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Analysis of the Infiltration of Slang Through the Social Media Platform TikTok in Indonesian Language Instruction at Jati 2 Public Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

The increasing use of the social media platform TikTok among elementary school students has triggered a shift in language use from standard Indonesian to slang, which has the potential to affect language proficiency and character development. This study aims to analyze the infiltration of slang through TikTok in character-based Indonesian language instruction at SD Negeri Jati 2. The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with observation, interviews, and documentation involving students, teachers, and parents. The results indicate that TikTok significantly influences students' language style, marked by increased use of slang and the adoption of vocabulary and expressions from social media. Some examples of evolving slang terms include hits, worth it, bestie, gas, auto, spill, relate, FYP, at least, and OOTD. To address this, teachers implemented the habit of using standard language, modeling proper language use, reprimands, and the integration of character values into the learning process. Thus, the infiltration of slang can be controlled through the strengthening of character education and the cultivation of proper and correct Indonesian language use with the support of teachers and parents. This study makes important contribution and provides more specific analysis of elementary school students and their integration with character-building efforts.

1. Introduction

The development of information and communication technology in the digital age has brought about profound changes in the way people interact and communicate. Digital technology has the power to transform human communication and influence language use in people's daily lives (Haris et al., 2024). Changes in language use generally occur among young people and children who actively use social media (Luhulima et al., 2024). TikTok has become one of the most influential digital platforms due to its near-universal adoption across all

demographics. TikTok is a short-form video social media app that can be easily accessed via a smartphone connected to the internet (Batoebara, 2020).

TikTok allows users to quickly create and access a variety of short-form video content as a platform for creativity and entertainment in everyday life. TikTok has become an interactive platform for today's generation, including Gen z (Sari et al., 2026). The use of social media platforms such as TikTok has the potential to improve students' communication skills (Rohmah et al., 2025). In addition, TikTok also influences the use of slang, which is evolving and commonly used outside standard language norms as a form of familiarity or to keep up with the times (Sham et al., 2025). The use of slang on TikTok takes the form of abbreviations, acronyms, puns, and foreign vocabulary that are widely disseminated and understood as standard language by its users (Li & Wang, 2024). Research (Bakrin & Hilalludin, 2025) shows that various new words have emerged on TikTok in the form of acronyms, abbreviations, and other word combinations used as substitutes for the standard language that had previously evolved.

In Indonesian language learning, the selection and use of language are crucial aspects for establishing communication and serving as a means of instilling cultural values, character, and norms in daily life. The use of Indonesian in accordance with grammatical rules is key to successfully mastering language skills, which include listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Hidayah et al., 2023). Nevertheless, various forms of slang have infiltrated social media platforms such as TikTok. Slang has not only developed on digital platforms but has also entered students' face-to-face interactions at school (Hoang Ha, 2025). This, of course, triggers a shift from standard language use to non-standard language that deviates from linguistic norms. Research (Novita & Rosidah, 2025) indicates that the infiltration of slang on social media impacts elementary school students' understanding of the Indonesian language and influences their communication patterns.

This phenomenon of language infiltration is marked by the widespread use of slang among the younger generation, who rely heavily on social media platforms as a means of communication. This linguistic infiltration refers to changes in language development and its social functions within the ever-evolving identity of the digital generation. The use of social media slang on platforms like TikTok can shift the patterns of standard Indonesian language use in daily communication toward a more informal style (Nashrudina et al., 2025). Slang emerges due to various social factors and the rise of digital communities followed by the younger generation (Zhang & Zhang, 2025). This emerging slang does not fully align with the formal language conventions expected in academic contexts. The uncontrolled proliferation of slang can lead to a decline in students' formal language proficiency (Rajagukguk et al., 2025). Therefore, the integration of digital technology into learning must follow an approach that combines digital content with the reinforcement of a strong foundation in standard Indonesian.

The research problem is further underscored by the fact that previous studies on the integration of TikTok slang with Indonesian language instruction in elementary schools have left room for further exploration. This research topic has not been extensively discussed and requires further study to address the issue. Previous research has largely focused on the impact of slang on the general adolescent population or university students and has not yet explained how this linguistic shift affects the elementary school setting (Bu'lolo et al., 2025; Nurkhasanah et al., 2025; Siregar et al., 2024). A previous study by Romauli Situmorang explained that slang emerging on TikTok can influence adolescents' use of standard language in daily life (Namang et al., 2024). Slang tends to be used more dominantly by adolescents to establish communication and social interaction with their environment.

When examined in the more specific context of Jati 2 Public Elementary School, the phenomenon of social media use has emerged among students and become part of their lives outside of school. The spread of slang through TikTok, which students bring into the classroom, indicates a potential shift in language patterns that could directly affect the Indonesian language learning process. If students are more comfortable using slang than standard language, a mismatch may occur between the curriculum and learning objectives on one hand and the actual implementation of instruction on the other. This situation certainly requires concrete and prompt solutions from teachers and school administrators to understand the various forms of slang infiltration in the digital age, with a view to adjusting future instructional designs and lesson plans. Based on the issues outlined above, this study aims to explain the phenomenon of slang infiltration via the social media platform TikTok in the context of Indonesian language learning at Jati 2 Public Elementary School. This study also examines the strategies teachers use to address the phenomenon of slang from a pedagogical perspective. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the development of theories and practices in Indonesian language learning that are adaptable to advancements in digital technology.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach, specifically a descriptive qualitative research design. This approach was chosen because the study aims to describe and gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of slang infiltration originating from the social media platform TikTok in Indonesian language instruction at the elementary school level. Qualitative descriptive research allows researchers to examine linguistic phenomena naturally in accordance with real-world conditions in the field without treating or manipulating the research subjects. The research focuses on the forms of slang that emerge, the process of their infiltration into learning activities, and their implications for the use of standard Indonesian in the school environment.

This study was conducted at Jati 2 Public Elementary School, which was selected through purposive sampling. The research subjects included three upper-grade

teachers, three parents, and 35 upper-grade elementary school students who were considered to have well-developed language skills and to interact intensively with digital media. The selection of students was based on the consideration that they actively use the social media platform TikTok in their daily lives. The selection of parents was based on their level of concern and the ease of obtaining information during data collection. The selection of teachers was based on those teaching upper-grade classes, specifically grades IV through VI. Teachers served as key informants because they have an understanding of the learning process and language use policies in the classroom, while students served as primary informants who directly experience the phenomenon of slang infiltration in learning activities.

Data collection was conducted through questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The questionnaires were used to identify students' language use during the Indonesian language learning process as well as teachers' responses to the use of slang in the classroom. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner using interview guidelines to explore teachers' views, experiences, and strategies in dealing with this phenomenon, as well as students' perceptions of the use of slang they learned from TikTok. Documentation was used as supporting data in the form of examples of TikTok content relevant to the use of slang that students often imitate. The research instrument indicators are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Indicators for the Teacher and Student Observation Questionnaire

Teacher Observation Questionnaire Indicators		
No	Indicators	Item number
1	Teaching and Learning Implementation	1 - 7
2	Language Use	8 - 13
3	Attitudes Toward Slang	14 – 18
4	Character Development	19 – 24
5	Use of TikTok	25 – 30
Students Observation Questionnaire Indicators		
No	Indicators	Item number
1	Language Use	1 - 4
2	Language Comprehension	5 - 8
3	Attitudes	9 - 12
4	TikTok Use	13 - 16
5	Impact on Character	17 - 20

Table 1 shows that the indicators in the observation questionnaires for teachers and students have different characteristics. The teacher observation questionnaire focuses on teaching practices, language use, attitudes, character development, and the use of social media. The student observation questionnaire was developed with a focus on language use, language comprehension, attitudes, and the use of TikTok. In addition, the interview guideline indicators are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Interview guideline indicators for teachers, perents, and students

Teacher Interview Guidelines			
No	Focus		Indicators
1	Indonesian Language Learning	Language	Identify teachers' strategies for teaching language skills
2	Slang in the Classroom		Identify students' use of slang from the teachers' perspective

3	The Role of TikTok		Identify the influence of TikTok on changes in students' behavior and language
4	Character Building		Identify teachers' efforts to foster good manners and a sense of responsibility
5	Collaboration with Parents		Identify forms of collaboration and cooperation with parents regarding children's social media use
Students Interview Guidelines			
No	Focus		Indicators
1	Language habits		Identify students' use of slang in daily activities
2	Understanding of Indonesian		Identify students' understanding of the use of formal and informal language
3	Use of TikTok		Identify students' engagement with the social media platform TikTok
4	The impact of TikTok on behavior		Identify the impact of TikTok on changes in students' speech patterns and behavior
Parents Interview Guidelines			
No	Focus		Indicators
1	TikTok usage habits		Identify the frequency and duration of children's social media use at home
2	Impact on behavior		Identify changes in children's behavior and language when using TikTok
3	Etiquette		Identify the influence of social media on children's character development
4	Parental supervision		Identify the extent of parental supervision of children's social media use
5	Expectations		Identify parents' expectations regarding their children's character development

The data collected were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model, which includes the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. During the reduction stage, the data were selected and focused on information related to the infiltration of slang and its impact on Indonesian language learning. Subsequently, the data were presented in the form of narrative descriptions to facilitate interpretation and the identification of patterns. Conclusions were drawn gradually by considering the interrelationships among the data until meaningful findings were obtained. To ensure the validity of the data, this study applied triangulation techniques, including both source and methodological triangulation. Data obtained from teachers and students were compared and tested for consistency through observations, interviews, and documentation. Thus, the research results are expected to have a high level of credibility and provide a comprehensive picture of the infiltration of slang through the social media platform TikTok in Indonesian language learning at SD Negeri Jati 2.

3. Results and Discussion

The research findings present observational data collected through questionnaires that describe students' language use during the Indonesian language learning process in elementary school. The results of the questionnaires were analyzed by calculating the percentage of achievement for each indicator. The results of the teacher questionnaire are presented in Figure 1.

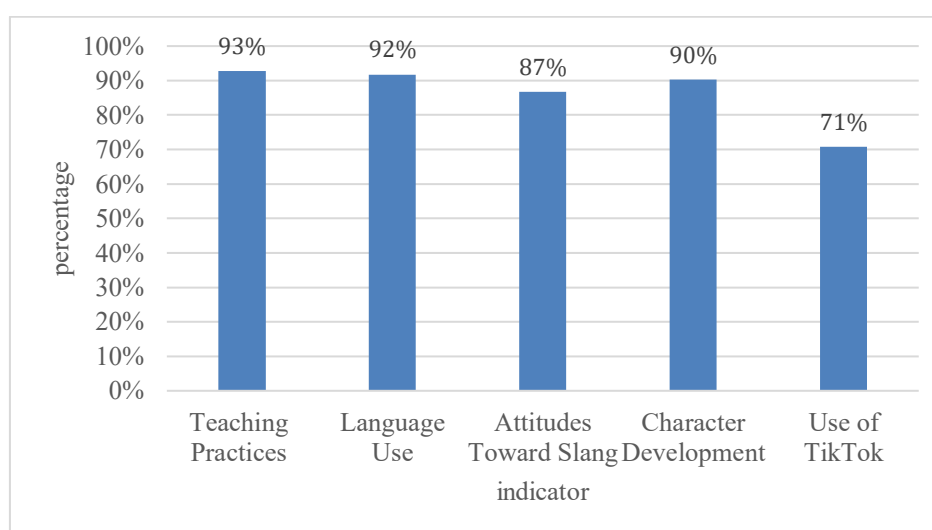


Figure 1. Results of the Teacher Questionnaire

Figure 1 shows that the implementation of Indonesian language instruction in elementary schools is very good, with a percentage of 93%, and emphasizes the use of standard Indonesian in accordance with linguistic rules. The indicator for instructional implementation scored the highest compared to the other indicators. These results indicate that teachers have facilitated students' active engagement in learning. Students are actively guided to listen, read, and speak during Indonesian language instruction. In addition, students also learn new vocabulary using standard language that adheres to linguistic norms. This aims to help students understand that Indonesian is the primary and standard language and to prevent them from falling into the trap of using slang in this era of digital learning.

During the learning process, teachers also use language that conforms to standard rules, as indicated in the second indicator. Teachers maximize the use of standard language and do not introduce slang into the classroom. This is to prevent students from becoming accustomed to using slang and non-standard vocabulary. In addition, during instruction, teachers correct students who use Indonesian vocabulary incorrectly and explain their mistakes, providing guidance on how to correct them using appropriate methods. In this way, teachers can ensure that Indonesian language instruction adheres to standard language and follows appropriate linguistic rules. Throughout the learning process, teachers also focus on fostering students' character in the classroom. Teachers set examples by instilling values of politeness in speech and behavior, as well as a sense of responsibility toward every assigned task. Teachers also utilize TikTok as a contextual learning medium in Indonesian language instruction. TikTok is used wisely and in accordance with educational needs. Teachers also guide students on how to use TikTok as a positive learning tool and to filter content appropriately. The results of the students questionnaire are presented in Figure 2.

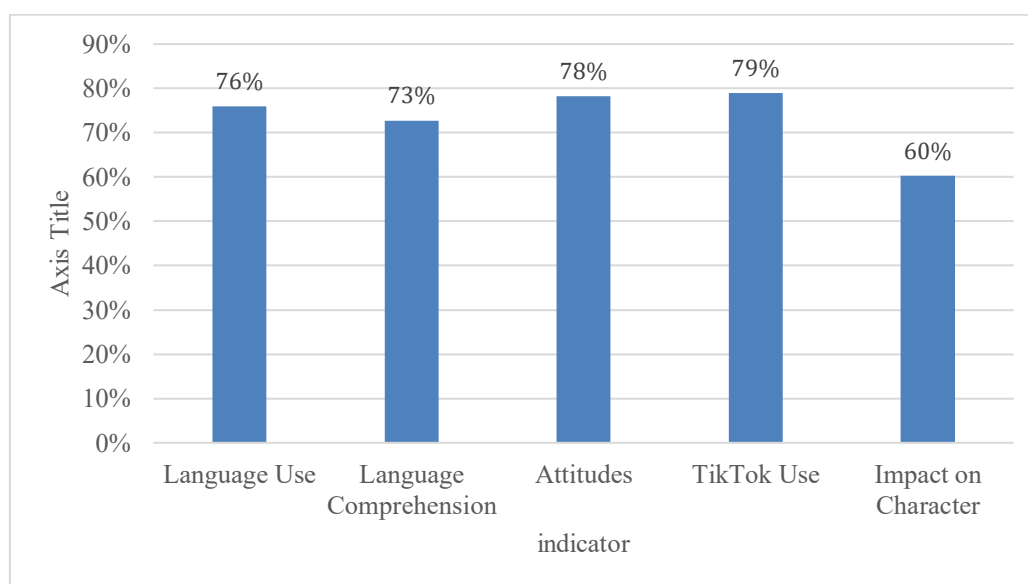


Figure 2. Results of the Student Questionnaire

Figure 2 shows the results for each indicator of the questionnaire administered during the observation process in the classroom. The research findings indicate that the infiltration of slang through the social media platform TikTok into Indonesian language instruction at Jati 2 Masaran Public Elementary School is a real phenomenon occurring gradually and continuously. Upper-grade students at SD Negeri Jati 2 Masaran actively use the social media platform TikTok. This is indicated by a 79% percentage on the “TikTok use” indicator. Students are active in accessing TikTok and creating content that aligns with trends appearing in their For You Page (FYP). This activity is characterized by daily usage frequency, the ability to name popular TikTok terms, and a tendency to imitate the language styles and expressions frequently featured in short-form video content. The analysis also indicates that students’ language usage and comprehension are quite good, with percentages of 76% and 73%, respectively. These findings reinforce the view that social media, particularly TikTok, is one of the primary sources shaping the language habits of elementary school-aged students.

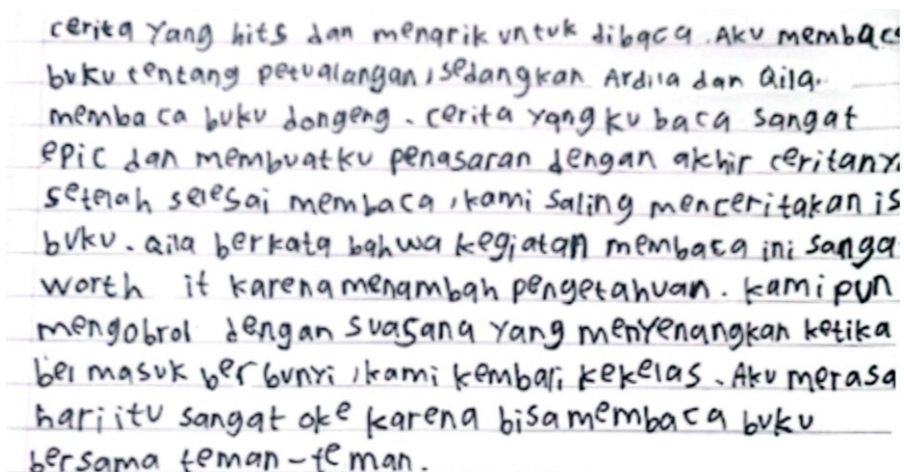
The results of the questionnaire were also confirmed by interviews conducted with teachers, students, and parents. Teachers noted that students often use slang when interacting during Indonesian language classes and in the school environment. *“My students use slang quite often, especially when talking with their peers.” “I have encountered students several times using language that has gone viral on social media.”* These results indicate that the infiltration of slang is clearly evident in students’ spoken communication during Indonesian language lessons. Students frequently use non-standard vocabulary. Examples of vocabulary frequently used by students include “bestie,” “gas,” “auto,” “spill,” “relate,” and “FYP” when interacting and speaking, especially with peers. The use of such language occurs not only in informal situations but also carries over into formal learning contexts. This indicates that students have not yet been able to clearly distinguish between informal language and the standard language that should be used in Indonesian language instruction.

Students also gave similar responses based on the results of the interviews conducted. Students stated that they use slang and non-standard language when speaking with people around them. *"Yes, I often do that when talking to friends."* *"I like slang just to make it sound more fun."* *"Almost every day, I speak using slang with my friends."* These results and findings indicate that language infiltration is occurring among students and warrants further attention. Some students incorporate slang terms into the sentences they speak. Their goal is simple: they just want to look cool and stay up-to-date. However, this perspective is misguided because the use of non-standard language actually erodes the originality of the Indonesian language as defined by linguistic norms. These findings indicate that slang affects students' oral communication and their daily attitudes when interacting with their social environment.

Parents also reported that students frequently access social media platforms like TikTok while at home. They explained that their children use social media after school and at night before bed. They added that while at home, children often use language that parents do not understand slang that is unfamiliar to them. *"My child plays on their phone after school and at night before they go to sleep."* *"While at home, they often open and play on their phones."* *"Yes, they often mix Indonesian with youth slang."* These findings indicate a shift in students' language usage patterns while at school. Thus, the infiltration of this language is also caused by the high level of TikTok usage when students are in a family setting.

In addressing the issue of TikTok's influence among elementary school students, teachers have specific strategies to resolve the problem and mitigate the impact of uncontrolled TikTok use. *"I start by teaching my students to speak politely and respect others."* *"I guide my students to be disciplined about their social media usage and to always maintain polite social communication."* The method implemented by teachers is to set a direct example of appropriate behavior both during lessons and while on school grounds. Teachers also assign tasks related to language norms so that students can independently learn how to speak correctly and in accordance with the rules. In addition, students are reminded of proper language usage when errors or inconsistencies are identified.

In addition, the data from the documentation also shows that various new words have emerged in the use of the social media platform TikTok. Some examples of these terms include "hits", "worth it", "gass," "bestie," "at least," "spill," "ootd," and so on. Although widespread, the infiltration of slang through TikTok is not entirely negative. In some cases, teachers leverage this phenomenon as a starting point to capture students' attention and spark their interest in learning. For example, teachers use examples of currently popular slang and then compare them to the correct standard language forms. This strategy has proven effective in raising students' language awareness. Additionally, character-based Indonesian language instruction at Jati 2 Public Elementary School is now focused on instilling the values of polite language use, digital responsibility, and the ability to choose language appropriate to the context. Teachers emphasize that the use of slang is not entirely prohibited, but it must be adapted to the situation and the purpose of communication. The example show at Figure 3.



cerita yang hits dan menarik untuk dibaca. Aku membaca buku tentang petualangan. Sedangkan Ardi dan Aila membaca buku dongeng. Cerita yang ku baca sangat epic dan membuatku penasaran dengan akhir ceritanya. Setelah selesai membaca, kami saling menceritakan isi buku. Aila berkata bahwa kegiatan membaca ini sangat worth it karena menambah pengetahuan. Kami pun mengobrol dengan suasana yang menyenangkan ketika bermasuk berbunga. Kami kembali ke kelas. Aku merasa hari itu sangat oke karena bisa membaca buku bersama teman-teman.

Figure 3. Example Infiltration of Slang

The findings of this study demonstrate the clarity and consistency of each data collection method employed. The survey results indicate that TikTok usage among students is high, at 79%. These results certainly indicate that the intensity of students' social media use particularly TikTok is widespread and practiced by nearly all students. These findings are further confirmed by interview results, which reveal that students frequently use popular and new terms in their speech. These terms are considered slang and reflect contemporary trends. Students also mentioned that they use this slang almost every day when interacting with others, especially their peers. Additionally, the documentation data shows that TikTok content featuring slang is frequently accessed by students and introduces new vocabulary to them. Various terms such as "gass," "bestie," "at least," "spill," "ootd," and others exemplify the abundance of slang vocabulary developing on social media.

Thus, the results of this study confirm that the infiltration of slang through TikTok at Jati 2 Masaran Public Elementary School is not merely a linguistic phenomenon, but rather a socio-educational phenomenon that requires a thoughtful pedagogical response. Character-based Indonesian language instruction serves as a strategic approach to balancing students' language development with the demands of proper and correct Indonesian language use. It is hoped that these findings will serve as a reference for teachers, schools, and future researchers in managing the influence of social media on language learning in elementary schools.

Discussions

Research findings indicate a shift from standard language to slang among elementary school students in Indonesian language classes. Students actively use social media platforms such as TikTok as a means of self-expression and interaction with their social circles. As a result, many students have fallen into the habit of using language that does not conform to linguistic norms and standard language. These findings were also confirmed by the results of interviews conducted. Teachers observed that many students use what is known as slang. The students did not deny this when asked about it during the interviews. Parents also explained that

students often spend time on their smartphones after school until late at night before going to bed.

The research findings confirm that there has been a shift from standard language to non-standard language and slang in Indonesian language learning. This is consistent with previous research indicating that TikTok is one of the causes of this shift and has led to the widespread use of non-standard slang (Novianti et al., 2026). This linguistic shift began with the blending of standard vocabulary with new terms emerging on social media (Sundari et al., 2025). Another study revealed that slang is more readily accepted and quickly adopted by students as a means of social communication (Toan, 2022). This clearly indicates that slang is developing on a massive and dynamic scale among elementary school students (Haq, 2025). Consequently, these linguistic changes and shifts affect not only students' communication skills but also their academic achievement (Son & Morrison, 2010).

Teachers' responses to language infiltration are a crucial step in mitigating its effects. Instilling appropriate linguistic attitudes and character traits can encourage students to use Indonesian more effectively. Previous research has shown that integrating positive character traits into learning can encourage students to use language more wisely and politely (Hatima, 2025). The instillation of values must be carried out by implementing appropriate small habits (Anshel, 2010). Furthermore, teachers who serve as role models for students are key to successfully instilling character and language skills (Lian et al., 2020). Thus, the development of social media not only has positive impacts but can also enhance language proficiency and foster a selective approach to these developments (Cheng et al., 2024). The use of social media can also influence students' motivation to learn, as explained in previous research (Fudhla et al., 2023; Ratnasari et al., 2022).

The findings of this study imply the need for more intensive attention from teachers and parents toward elementary school students regarding their use of the social media platform TikTok. This is because interactions with the social environment at home and at school also influence students' communication behaviors (Fahira et al., 2025). Teachers can use these findings as a basis for developing lesson plans that utilize TikTok as a digital medium without resorting to the use of slang or evolving colloquial language. TikTok should be used more wisely in the process of teaching Indonesian at school. Parents at home should also actively monitor their children's smartphone use. Parents can set time limits to mitigate the negative effects of excessive digital media use.

Although this study provides insights into the infiltration of slang vocabulary into the language of elementary school students, its implementation still faces several limitations. The study was conducted using a questionnaire that was self-administered by elementary school students; this raises the possibility of data bias, as elementary school students tend to choose answers they consider appropriate, which may not accurately reflect the actual situation. This study did not use testing instruments capable of measuring specific abilities and indicators more objectively. Furthermore, time constraints in this study resulted in the research not being carried out to its full potential and prevented a more in-depth exploration of the data.

Given these limitations, it is important for future researchers to use more objective and credible research instruments to measure the infiltration of slang among elementary school students. The selection and scheduling of the research timeline can also be carried out in a more planned and structured manner so that all data and research findings can be explained in a more structured way. Further research using a quantitative approach is needed to determine the level of slang infiltration occurring in the use of the social media platform TikTok. Additionally, a development research design is needed to produce a digital literacy-based learning model aimed at improving students' language skills at the elementary school level. Efforts to address these limitations will provide answers to the research questions that have not yet been fully addressed.

4. Conclusion

The results of the study concluded that the infiltration of slang through the social media platform TikTok into Indonesian language instruction at Jati 2 Public Elementary School is a real phenomenon. This phenomenon began with the high frequency of new slang terms appearing as a result of uncontrolled social media use. The influence of TikTok as the primary digital platform encourages students to imitate vocabulary and speech patterns that do not conform to standard language norms, thereby causing a shift in the use of the Indonesian language. Teachers have implemented strategies to mitigate the impact of this linguistic infiltration. These include fostering the habit of using standard language, providing examples, offering constructive feedback, and integrating character-building values into the learning process. Therefore, the study concluded that an Indonesian language learning approach based on character development, combined with the wise use of digital media, is an effective solution for controlling the infiltration of slang while maintaining students' language proficiency in accordance with correct linguistic norms. Future research should employ a quantitative approach to assess the extent of language infiltration. Additionally, developmental research is needed to create a digital literacy-based learning model.

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