



Jurnal Hata Poda:
Jurnal Pendidikan, Bahasa, dan Sastra Indonesia
<https://jurnal.uinsyahada.ac.id/index.php/hatapoda>
Vol. 04 No. 02 (Desember 2025)
E-ISSN: 2964-6928



Problems with Using Indonesian in Digital Communication and Public Spaces

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Abstract

The use of Indonesian in online communication and public spaces is increasingly changing due to the impact of globalization, technological advances, and societal language habits. The purpose of this study is to identify and explain various forms of deviation in the use of Indonesian in various communication contexts, both spoken and written. The method used was observation with a descriptive qualitative approach. The results of the observations revealed various linguistic problems, such as spelling and punctuation errors, inappropriate sentence structure, non-standard word choice, code-mixing and code-switching, ambiguous or illogical sentences, and language deviations in public spaces such as banners and social media. Several influencing factors include informal communication habits, a lack of awareness of proper and correct language, and the dominance of foreign and regional languages in everyday interactions. These findings demonstrate the importance of improving linguistic literacy in society to maintain the function of Indonesian as a language of unity and national identity, especially in the ever-evolving digital era.

Keywords: *language problems, online communication, public spaces, linguistic deviations, Indonesian.*

Abstrak

Penggunaan Bahasa Indonesia dalam komunikasi daring dan ruang umum semakin mengalami perubahan akibat dampak globalisasi, kemajuan teknologi, serta kebiasaan masyarakat dalam berbahasa. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengenali dan menjelaskan berbagai bentuk penyimpangan dalam penggunaan bahasa Indonesia di berbagai konteks komunikasi, baik yang lisan maupun yang tertulis. Metode yang diterapkan adalah observasi dengan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif. Hasil yang didapat dari observasi menunjukkan berbagai masalah kebahasaan, seperti kesalahan dalam ejaan dan tanda baca, ketidaksesuaian dalam struktur kalimat, pemilihan kata yang tidak sesuai baku, campur kode dan alih kode, kalimat yang ambigu atau tidak logis, serta penyimpangan bahasa di ruang publik seperti spanduk atau media sosial. Beberapa faktor yang mempengaruhi termasuk kebiasaan informal dalam berkomunikasi, kurangnya kesadaran untuk berbahasa yang baik dan benar, serta dominasi bahasa asing dan daerah dalam interaksi sehari-hari. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa penting untuk meningkatkan literasi kebahasaan di masyarakat guna mempertahankan fungsi bahasa Indonesia sebagai bahasa persatuan dan identitas nasional, terutama dalam era digital yang terus berkembang.

Kata Kunci: Masalah bahasa, komunikasi daring, ruang umum, penyimpanan kebahasaan, bahasa Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Indonesian is the national language and the official language of the country, playing a crucial role in social and state life. It holds a crucial position and function in the life of the nation and state. The position of Indonesian is enshrined in the 1928 Youth Pledge and the 1945 Constitution (Dibia & Dewantara 2017:8). The role of Indonesian as the primary means of communication extends beyond education and government administration to the public sphere and digital communication. In the current era of globalization and the development of information technology, the use of Indonesian has undergone a significant transformation, both in terms of form, function, and context. Advances in digital technology, particularly social media and online communication platforms, have created new dynamics in the way people speak. While this provides opportunities to expand the use of Indonesian, it has also led to numerous deviations from standard language rules. According to Zalmansyah (2021), the use of Indonesian in public spaces needs to be adjusted to applicable linguistic rules and regulations to remain in accordance with good and correct language norms.

The rapid and informal nature of digital communication often encourages language users to ignore proper and correct norms in Indonesian. According to (Asari et al., 2023:1), digital communication can be defined as a mechanism for sending messages or information from one sender to another using digital media. The characteristics of digital communication are very different from conventional communication. The first difference is the way information is structured, packaged, and displayed. This phenomenon is evident in the widespread use of non-standard abbreviations, misspellings, illogical sentence structures, and the mixing of foreign or regional languages without considering the context and purpose of the communication. In public contexts, similar things are also not uncommon, such as banners, billboards, announcements, and advertisements that do not follow language rules, thus creating confusion or even double meanings for readers. This situation indicates that the use of Indonesian in public spaces and digital communication still faces a number of fundamental problems.

The problems with the use of Indonesian language seen in digital communication and public spaces reflect an imbalance between ease of communication and responsibility in using language. Language should be an effective and efficient tool for conveying

information, but instead it loses its function due to errors in spelling, word choice, sentence structure, and language logic. For example, in digital communication such as text messages or online conversations, we often encounter the use of mixed words from regional languages, English, and confusing abbreviations. This not only risks reducing the quality of Indonesian but also affects understanding among language users, especially the younger generation who interact more frequently with digital media. Maintaining Indonesian as the national and official language of the country needs to be continuously carried out and developed to become a modern language, namely a language capable of fulfilling its function as a communication tool in various aspects of life (Astuti 2019).

According to Amelia, Putri, and Daulay (2024), in the digital era, Indonesian faces significant challenges in maintaining the authenticity and quality of language use, which often receives less attention.

Based on observations, various forms of language deviation were found, including spelling and punctuation, sentence structure, word choice (diction), code mixing, code switching, and illogical or ambiguous sentences. These deviations appear in various contexts, from everyday conversations in digital media, social media content, YouTube broadcasts, to public speeches. For example, in a chat communication, an expression such as "Ntos selang Brody, barusan cknh bisa buka en bking" was found, which mixes regional languages, non-standard abbreviations, and incorrect spelling of loan words. Furthermore, on banners in public places, phrases such as "jual pulsa: nasi campur petrol" (selling phone credit: rice mixed with gasoline) are confusing in terms of structure and meaning.

This phenomenon demonstrates that many problems in the use of Indonesian are not only technical but also involve social and cultural dimensions. Lack of public awareness of the language, the impact of popular culture, and weak oversight of language use in public spaces contribute to these problems. Therefore, it is crucial to conduct comprehensive research to identify and describe various forms of deviation in Indonesian language use and to understand the background of these issues in the context of communication in the digital world and in public spaces. Fitriyani (2015) emphasized that low mastery of effective sentences contributes to the quality of people's writing and speech. Public awareness and a desire to learn proper and correct Indonesian language use must also be present, so that we can teach our children and future generations the importance of knowing proper and correct Indonesian language, so that Indonesian language does not fade away along with its ongoing identity.

This research is expected to contribute to efforts to preserve and purify the Indonesian language, ensuring its dignity and compliance with existing regulations. Furthermore, this study is crucial as a reflection for society, especially the younger generation, to be more prudent and responsible in their use of Indonesian, both in private and public settings. With a better understanding of existing linguistic issues, it is hoped that there will be an increased collective awareness to protect the purity and beauty of the Indonesian language as part of the nation's identity.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method that aims to fully and in-depthly explain various types of deviations or problems in the use of Indonesian that arise in the realm of digital communication and the public sphere. According to Ramdhan (2021:7-8), descriptive research is a method used to provide explanations regarding the results of a study. The purpose of this type of research is to provide explanations, descriptions, and validation of the phenomena being analyzed. A qualitative approach was chosen because the focus of this research is not on numbers or statistical data, but rather on linguistic phenomena that occur naturally in everyday activities. Researchers seek to understand the context, meaning, and background of language use that differs from existing linguistic rules.

This type of research is qualitative descriptive research, that is, research that explains and depicts language phenomena as they actually appear, without any manipulation or special treatment of the subjects being studied. This approach is suitable for analyzing deviant or non-conforming language use in digital communication (such as interactions on social media, private chats, and online videos) and in public spaces (such as banners, billboards, or advertisements).

The object of this research is the use of Indonesian that does not conform to language rules, including spelling, sentence structure, word choice, and code-switching. The research also examines irrational or unclear language use, as well as errors in spoken and written texts used in public spaces and online media.

The research subjects include language content created by the wider community, both individually and within institutions, across various online platforms and public spaces.

Information was obtained through observations of interactions between friends, public figures, and the media.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The use of Indonesian in various aspects of life today, particularly in digital communication and public settings, faces numerous challenges. Through observations, various types of language deviations have been identified, demonstrating a lack of awareness, caution, and understanding of the rules of proper and correct Indonesian. The following discussion will categorize these issues and provide more in-depth explanations.

a. Spelling and Punctuation Deviations

One of the most common problems is errors in spelling and punctuation. In digital communication, users often simplify words, ignore punctuation, or misplace capital letters. For example, in the sentence "Ntos selang Brody, barusan cknh bisa buka en bking," it appears that the writer ignores periods, uses incorrect capitalization, and includes errors in loan words. According to Fitriyani, Humaira, and Firdaus (2020), this online media outlet still displays various spelling inaccuracies in some of its news items. According to Yunita, Sugono, and Suendarti (2021), the ability to understand punctuation is important for every individual so that the message conveyed in a sentence can be received according to the intended meaning. According to the General Guidelines for Indonesian Spelling (PUEBI), capitalization, periods, and the use of loan words must follow the correct rules to ensure clear communication and avoid confusion. However, in digital communication, which is typically casual, these rules are often ignored for the sake of efficiency and convenience.



Figure 1. Frivate chat with friends

Source: WhatsApp

b. Inaccuracy of Sentence Structure

Sentence structure errors are also a significant problem. In the banner that reads "Blue Natural Drinking Water Is So Beautiful," there is no complete sentence structure containing a subject, predicate, object, and adverb (SPOK). The sentence lacks a clear predicate and its meaning is ambiguous. Prima Harianto (2018) explains that an effective sentence is not just a series of language that has a subject and predicate, but rather how the sentence is able to convey the author's ideas clearly and easily understood by the reader. According to Fitriyani (2015), an effective sentence is a sentence that is precise and clear so that others can understand it easily. Sentences that are said to be effective have characteristics such as being logical, concise, parallel, unified, coherent, and firm.



Figure 2

Source: Google <http://ejournal.undiksha.ac.id>

c. Inaccuracy of Diction

The use of inappropriate word choices is often seen. When speaking on podcasts, public figures like Nadiem Makarim use terms like "yuk," "bikin," and "excited," which demonstrate a mix of casual language, formal language, and terms taken from English. According to Hendrastuti (2015), word choice in language plays an important role because it can influence the impression and meaning produced. According to Mustakim in Tenesia & Thamsin (2019), accurate word choice is related to the ability to choose terms that can convey ideas clearly and that are also well understood by the audience.



Figure 3

Source: Channel Youtube Deddy Corbuzier

d. Code Mixing and Code Switching

The phenomenon of code mixing and code switching is common in communities that speak more than one language. In a YouTube Shorts conversation between Dave and Jo, the simultaneous use of Javanese and English is evident. While this can be seen as a way of communicating, in formal situations, it can make meaning unclear and interfere with understanding. Amri (2019) argues that code mixing is the combination of two or more languages that occurs in language variations in communication situations that require a mixture of these languages, which includes language use events. Meanwhile, code switching is a linguistic phenomenon that occurs in sociolinguistic contexts and is one of the signs that occurs in communities that use two or more languages. Munandar (2018) suggests that code switching and code mixing are natural phenomena that occur in environments that bring together speakers from various regional and linguistic backgrounds, especially in places where routine activities involve interactions between diverse speakers.



Figure 4

Source: Channel Youtube Londokampung

e. Illogical and Ambiguous Sentences

Illogical or confusing sentences can also be seen in online communication. For example, phrases like "yeah om, jdi skip dulu lhh.. ada wayahna deui, skrng Mh wyhna umpul2" exhibit a mixture of local language, foreign terms, and strange abbreviations. This situation makes the sentence difficult to understand, even for people who also speak Indonesian. Ghuftron, Kasiyun, and Hidayat (2020) state that an illogical sentence is a sentence whose meaning does not conform to common sense. They emphasize that the logic of a sentence can be assessed by the appropriateness of the intended meaning. Ambiguity is a phenomenon that can arise when a sentence allows for more than one interpretation or lacks a clear meaning (Milka & Palino, 2021).



Figure 5. Frivate chat with friends

Source: WhatsApp

f. Language Deviation in Public Space

In public spaces, inappropriate language use is a significant issue. A banner reading "Sell phone credit: Nasi campur petrol" is a clear example of structural deviations and confusion of meaning. According to Devianty (2018), deviations in Indonesian are errors in language use that occur repeatedly and regularly due to a lack of understanding of the rules or norms of proper and correct Indonesian. Puspa and Kulup (2018) revealed that in news writing, inaccuracies in word choice are still common, resulting in inaccurate information delivery. This demonstrates a lack of mastery or understanding among media creators regarding how to construct appropriate sentences. Language use in public spaces should serve as an example of good and correct Indonesian, not the opposite.



Figure 6. Writing error on banner

Source: Google menuliskreatif

g. Errors in Oral Discourse

Errors in pronunciation are also a concern, such as those in Prabowo Subianto's speech where he pronounced the word "peace" as "dame." While seemingly trivial, such errors in formal contexts can diminish the speaker's sense of formality and credibility. Zulfa and Cahyani (2025) explain that a person's ability to master a

language significantly determines their success in conveying ideas. They also emphasize that in formal contexts, such as educational and governmental settings, Indonesian is the primary language of choice for various forms of communication. According to Astuti (2016), errors in interpreting discourse can arise in various situations, whether caused by the speaker or the interlocutor, and can occur in both spoken and written discourse. From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the problem of using Indonesian in digital communication and the public sphere involves various interconnected linguistic aspects. Errors in spelling, grammar, word choice, and pronunciation highlight the need to increase public awareness of good and correct language use.

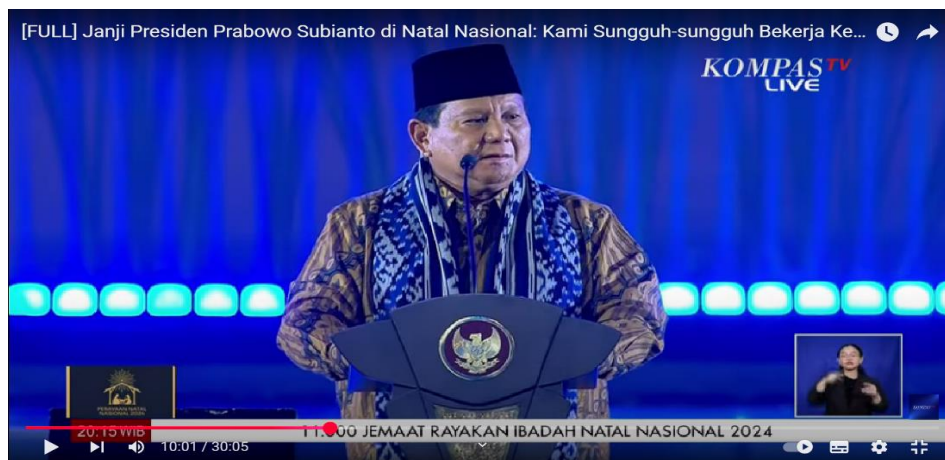


Figure 7. President Prabowo Subianto’s speech

Source: Channel Youtube KOMPASTV

Table 1. Findings of Errors in the Use of Indonesian

No	Linguistic Aspect	Problem Indicator	Findings/Examples	Analysis
1.	Spelling and Punctuation	Capital letters, punctuation, loan words	“Ntos selang Brody, barusan cknh bisa buka en bking”	There is no final punctuation, the use of loan words is not standard, the spelling of “M-

				banking is incorrect.
2.	Sentence Structure	SPOK accuracy, effective sentences	“Biru Air Minum Alami Begitu Indah”	The sentence does not have a clear subject and predicate, it is only an ambiguous phrase.
3.	Word Choice (Diction)	Use of standard and non- standard words	“Yuk bikin excited program yuk” (Nadiem Makarim dalam podcast)	The non-standard words “yuk”, “bikin”, and the loan word “excited” are used in formal situations.
4.	Code Mixing and Code Switching	Mixing foreign asing/regional languages	Percakapan Dave dan Jo (dari Youtube Shorts Londokampung)	The mixed use of Javanese and English show inconsistent code switching.
5.	Illogical or Ambiguous Sentences	Confusing or out-of-context sentences	“iya om, jdi skip dulu lhh..ada wayahna deui, skrng Mh wyahna umpul2	Sentences use a mixture of regional languages and loan wods along with non-standard abbreviations.
6.	Language in	Deviations in	“Jual pulsa: nasi	The sentence is

	Media/Public Speace	banners/advertisments	campur bensin”	confusing because it does not have the correct structure and causes ambiguity in meaning.
7.	Errors in Oral Discourse	Pronunciation or spoken grammar	“merasa dame” (seharusnya “damai”) dalam pidato Prabowo Subianto	Pronunciation errors in formal situations indicate a lack of accuracy in spoken language.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion conducted, it can be concluded that the use of Indonesian in the digital age and public sphere still faces various linguistic problems. These problems include inaccurate spelling and punctuation, inefficient sentence structure, inappropriate diction, the use of code-mixing and code-switching, illogical sentence construction, violations of language rules in the public sphere, and pronunciation errors in formal speech.

These issues demonstrate that despite the widespread use of Indonesian, public awareness of the correct application of language rules remains lacking, particularly in everyday communication and on digital platforms. Furthermore, the lack of attention to language structure and logic in public spaces also reflects the importance of more in-depth language development and education.

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