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Slang English Word on The Tik Tok Platform: Analysis of Pronunciation Errors Among Gen Alpha

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how TikTok influences the use and pronunciation of English slang among Generation Alpha in Indonesia. Using a mixed-methods explanatory sequential design, the research involved 36 ninth-grade students who actively use TikTok. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires examining TikTok usage frequency, familiarity with slang, and pronunciation habits, followed by qualitative interviews and TikTok content analysis to explain pronunciation patterns in depth. Findings show that although students widely adopt slang such as cap, slay, OMG, BFF, based, and rizz, only 31.02% of the total pronunciations were correct, while 58.33% were incorrect. Most errors occur because students imitate non-standard pronunciations used by TikTok creators and are influenced by Indonesian phonological patterns, such as omitting final consonants, mispronouncing diphthongs, and replacing /z/ with /s/. The study concludes that TikTok successfully increases vocabulary exposure and motivation, but does not independently improve pronunciation accuracy. Therefore, structured phonetic guidance and pedagogical integration of TikTok content are needed to help Generation Alpha achieve correct English pronunciation.

Keywords: TikTok; English Slang; Pronunciation; Generation Alpha; Digital Language Learning; Mixed Methods; Sociolinguistics.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the rise of social media platforms has significantly changed how young people communicate and express themselves. Social media no longer serves only as a means of sharing information, but also as a space for young people to build their social and linguistic identities. Through platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, X, and YouTube, users can easily access various forms of language and expression, including slang and colloquial words considered more “contemporary” and “trendy.” Social media also serves as a space for rapid cross-cultural interaction, accelerating cultural integration while creating new challenges in global communication. The language style of a country can now spread around the world in a matter of hours, leading many teenagers to adopt English vocabulary and pronunciation patterns from viral social media content.(Ilmita et al., 2025).

One of the most influential platforms in recent times is TikTok. According to (Khikmah et al., 2024), it has become the first medium for young people to interact, express themselves, and build their social identities. It allows users to make and share short videos featuring entertaining, educational, and popular culture content. Because of this straightforward, easy, and trend-oriented video format, TikTok has grown exponentially and reached as far as to include all ages. According to a report by DataReportal, 2024, TikTok is one of the fastest-growing social media platforms worldwide. A research paper by (Aisyiah & Erizar, 2023) also reported that TikTok, when used for English language learning, increases student

engagement due to its interactive, digitally-based nature. Its uniqueness lies in its algorithm, which personalizes content based on users' interests, enabling the rapid diffusion of language trends worldwide, including slang and new vocabulary.

Moreover, students' pronunciation skills and confidence are influenced by their exposure to social media. (Suwanda et al., 2024) state that TikTok-based learning encourages students to imitate English pronunciation creatively, while (Fokatea & Widagsa, 2024) reveal that many students adjust their pronunciation to the style of the influencers or native speakers they have followed. These results demonstrate that TikTok has contributed not only to vocabulary but also to shaping non-standard pronunciation among Indonesian EFL learners.

In discussing linguistic flexibility in young learners, findings from a previous article by (Adiana, n.d.) also show how visual-based learning encourages active participation and vocabulary expansion in junior high school students. Their research shows that students become more enthusiastic, confident, and motivated when visual media and interactive approaches support learning. These findings are relevant because the multimodal nature of TikTok—combining images, sound, text, and movement—creates conditions similar to those described in their research. The article shows that students respond positively to learning methods that are visually stimulating, interactive, and encourage active engagement, similar to how teenagers interact with TikTok content.

Besides, TikTok is also a digital cultural space that encourages linguistic creativity. Most of the language used in TikTok videos is abbreviations, unique expressions, and slang that later become part of daily conversation. Language plays a vital role in shaping digital identity on social media. (Robah & Anggrisia, 2023) shared the view that social media interactions influence students to use informal English expressions, which often include slang and non-standard pronunciation. Further support was provided by (Araujo, 2024) and (Yonatan, 2024), who found that Indonesian students consider social media an effective and flexible environment for language learning outside the formal classroom.

According to (Frastiwi, 2022) Slang is a kind of non-standard language that social groups, especially teenagers, use to indicate identity and intimacy. As explained by (Harahap & Lubis, 2021) ,slang evolves rapidly due to rapid changes in society and culture. In the Indonesian context, (Nugroho et al., 2022) note that emerging informal language styles in the digital space require learners and educators alike to be more adaptable to flexible language practices. This is corroborated by (Maulida et al., 2022),who found that social media use in English learning may provide even more opportunities for natural, communicative language habits.

In the context of American English, slang refers to informal and non-standard lexical items that are commonly used in casual spoken interaction, particularly among young people. Eble (1996) explains that American slang functions as a marker of group identity and social belonging, allowing speakers to express familiarity and social closeness within a community. Allan and Burridge (2006) further state that slang is characterized by creative word formation, semantic shift, abbreviation, and phonological variation, which often results in non-standard pronunciation patterns. Many American slang expressions originate from African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and youth culture before spreading widely through popular culture and digital media (Green, 2002).

This phenomenon is particularly relevant for Generation Alpha, which is growing up alongside the development of digital technology and social media. Generation Alpha, which grew up with technology, not only consumes TikTok content but also adopts the platform's vocabulary and pronunciation. They (born between early 2010 and now)(Darwati et al., 2025), unlike Generation Z, have less formal experience learning English but are more deeply immersed in digital culture. This makes them not only consumers but also producers of language through the imitation of social media trends. (Subhan et al., 2025) stated that intense digital interaction creates a new language style among Indonesian teenagers. However, as noted by (Venalinda et al., 2023)Even though digital exposure increases interest in learning, phonetic skills still require structured practice to ensure accurate pronunciation.

Previous studies in Indonesia show that Generation Z is the most active group in shaping linguistic dynamics through social media. (Musyarrafah et al., 2025) A study found

that Gen Z often combines regional languages, Indonesian, slang, and elements of foreign languages in their digital interactions to assert their identity and improve communication efficiency. (Telaumbanua et al., 2024)also confirmed that Gen Z's language style on Instagram.

dominated by informal language, abbreviations, and slang expressions influenced by fast-paced digital culture. Additionally (Yusuf et al., 2022).'s study reveals that the use of slang in WhatsApp groups strengthens social closeness among Gen Z users. (Oktaviana & Yusra, 2023) Research at UNRAM also highlights the increasingly common practice of translanguaging among Gen Z, indicating a high degree of linguistic flexibility in digital interactions. Overall, these studies show that social media is a significant space for Gen Z to develop new language patterns that are more flexible, creative, and reflect their social identities.

While several studies investigate the relationship between social media and language, most focus on Generation Z students rather than other generations. Specifically, previous studies exploring the influence of TikTok on English slang pronunciation among Generation Alpha are limited. Thus, the present study tries to fill this gap by examining how TikTok contributes to the formation of English pronunciation among Generation Alpha in Indonesia.

The results of this research are expected to add weight to the role of digital media in English learning and to provide a promising foundation for teachers and parents to guide Generation Alpha children in using the language correctly, including pronunciation. Indeed, integrating TikTok into focused phonetic learning will make learning more interactive, modern, and relevant to the present digital generation.

This study will analyze how TikTok influences the use and pronunciation of English slang in Generation Alpha in Indonesia and identify the types of slang most adopted from digital content. The study also seeks to explain TikTok's role as a digital cultural space in shaping linguistic identity, language creativity, and non-standard pronunciation patterns among EFL learners. Based on these objectives, some questions that will be asked in this study include: How does TikTok shape the use and pronunciation of English slang for Generation Alpha? What types of slang are most widely adopted? How does TikTok contribute to the formation of linguistic identity and language habits of Generation Alpha? And finally, how can this platform be used as a phonetic learning tool to improve English pronunciation accuracy?

METHOD

This research will employ a mixed-methods approach using the explanatory sequential design, a two-stage approach with quantitative data collection to provide a general picture of pronunciation patterns and slang vocabulary use among students, followed by qualitative data collection to elaborate on and explain the quantitative findings. This is because the design of this research provides a general overview of the observed phenomenon, namely the effect of TikTok on Generation Alpha's pronunciation of English slang. At the same time, it also systematically integrates both quantitative and qualitative findings. This is supported by the explanation given by (Khabibullah et al., 2024) and further solidified by (Habibullah et al., 2025) who state that the explanatory sequential design provides clarity on cause-and-effect due to its structured sequence of processes.

This approach has been widely applied in English language education research in Indonesia. For example, (Putra et al., 2023) applied it to analyze prospective teachers' self-efficacy, while (Indrayani et al., 2025) used it to examine the effectiveness of digital media for language learning. Similar findings were reported by (Adara et al., 2024) and (Lukas & Yunus, 2021), who noted that this approach is a practical design for understanding linguistic phenomena and learning behaviour; therefore, its application in this study is well-founded.

The research population in this study is Generation Alpha students aged 10-15 years who actively use TikTok. The sample in this research consists of 36 ninth-grade students at Madrasah Tsanawiyah, selected by using purposive sampling with the following criteria : (1) using TikTok at least one hour per day and (2) having studied English at school. Purposive sampling was performed, so the research focuses only on subjects relevant to the research objectives.

Data collection was carried out in two phases. The quantitative phase used a questionnaire to determine each respondent's academic background, pronunciation habits,

frequency of TikTok use, and familiarity with English slang. This is an approach observed in the explanatory sequential model, in which the quantitative results serve as the basis for participant selection and question development in the qualitative phase (Putu & Pramerta, 2024)

In the qualitative phase, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and content analysis. Interviews were conducted with selected students to explore their perceptions of how TikTok influences their pronunciation of English slang and the strategies they use when imitating pronunciation from digital content. In addition, three TikTok videos were employed as primary linguistic input media to support the content analysis. All three videos were taken from the TikTok account Brilliant Kampung Inggris, which was selected because it consistently provides English learning content focusing on American English pronunciation and slang usage and is widely accessed by Indonesian EFL learners.

The three videos were selected using purposive sampling based on several criteria: (1) the videos were frequently viewed by the respondents, (2) they contained spoken American English slang rather than text-only explanations, (3) pronunciation was produced orally by the content creator, and (4) the slang expressions used were relevant to those commonly adopted by Generation Alpha, such as cap, slay, OMG, BFF, based, and rizz. Each video had a duration of approximately 30–60 seconds and presented natural pronunciation in an informal digital learning context.

These videos functioned as audio-visual linguistic input, providing pronunciation models that were heard and potentially imitated by the students. The videos were observed and transcribed to identify pronunciation patterns, phonetic features, and instances of non-standard American slang pronunciation. The pronunciation patterns identified in the TikTok videos were then compared with the students' pronunciation results obtained from the pronunciation test and interviews.

In this study, qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which allows for the identification and interpretation of patterns of meaning (themes) from interview transcripts and other qualitative data. For example, in a study in Indonesia on education, thematic analysis was used to evaluate educational research literature and map themes of research development (Santoso, 2022). In addition, recent research on leadership styles in religious schools in Indonesia also used a deductive thematic analysis approach to thematically describe interview data. Furthermore, this approach is considered flexible and appropriate when researchers want to explain quantitative findings through in-depth qualitative explanations—a strategy that is relevant when the research design is mixed methods or explanatory sequential.

Findings from the two stages of analysis were then integrated using triangulation to enhance the validity and reliability of the research findings. Triangulation was done by comparing quantitative data from questionnaires with qualitative data from interviews and video content analysis. This approach aligns with guidelines for integrating data in an explanatory sequential design.

This mixed-methods approach with an explanatory sequential design is effective for a range of educational studies in Indonesia. Thus, it's expected that this design will provide a comprehensive, in-depth picture of how the TikTok platform influences the pronunciation of English slang among members of Generation Alpha and will offer practical contributions for both teachers and parents in understanding the dynamics of language learning in the digital era.

FINDING

The results show that TikTok has a significant influence on the pronunciation of English slang among Generation Alpha. Based on the analysis, some of the most frequently used vocabulary and pronunciations are presented in the following table.

Table 1. Analysis of the Pronunciation of the Word "Cap / No Cap" among Generation Alpha

No	Pronunciation	Number of students	Percentage	Explanation
1	“Kep” (incorrect)	6	16,67%	Pronounced with the Indonesian sound pattern /kep/ due to phonological interference.
2	“Keip” (incorrect)	7	19.44%	Exaggerated pronunciation with the vowel a changing to the diphthong /ei/ due to the influence of written English spelling.
3	“Kæp” /kæp/ (correct)	23	63,89%	Pronunciation close to the original form in African American Vernacular English (AAVE), commonly used in slang on TikTok.

The slang "cap" and "no cap" are used by youth in their everyday TikTok parlance to denote the veracity of a statement. The term "cap" is used to describe another person's statement as a lie, a stretch of the truth, or untrustworthy. This term is used when a person doubts the honesty of a statement, such as when a friend says they did something that sounds impossible, or when a person is doing something considered extra by the speaker. On the other hand, "no cap" emphasizes that a person is speaking the truth, seriously and without exaggeration. A speaker saying this would want to make sure the listener believes them, especially during praise, explanation, or justification. Both terms have their roots in AAVE(African American Vernacular English) and were popularized by hip-hop music and viral TikTok content. Generation Alpha uses "cap" and "no cap" as markers of honesty and as a stylistic element that empowers their digital linguistic identity.

In support, 36 students of Generation Alpha were involved in the research, in which the pronunciation of the slang word "cap" was "kep" by 16.67% and "keip" by 19.44%. In contrast, 63.89% were close enough to the appropriate pronunciation of /kæp/. It goes without saying that, even though students hear most English slang on social media platforms like TikTok, many are not yet able to pronounce it appropriately.

It was because the TikTok creator's speaking styles are colloquial and sometimes far from standard pronunciation. As (Fatmasari et al., 2025), state, TikTok can indeed be an interactive medium for learning to improve pronunciation; however, students tend to imitate incorrect pronunciation when there is no clear guidance.

Moreover, according to (Paoleti, 2025) slang words like “cap / no cap” are not used only under the influence of social media but as a way of adapting to digital culture. In slang, students often modify pronunciation to make it sound “cool” rather than correct English.

Therefore, TikTok strongly influences students in how they pronounce English slang. However, pronunciation errors such as "cap / no cap" will continue to recur if guided neither by teachers nor by phonetic practice.

Table 2. Analysis of the Pronunciation of the Word “Slay” among Generation Alpha

No	Pronunciation	Number of students	Percentage	Explanation
1	“Sli” (incorrect)	9	25%	Mispronounced by replacing the diphthong /eɪ/ with the vowel /i/ due to influence from Indonesian phonology.
2	“Sleh” (incorrect)	12	33.33%	Produced with a flat and short vowel, showing incomplete articulation of the English diphthong.
3	“Sley” /sleɪ/ (correct)	15	41.67%	Pronounced correctly using the diphthong /eɪ/ as in say or play.

The slang word "slay" means someone did something really great, looked cool, or performed something impressively. It's an expression that describes those specific moments of confidence, style, appearance, and great ability of people, especially in fashion, stage performances, creative content, and actions considered "powerful." For example, when one is well-dressed, singing great, or producing amazing content on TikTok, friends and followers use the comment "You slay!" as a form of appreciation. More expressively, it is said, "Slay girl!" "Slay queen!" or "you're slaying!" to show support and admiration. The word "slay" is not only used as a compliment but also as an encouraging positive expression that empowers users' self-confidence and social identity on such platforms as TikTok. This word appears in the Generation Alpha digital conversations for appreciation or encouragement given to friends who could have performed something cool, bold, or simply out of the ordinary.

It can be observed from the results that, out of 36 Generation Alpha students, 25% pronounced the English slang word "slay" as "sli," 33.33% pronounced it as "sleh," while only 41.67% correctly pronounced the word as /sleɪ/. This error demonstrates that the pronunciation of slang in English remains a challenge for students, even though they often hear these words on social media platforms like TikTok.

According to (Hendrastomo & Januarti, 2023), many EFL students who learn pronunciation through TikTok often face obstacles because there is no direct phonetic guidance; hence, they imitate the sound based on their hearing alone. Thus, their pronunciation does not usually follow that of the English standard.

TikTok does increase the motivation of students in learning English; however, pronunciation accuracy would still depend on focused phonetic practice. Overall, it is established that TikTok significantly introduces slang such as "slay" to Generation Alpha. This medium, though, may also lead to incorrect pronunciation habits without proper guidance. Thus, teachers are encouraged to incorporate TikTok into phonics lessons to understand the correct pronunciation while students are motivated to learn.

Table 3: Analysis of the Pronunciation of the Word “OMG” among Generation Alpha

No	Pronunciation	Number of students	Percentage	explanation
1	“om gee” with an Indonesian accent (incorrect)	27	75%	Incorrect pronunciation (influenced by local customs

				and social media)
2	“omg” diucapkan cepat seperti satu kata (incorrect)	6	16.67%	Incorrect, because there is no space between letters.
3	/oʊ ɛm dʒiː/ (correct)	3	8.33%	That's right, according to standard English pronunciation.

"OMG" is short for "Oh My God"; this word has come to be used anytime someone is amazed, admired, disbelieving, or emotionally reactive over something. The expression comes in both negative and positive contexts-for instance, being surprised at something, getting news that is uncharacteristic of the person it's about, seeing a humorous incident, or experiencing a heart-shocking situation. Digital communication, particularly on TikTok, is full of "OMG" as a spontaneous reaction to funny, dramatic, or shocking videos. Generation Alpha uses "OMG" both verbally and in writing; this would be upon seeing an exciting performance, an intense moment, or something exciting, for instance. This expression has become a constituent in normal emotive expression in everyday speech because it's short, easy to use, and powerful in expressing strong reactions. Thus, "OMG" functions both as a marker of spontaneous and emotive responses, reinforcing the typical digital style of communication among these younger age groups.

Accordingly, of the total 36 students of Generation Alpha, 27 students or 75% pronounce the slang word "OMG" with an Indonesian accent, such as "om gee." The reason behind such a mistake was the imitation of pronunciation on TikTok. Social media has indeed made pronunciations more localized, rather than becoming consistent in the forms they were originally designed for.

Students are likely to continue imitating the pronunciation on TikTok, without realizing the differences between English and Indonesian sounds; this happens because TikTok focuses on expressive intonation and speaking style, not phonetic accuracy. As reported by (Subekti, 2023)TikTok indeed engages students in learning about English; however, proper pronunciation can be achieved only if students practice systematically and under the teacher's guidance.

Therefore, though very popular and even frequently used in everyday conversation, the abbreviation "OMG" is still mispronounced by a majority of the students, according to the results of this study. Although social media is very promising for English language learning, it still requires formal phonetic guidance since not all pronunciation will be aligned with the standards of the English language.

Table 4. Pronunciation of the slang word “BFF” by Generation Alpha students

No	Pronunciation	Number of students	Percentage	Explanation
1	“bef-ef-ef” with an Indonesian accent (incorrect)	20	55.56%	Incorrect pronunciation due to the following local sounds
2	“bee-ef” (incorrect)	8	22.22%	Incorrect, missing one phonetic element
3	/biː ɛf ɛf/ (correct)	8	22.22%	Correct according to

				English standards

The best friend is called "BFF," standing for Best Friends Forever. In this context, the phrase is usually used to express emotional closeness, loyalty, or close friendship. "BFF" is used to introduce the best friend to someone else, emphasizing the special connection between two people, and sharing affectionate moments on social media. There could be different situations example, where a photo on TikTok or Instagram with a close friend is simply marked "With my BFF." Then again, during everyday conversations of Generation Alpha, this term further denotes a unique friendship that is close and considered long-lasting. Thus, "BFF" expresses not only a social relationship but also a positive identity and manner of communication among the youth today in the digital world.

As seen in the table above, from 36 students belonging to Generation Alpha, only 20 or 55.56% pronounced the slang word "BFF" in some sort of local style, such as "bef-ef-ef". Eight, or 22.22%, pronounced it as "bee-ef," in which not all letters were pronounced. There were only 8 students, 22.22%, who pronounced it correctly as /biː ɛf ɛf/.

These results indicate that most students still suffer from pronunciation errors due to the influence of their mother tongue and the habit of imitating social media such as TikTok. Most of these media use slang within fast and expressive contexts, without clarifying the pronunciation, so students imitate inaccurate sounds.

The research by (Churniati & Vidya, n.d.) concluded that TikTok, as a speaking medium, can increase student interest but does not directly improve pronunciation if targeted practice and teacher correction are not introduced. This shows that even though Generation Alpha tends to learn independently through social media, phonetic guidance is still needed so that the pronunciation of English slang will not stray further from the standard.

As English and Indonesian belong to different sound systems, the students in Indonesia can hardly imitate the consonant and double-vowel sounds. Students therefore tend to use pronunciations easier for them to pronounce locally than stick to the original pronunciation.

Therefore, though slang expressions like “BFF” have become part of the students' digital communication, this study's results have pointed out a need for further strengthening the instruction of phonetics in digital media so that the students not only understand what slang means but can also pronounce it correctly.

Table 5. Pronunciation of the slang word “BASED” by Generation Alpha students

No	Pronunciation	Number of students	Percentage	Explanation
1	“bes” /bes/ (incorrect)	17	47.22%	Pronounced without the final consonant /d/ and without the diphthong /eɪ/.
2	“beis” /beis/(half correct)	11	30.56%	Has a diphthong, but loses the /d/ sound.
3	/beɪst/ (correct)	8	22.22%	Correct according to English standards

"Based" is slang that has come to mean an opinion, action, or attitude that is authentic, honest, courageous, and uninfluenced by social pressures. It is an expression that typically appears when someone is holding a very intense or possibly controversial view, which, nonetheless, others find valid or "as is." Finally, in application to TikTok and social media, "based" is generally applied as a term of praise toward somebody who dares to speak out against the mainstream, or to someone who shows high confidence in their personal

principles. For example, whenever a person makes a video criticizing a trend of some kind or offers a point of view honestly without fear of criticism, then viewers will often comment as a form of appreciation: "That's so based." This slang is used when someone exhibits values or actions that can be considered "steadfast" and not influenced easily by the opinions of other people. Thus, for Generation Alpha, the use of "based" is nothing but a form of praise and a marker of social identity that points to courage, authenticity, and self-confidence in the digital environment.

Based on the results of the analysis, 47.22% of the students articulated the slang word "based" as "bes" /bes/. The significant deviation took place since the diphthong /eɪ/ was lost together with the final consonant/d/ or/t/, which shows that students tend to simplify the phonetic structure of English to fit the Indonesian language system.

A total of 30.56% of students pronounced “beis” /beis/, where they could produce the diphthong /eɪ/ but still omitted the final consonant /d/. This pattern is typical among Indonesian learners because Indonesian rarely has consonant clusters at the end of words.

Only 22.22% of students correctly pronounced "based" as /beɪst/. Correct pronunciation is usually found in students who frequently watch English-language TikTok content, especially comment videos and memes.

These findings showcase that while “based” is popular on TikTok, along with other social media platforms, its complex articulation makes it hard for many students to pronounce correctly. The study entitled Exploring Language Trends on TikTok: Impacts on Indonesian Communication by (Za & Pujiati, 2023)Teenagers on TikTok often use slang, code-switching between Indonesian and English, and adding elements of Internet culture.

The use of English slang on TikTok gives exposure to non-Indonesian terms to Gen Alpha, pushing them to use foreign vocabulary in online communication. Pronunciation-wise, although this research does not directly calculate phonetics, code-switching and the use of foreign terms show continuous exposure to the sounds of English that might affect how they will imitate and pronounce such slang.

Table 5. Pronunciation of the slang word “RIZZ” by Generation Alpha students

No	Pronunciation	Number of students	Percentage	Explanation
1	“ris” /ris/ /bes/ (incorrect)	14	38.89%	Pronunciation without the final consonant /z/ due to phonological interference from Indonesian.
2	“rizz” /rɪs/(half correct)	12	33.33%	The vowel sound is close to correct, but the consonant /z/ is replaced by /s/.
3	/rɪz/ (correct)	10	22.22%	Correct according to English standards

The slang "rizz" means the ability to capture others' attention, charm, or interest socially or romantically. This word is usually used when someone shows charisma, a speaking style that compels others, or an attitude that makes them lovable. This phrase is often used by teens, specifically on TikTok, when describing someone as having game with the opposite sex, for instance, when someone can make others smile at him, admire him, or show interest in him because of the way he talks or his body language. In digital conversations, someone might say "He's got rizz" to express that this person has natural appeal or "No rizz" to express the opposite. Thus, the use of "rizz" not only describes social skills but also becomes part of

the language of the digital generation's identity, which values charisma and interpersonal skills as necessary in their daily interactions.

In this research, based on 36 respondents of Generation Alpha students, 38.89% pronounced the slang term "rizz" as "ris." This kind of error occurred because they replaced the consonant /z/ with the sound /s/ due to Indonesian phonology, which often drops the voiced consonant at the end of words.

33.33% of students pronounced it as "rizz", with the nearly correct vowel but still changed final consonant /z/ to /s/. This indicates that even while recognizing this sound from TikTok, they still struggled to produce a /z/ fricative, which is quite rare in their first language.

Only 27.78% of students could pronounce the slang word "rizz" correctly as /rɪz/, which is used in American TikTok slang. The low percentage shows that students only imitate the form of the word from TikTok texts or captions but do not know how to phonetically pronounce it.

"Rizz", in context, generally refers to a person's ability to attract the attention of the opposite sex. As this word has gained such popularity on TikTok, it seems that students use this word often in digital conversations, but the pronunciation is still influenced by its spelling, not the original sound. By conducting research into Language Variations of Adolescents on TikTok Social Media, researchers have found a new language variation among adolescents inspired by social media, especially TikTok: the phenomenon "ecrononciation". (Sulistiyarini, 2024)

This variation is not restricted to just the written content but also oral variation or pronunciation that comes forth in TikTok videos. That suggests that through TikTok, Gen Alpha creates and uses its own variant of language. Their use of English slang on TikTok, in this sense, functions as a social-linguistic marker of identity: a certain set of terms is chosen and used in order to demonstrate modernity, global connectedness, and digital community membership.

DISCUSSION

Research shows that TikTok has a significant influence on how Generation Alpha speaks English slang. This application has become the main place for them to hear and imitate English from various content creators. Although most students are familiar with slang words , only a small number of them can pronounce them correctly according to standard English pronunciation. This means that they are often exposed to English, but are not yet able to pronounce it correctly.

Based on the overall data from 216 Generation Alpha students' responses to the six English slang words analyzed, it was found that only 31.02% of all answers were correct according to English pronunciation standards. A total of 10.64% were in the half-correct category, which is pronunciation that is close to the original form but still has errors in one or two phonetic elements. Meanwhile, the majority of answers, namely 58.33%, were classified as incorrect, indicating that most students are still unable to pronounce English slang correctly even though they are frequently exposed to it through TikTok. These findings show that intensive exposure to digital media does not automatically improve pronunciation accuracy because students tend to imitate the pronunciation of TikTok creators, who do not always use standard pronunciation. Thus, although TikTok is effective in introducing slang vocabulary and increasing learning motivation, these results emphasize the need for structured phonetic practice and teacher guidance so that students' pronunciation is more in line with English language standards.

These results are in line with the research by (Fitria, 2023) and (Fauziah & Pratolo, 2025), which states that TikTok can make students more enthusiastic about learning English, but without clear guidance, students often imitate incorrect pronunciation. TikTok can also be an effective learning medium if used for educational purposes, not just entertainment.

This study differs from previous studies because it focuses on Generation Alpha, a generation that has grown up with social media since childhood. According to (Wijayati et al., 2023)This generation needs a more modern way of learning languages that is in line with the digital world.

The results of this study also prove that the hypothesis is accepted—TikTok does indeed influence the way students pronounce English slang. However, the influence is more on imitating sounds than on proper learning. Many students imitate the pronunciation from videos without knowing whether it is in accordance with English language rules. This has led to a mixture of Indonesian and English sounds. If not guided by teachers, this mistake can become a habit that is difficult to change. But on the other hand, TikTok can also be an interesting learning tool if teachers use it to practice correct pronunciation.

In relation to current theories and issues, this study is in line with research on digital sociolinguistics and digital literacy in Indonesia, which shows that social media shapes the language style and speech patterns of teenagers when using slang. Digital literacy is important so that Generation Alpha can use social media wisely and not just imitate incorrect language. Language development in the digital age needs to be balanced with critical thinking skills so that students can imitate correct language from social media.

Overall, this study concludes that TikTok has the potential to be an interesting and relevant medium for learning English for Generation Alpha. However, its use must be accompanied by teacher guidance and proper phonetic practice so that students do not just follow trends but are also able to speak with good and correct pronunciation. With this approach, the language learning process can be more enjoyable, modern, and still educational.

CONCLUSION

The result of this research shows that TikTok indeed has a powerful influence on the use and pronunciation of English slang for Generation Alpha. Due to exposure to TikTok content, students are familiar with various slang like cap, slay, OMG, BFF, based, and rizz, but most students still cannot pronounce them according to the English phonetic standard. They tend to imitate the pronunciation of TikTok creators who do not use standard pronunciation, making the pronunciation pattern simple with a mixture of the Indonesian sound system, showing linguistic interference. These results confirm that although TikTok is effective in teaching new vocabulary and increasing motivation in learning, it still holds shortcomings as a tool of learning phonetics without guidance.

This study also proves that TikTok is a digital cultural space where Generation Alpha forms its linguistic identity. Slang serves as a method of communication, but also as a sign of modernity, digital identity, and membership in a global community. However, high digital exposure does not automatically improve pronunciation accuracy since phonetic skills still need structured practice. Therefore, the study concludes that TikTok can be a fun and relevant medium for learning the English language, but needs to be correctly integrated into formal learning. Teachers can make use of the TikTok content for proper phonetic practice; parents can guide them so that children don't simply end up following digital language trends but instead master the proper pronunciation. With an integrated approach, the use of TikTok will contribute positively toward the development of Generation Alpha's skills in the English language and at the same time, minimize pronunciation errors that may set in their habits.

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