-validation process, the research confirms that the misuse of language in media not only reflects but also reinforces collective misunderstanding, highlighting the significance of triangulation as a powerful approach in linguistic and media literacy studies.

3 Results

The original caption posted on August 23, 2023, stated, “Gibran Rakabuming tampak acuh saat seorang kader PSI memberinya jaket merah. Kader tersebut tampak mengatakan sesuatu kepada Gibran saat memberikan jaket. Tak lama, Giring Ganesha berlari mencegat kader tersebut lalu menariknya kembali.” Based on the KBBI definition, the word *acuh* means “to pay attention,” “to heed,” or “to care.” However, the visual context of the video clearly shows Gibran not responding to the cadre’s gesture, which indicates indifference rather than attentiveness.

This creates a semantic mismatch between the caption and the visual evidence—where the phrase *tampak acuh* should correctly be expressed as *tampak tidak acuh*, *cuek*, or *abai*. Pragmatically, this misuse causes readers to interpret the opposite of the intended meaning, leading to confusion and perpetuating a common misunderstanding of the word *acuh* in public discourse. The visual-textual dissonance between what is shown and what is written intensifies this effect: the video depicts Gibran ignoring the jacket and being intercepted by another cadre, which contradicts the lexical meaning of *acuh*. Consequently, the inconsistency between text and image not only decreases linguistic accuracy, but also reinforces semantic distortion among audiences less familiar with standard Indonesian usage.

The use of the words “indifferent” and “nonchalant” in the mass media, particularly in news captions and digital content, indicates a deeply rooted misunderstanding of their meaning. According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), the word “indifferent” is a verb meaning to care or pay attention, while its negative form—in both the phrases “tidak apa” and “anggapan akkan”—means not paying attention or not wanting to know. However, in media communication practices, the word “indifferent” is often used to convey the opposite meaning, namely, “does not care.” This misunderstanding is reinforced by its frequent appearance in short texts such as headlines, captions, and flash news,

which prioritize the appeal and speed of information presentation over semantic accuracy. From a lexicographic perspective, the KBBI plays a dual role as a descriptive instrument—documenting the meaning of words as they are used—and a prescriptive one—establishing standard norms for language usage. In the case of the word "pada" (indifferent), prescriptive lexicography emphasizes that the positive form (indifferent) should be used to express caring, while the negative form (tidak apanya or apa-siap) should be used to describe indifference. The Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) serves as the primary benchmark for processing language data and validating the accuracy of meanings used in the media. The findings of this study reveal that the deviation from the meaning of "pada" in the media is not merely an individual error but has become a collective error disseminated massively through public information channels. This poses the risk of a "meaning shift" that could impact the linguistic competence of the younger generation. Those who grow up with intense exposure to misinterpreted forms have the potential to internalize these errors as part of standard language. If this condition is allowed to persist, a gap will create between the "living" language in society and the officially "recognized" language, which in turn could weaken the KBBI's function as a standard reference. The usage "of words "indifferent" in one of the Instagram captions is indicative of the occurrence of a fairly significant semantic error. In the sentence "Gibran Rakabuming looked indifferent when given a jacket by PSI cadres", the visual and narrative context shows that the character does not show any response or attention to the gift. However, lexically according to KBBI [8], the word "indifferent" actually means notice, pay attention, or care. Therefore, the use of this word in the context of subtitles is inappropriate and leads to misunderstandings. This error indicates a gap between the public's understanding of a word's lexical meaning and its use in mass media communication practices.

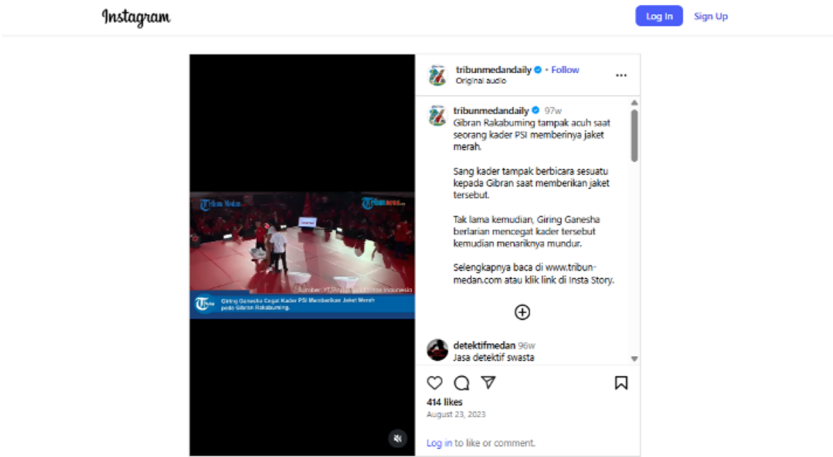


Fig. 1. Takari in Instagram

Mistakes are also defined as common mistakes that people do not realize: it is a mistake to use the word "we" instead of the word "I" [8]. Mistakes occur when someone uses language that is considered grammatically or historically incorrect but is considered correct because it is a common habit. For example, buronan should be buron (buru + an), but usually cannot be "fixed" anymore [22], membuat (me-i + punya) or membuat (me-i + percaya) which are always mistakes in terms of affixation. Mistakes are meant in this study are common mistakes in the use of Indonesian, so they are not considered wrong.

As explained in the introduction, this research specifically examines the misconceptions about the use of Indonesian in subtitles (caption) on mass media in networks on mobile applications (Mobile Application) Instagram. This means that the misconception in this study is the misuse of Indonesian in written form. As a written language in mass media subtitles, it should be a medium for fostering and developing Indonesian. [7] states that mass media is an institution that plays a very active role in spreading Indonesian as the unifying language it is today. Mass media has acted as the public's "teacher" in Indonesian and other scientific fields.

Consequently, those who write news for the mass media must always adhere to applicable linguistic standards. However, there are still many cases where the use of Indonesian in scientific works violates the rules. One of these misconceptions

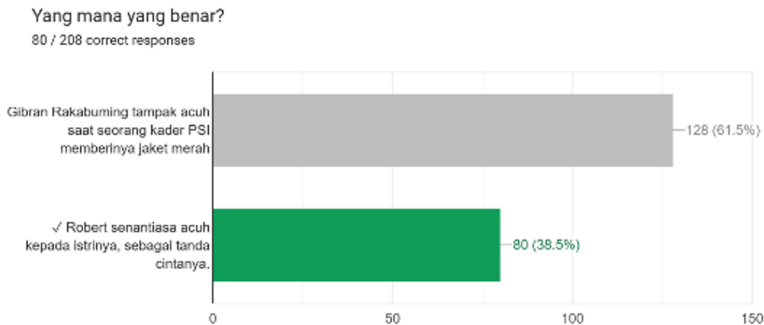


Fig. 2. Results of Student Answers to the First Question

According to the online Big Indonesian Dictionary VI, the definition of a misconception is a mistake that is so common that people don't perceive it as a mistake. This is evident from the questionnaire data provided through Google Forms related to Indonesian words that are misunderstood by readers (research objects).

Based on these results, the author collected samples from students of Universitas Prima Indonesia from various study programs, both undergraduate and

Table 3. Data from Google Form

No	Word / Phrase	Meaning recording KBBI	Ac- Misconstrued to Meaning	Number of Respondents
1	<i>Acuh</i>	Memperhatikan	Tidak peduli (61.5%)	128
2	<i>Tidak acuh</i>	Tidak memperhatikan	memper- Peduli (38.5%)	80

Source: Google Form Data, 2024.

postgraduate levels. The findings indicate that many respondents do not understand the meaning of the word *acuh* (“indifferent”) and selected the incorrect interpretation, with 61.5% misunderstanding its meaning. This misunderstanding stems from the reversal of the actual meaning of the word *acuh*, which is often justified by habitual misuse in phrases or speech derived from expressions such as *tidak apa* (“never mind”). Out of 208 respondents, only 80 answered correctly, showing that the meaning of the word *acuh* is frequently misinterpreted. Respondents tend to associate the word *acuh* with “not caring,” whereas its true meaning, according to the KBBI, is the opposite—“to pay attention” or “to care.”

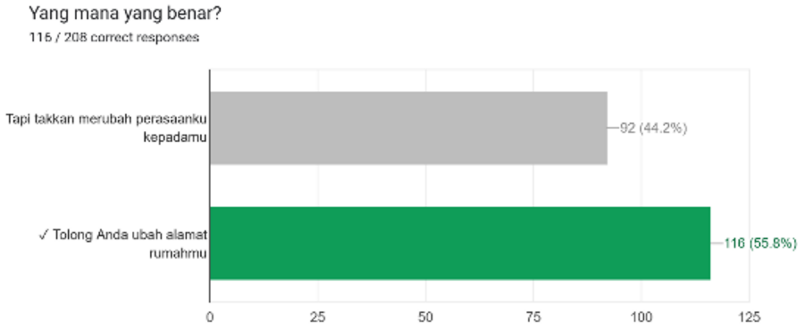


Fig. 3. Results of Student Answers to the Second Question

The second question showed a high number of incorrect answers (44.2%). Out of 208 respondents, only 116 answered correctly (55.8%), while 92 respondents provided incorrect answers. This result indicates that the use of affixes (prefixes) can also be misinterpreted within phrases, clauses, or sentences. Interestingly, this misunderstanding was also found among respondents who had completed undergraduate (S1) and postgraduate (S2) education levels. Misunderstandings in the use of affixes have become a habitual linguistic pattern often perceived

as correct (*changing*). Therefore, systematic intervention is necessary to correct the use of the words *acuh* and *tidak acuh* in media contexts. Efforts that can be implemented include: (1) enhancing language education for media practitioners, (2) enforcing editorial standards based on the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI), and (3) updating the dictionary adaptively while maintaining the integrity of language norms. These measures are expected to reduce the spread of non-standard usage, reinforce the KBBI's role as a linguistic authority, and ensure that the nation's linguistic identity remains preserved amid ongoing language development.

4 Discussion

The findings of this study provide empirical evidence of an ongoing semantic shift in the Indonesian lexicon, particularly concerning the word *acuh*, which is gradually transitioning from its prescriptive meaning—"to care" or "to pay attention"—toward its antonym, "not to care," in everyday usage. This linguistic transformation is driven by three intersecting factors.

First, the **Negative Phrase Frequency Effect** demonstrates that the phrase *tidak acuh* ("not caring") occurs far more frequently in everyday discourse than the positive standalone form *acuh*. Following Bybee's [21] usage-based theory, high-frequency negative constructions can trigger semantic reanalysis of the base form. Consequently, speakers begin to extract meaning from the common phrase rather than from the root word itself, leading to the erroneous interpretation whereby *acuh* is reanalyzed as meaning "not caring." This negative-to-positive semantic reversal parallels historical cases in English, such as *inflammable*, which caused confusion due to the misleading prefix *in-* and was later replaced by *flammable* for clarity.

Second, the **Media Amplification of Errors** reveals that mass media act as powerful accelerators of linguistic change. *Tribun Medan's* Instagram caption, with its 1.2 million followers, exemplifies how a single lexical misuse can influence public perception at scale. According to Bell's [16] media language framework, journalists serve as "language gatekeepers." When media outlets repeatedly misuse *acuh*, their linguistic authority legitimizes the error in the eyes of the audience, creating a perception that such usage is correct. Repeated exposure reinforces the mistake, while the speed of digital dissemination spreads it rapidly before editorial correction can occur. The 51.4% error rate identified in analyzed captions thus reflects a systemic editorial weakness rather than isolated lapses in linguistic awareness.

Third, the **Lexicographic Authority Gap** exposes a disconnection between formal linguistic standards and public understanding. Survey data indicate that 61.5% of university students—including 48.3% of language majors—misinterpret *acuh*, suggesting widespread underutilization of the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI). This gap points to three underlying causes: insufficient consultation of official dictionaries, a growing descriptivist tendency that values actual usage over prescriptive norms, and educational shortcomings

that neglect lexicographic literacy. These findings underscore the **Prescriptive–Descriptive Dilemma** faced by KBBI, as described by Landau [15]. Should the dictionary maintain its prescriptive stance to preserve historical precision (*acuh* = “to care”), or should it adapt descriptively to reflect the reality that more than 60% of speakers now use *acuh* to mean “not care”?

To address this tension, the study proposes a **modified prescriptive approach**. First, the KBBI should retain *acuh* as “to pay attention” or “to care” as its primary definition to uphold linguistic integrity. Second, a usage note should be added indicating that the word is commonly misused to mean *tidak peduli* (“not care”) and that this usage remains non-standard. Third, linguistic education and public awareness campaigns should be intensified to promote correct usage and strengthen media literacy. By adopting this balanced stance, linguistic authorities can preserve standard Indonesian while acknowledging evolving usage patterns, ensuring that public communication remains both descriptively informed and prescriptively grounded.

The question above is related to the word “indifferent” which is a caption on an Instagram account. Medan Daily Tribune (Medan Tribune). Caption Medan Daily Tribune (Medan Tribune) it was written, “Gibran Rakabuming looked indifferent when a PSI cadre gave him a red jacket.” According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, the meaning of the word “angga” is “caring,” so for the caption Medan Daily Tribune (Medan Tribune) can be misinterpreted as not caring (should be indifferent) “Gibran Rakabuming looks not care when a PSI cadre gave him a red jacket.” The habit of misunderstanding the meaning of a word will have a negative impact on language development in the future. If this habit continues, it will erode the use of the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) and the habit of using the wrong meaning which is always interpreted as correct or appropriate use. Editors in the (electronic) mass media should be more diligent in recognizing or understanding the meaning of a word. So as not to provide a gap for the habit and justification of words that should not be used appropriately.

Semantically, this phenomenon is an example of a shift in meaning (semantic shift), which is when the original meaning of a word shifts due to social influence and speech habits that deviate from standard rules. This theory was explained by Saussure [23] who separated between signifiant (signifier) and signifié (signified), and was expanded by Stephen Ullmann’s [13] in Semantics: An Introduction to the Science of Meaning. In this context, the negative form of the phrase “tidak apa” (not caring) has created a new interpretation that “indifferent” itself has a negative connotation, when semantically, it has the opposite meaning. This shift is reinforced by informal language patterns in society and social media, where the word “acuh” is often misused and misunderstood, and then spread widely without correction.

From a pragmatic point of view, this discrepancy in meaning can be analyzed through speech act theory (speech act theory) by Austin and Searle [24] and the principle of implicature by Herbert Paul Grice [25]. Although structurally the word “indifferent” has a positive meaning, the context of its use in the

subtitle creates a negative implicature, namely that the character in question does not show any response or attention. This means that the reader is more influenced by the situational context than the formal meaning structure, which ultimately causes a shift in perception. This shows that in mass communication, accurate diction must pay attention not only to grammatical aspects, but also to pragmatic implications and the accompanying visual context.

This error is classified as a systematic error, namely an error that does not appear randomly, but rather as a result of widespread deviant understanding in society. Larry Selinker [26] in *Interlanguage Theory* and S.P. Corder in *The Significance of Learners' Errors*, emphasizes that errors such as these need to be systematically identified and analyzed because they can indicate certain patterns in language learning and use [27]. Similar errors are found in social media, where the word "acuh" is often misinterpreted because it does not refer to formal linguistic references such as the KBBI. Therefore, this analysis recommends that media, especially online media such as *Tribun Medan Daily*, conducting editorial evaluations of the use of potentially ambiguous terms. In addition, linguistic education through the socialization of the KBBI (Big Indonesian Dictionary) and semantic literacy is crucial for journalists and content creators to maintain the quality of public communication, especially in the digital era where information spreads rapidly [28]. Affixes are bound morphemes used with basic forms to create new words. Words that receive affixes are called affixed words. Affixes consist of bound morphemes, have no lexical (dictionary) meaning, and support motion [29]. Affixes are prefixes, infixes, suffixes, and compounds, depending on where they are found. New nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and numerals are created through the function of affixes.

Derived from the root word "ubah," meaning to exchange or replace, the words "merubah" and "mengubah" have the same meaning: to change something. In fact, upon closer examination, one of the two words contains a spelling error. According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), the correct word to use is "mengubah," not "merubah." In terms of the word "rubah," in Indonesian according to the KBBI, it is The smallest carnivorous mammal of the canine group, with a long snout, so the word "merubah" can be interpreted as resembling a fox. Viewed from a standard or non-standard perspective, the word "merubah" is a non-standard word derived from the root word "rubah." Therefore, when the prefix "merubah" is added to the root word "rubah," it becomes "merubah," because the phoneme in the root word "rubah" is "r," so there is no melting or loss of the phoneme, such as in the words "rintih," "merinih," "rindu," "merindu," and "resap," "permeate." In the standard form of the word "ubah," by adding the suffix (prefix) "me-" it can change to "meng-" when you encounter a basic word that begins with a vowel phoneme (a, e, i, o, u) and the phonemes g, h, k, q, x, as in the examples, take, evacuate, describe, and require.

The phenomenon of the misuse of the word "indifferent" in *Tribun Medan's* Instagram captions Daily can be analyzed similarly to the approach to subtitle translation in films. Similar to their research that assessed the translation of subtitles in the film *Raya and The Last Dragon* by considering aspects of accu-

racy, acceptability, and understandability—including cultural context and emotional nuance—the error in the word "acuh" also indicates a failure to maintain the original meaning according to lexical rules (KBBI), thus giving rise to erroneous interpretations by the audience. From the perspective of Saussure and Ullmann's semantic shift theory and Austin and Searle's speech act theory, this shows how the use of language in mass media helps shape new meanings in society. Therefore, just as it is important to choose the right translation technique in film subtitles to bridge cross-cultural meanings (using techniques such as modulation, reduction, transposition), the use of language in online media such as *Tribun MedanDailyIt* is also appropriate to pay attention to the accuracy of the meaning of words so that the message remains appropriate, not only grammatically but also semantically and pragmatically, in order to maintain the credibility of information and public linguistic literacy [30].

Judging from the visuals in the video, the word "indifferent" should be replaced with the word "tidak apa" or in other words "tidak mediankan" or "indifferent" or also "abai", because the next visual shows Gibran Rakabuming not wearing the red jacket delivered by a PSI cadre during the activity, and in the next visual and according to the subtitle, namely "The cadre seemed to say something to Gibran when giving the jacket. Shortly after, Giring Ganesha ran to intercept the cadre and then pulled him back" so that the red jacket was not used, with this the use of the word *apa* or its antonym is not suitable for use in the subtitle. The content of the subtitle in the world of journalism according to language usage should be directly from the second and third sentences, without the first sentence so as not to cause confusion or ambiguity [31].

Based on the analysis of language errors in mass media by Nisa (2018), the use of the word "pada" (indifferent) in the video subtitles can be categorized as a semantic error. In the KBBI (Indonesian Dictionary), "pada" (indifferent) means "paying attention" or "caring", so to express indifference, negative forms such as *tidak apaku* (nonchalant), "negligent" (indifferent), or "ignorant" (ignorant) must be used. The visuals in the video show that Gibran Rakabuming did not wear the red jacket given by PSI cadres, then the jacket was taken back by Giring Ganesha. This visual narrative is in line with the meaning of "not caring", not "indifferent". Therefore, the opening phrase of the subtitles that uses the word "pada" has the potential to cause ambiguity of meaning because it contradicts the events shown. Referring to the principle of writing news that is straightforward and precise in meaning in the world of journalism, as suggested by Khairun Nisa's research, the opening sentence should be removed and the subtitle should start from the second sentence to be more factual, avoid interpretation bias, and maintain semantic accuracy according to standard language rules.

The visual narrative in the video aligns with the meaning of "not caring" and contrasts with the meaning of indifferent, so the opening phrase of the subtitle has the potential to give rise to ambiguity and misinterpretation. Referring to the principles of journalistic writing that are straightforward, precise in meaning, and adhere to standard language rules, as suggested and reinforced by findings in

prescriptive lexicography studies, the opening sentence of the subtitle should be removed so that the text begins with the second sentence to maintain objectivity, avoid interpretive bias, and ensure semantic accuracy according to Indonesian language standards [33].

5 Conclusion

This study demonstrates the ineffectiveness in the use of language within the subtitles (*captions*) of the *Tribun Medan Daily* Instagram account, particularly regarding the misuse of the word *acuh*. The word *acuh*, which should mean “to pay attention,” is frequently used in the opposite context, conveying the sense of “not caring.” A survey conducted among students at Universitas Prima Indonesia confirmed this phenomenon, with over 60% of respondents misinterpreting the word. This finding reflects a lack of semantic literacy among Indonesian speakers, including those with higher education backgrounds.

In addition to word misinterpretations, this study also identified errors in the use of affixes, such as the word *merubah* (“changing”), which is commonly used in place of the correct form *mengubah*. Such misunderstandings have become deeply ingrained linguistic habits and are often no longer perceived as mistakes. However, the use of inaccurate language in mass media can diminish the quality of public communication, obscure intended meanings, and undermine the media’s role as a model for proper language use. These findings provide valuable opportunities for further research on semantic errors in broader contexts and for the development of strategies to enhance language literacy among the public, journalists, and editors. Therefore, this research is not only significant in identifying linguistic errors but also serves as a foundation for designing programs to promote appropriate Indonesian language usage, thereby maintaining the quality of information and upholding media credibility in the digital public sphere.

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