

ALPHA GENERATION'S LANGUAGE ATTITUDES IN INDONESIAN DIGITAL LITERACY PRACTICES

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Abstract

The rapid development of digital technology has influenced literacy practices and language use among Generation Alpha. This phenomenon affects their language attitudes toward the Indonesian language in digital spaces. This study aims to describe the language attitudes of Generation Alpha in Indonesian digital literacy practices. The research employed a descriptive qualitative method. Data were collected through observation of digital literacy activities, questionnaires, and interviews with Generation Alpha students. Data analysis involved data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that Generation Alpha demonstrates varied language attitudes, including positive, neutral, and negative attitudes. Positive attitudes are reflected in the functional and communicative use of Indonesian, while negative attitudes appear in the excessive use of foreign languages and code-mixing. This study concludes that digital literacy plays a significant role in shaping Generation Alpha's language attitudes, highlighting the need to strengthen digital literacy education oriented toward the preservation of the Indonesian language

Keywords: Language attitude, Generation alpha, Digital literacy

Abstrak

Perkembangan teknologi digital telah memengaruhi praktik literasi dan penggunaan bahasa pada Generasi Alpha. Fenomena ini berdampak pada sikap bahasa mereka terhadap Bahasa Indonesia di ruang digital. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan sikap bahasa Generasi Alpha dalam praktik literasi digital Bahasa Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Data diperoleh melalui observasi aktivitas literasi digital, angket, dan wawancara terhadap peserta didik Generasi Alpha. Analisis data dilakukan melalui tahap reduksi, penyajian data, dan penarikan simpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sikap bahasa Generasi Alpha dalam literasi digital bersifat beragam, meliputi sikap positif, netral, dan negatif. Sikap positif tercermin dari penggunaan Bahasa Indonesia yang komunikatif dan fungsional, sementara sikap negatif tampak pada kecenderungan penggunaan bahasa asing dan campur kode secara berlebihan. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa literasi digital berperan penting dalam membentuk sikap bahasa Generasi Alpha, sehingga diperlukan penguatan pendidikan literasi digital yang berorientasi pada pemertahanan Bahasa Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: Sikap bahasa, Generasi alpha, Literasi digital

I. INTRODUCTION

Advances in digital technology have significantly transformed literacy practices and language usage patterns in society. Generation Alpha, growing up in a digital environment, utilizes digital media as a primary means of interaction, learning, and shaping social identity. This high level of digital media use has implications for their language patterns, particularly in their use of Indonesian, which often overlaps with foreign languages, non-standard varieties, and practices of code-mixing. This situation has given rise to academic attention to the language attitudes of Generation Alpha in the context of digital literacy.

Language attitudes are a form of an individual's internal evaluation of diverse languages, giving rise to varying perspectives on how a person uses language. These perspectives influence an individual's language behavior and can result in positive or negative attitudes toward a language. According to Garvin and Mathiot (1968), language attitudes are classified into several aspects, including language pride, an attitude that encourages individuals to develop and maintain their language as a symbol of identity and social unity. Furthermore, awareness of language norms is reflected in a mindset that emphasizes the importance of using language appropriately, politely, and in accordance with applicable linguistic rules (Fitriyah & Turistiani, 2024).

According to Sri Puji, Generation Alpha is a generation that grew up in an environment saturated with technological advancements and enjoys easy digital access in everyday life. This generation possesses a high ability to access information and is considered more adaptive than previous generations. Currently, the oldest members of Generation Alpha are around 12 years old and are in a transitional phase to the next level of development. Generation Alpha was born after Generation Z, between 2010 and 2025. This generation is characterized by an instant lifestyle, freedom of expression and creativity, high levels of self-confidence, a need for recognition, ease of access to information, and strong skills in using digital devices.

In the context of digital literacy, Generation Alpha has distinct characteristics from previous generations, such as Generation Z and Generation Y, which experienced technological developments during a transitional period. For Generation Alpha, digital technology is an integral part of daily life, demonstrating a high level of proficiency in its use. Open and relatively unfiltered access to technology and information allows Generation

Alpha to interact intensively with a variety of digital content. This has a significant impact on various aspects of their lives, from lifestyle and mindset to learning styles and even language usage patterns. Therefore, digital literacy is a crucial aspect in shaping Generation Alpha's critical awareness, including their use of Indonesian in the digital space (Sri Puji Rahayu, Jumadi, 2024).

Previous research indicates that Generation Alpha grew up in a digital ecosystem with highly open access to information, necessitating a critical mastery of digital literacy grounded in character values (Mardiana, 2025). These digital literacy practices impact language usage patterns, characterized by, among other things, the use of non-standard varieties and code-mixing, reflecting the younger generation's language attitudes in the digital space. However, studies specifically examining Generation Alpha's language attitudes in the context of Indonesian digital literacy are still relatively limited.

On the other hand, Ariyana and Purawinangun (2021) in their article entitled "Character Education Development for Students Through Online Indonesian Language Learning" emphasized that online Indonesian language learning not only influences students' cognitive aspects but also their affective aspects, including their attitudes and character in language. These findings indicate that digital spaces play a strategic role in shaping students' language awareness and attitudes. However, most research still focuses on adolescents or students in general, making research specifically examining the language attitudes of Generation Alpha in Indonesian digital literacy practices crucial to filling this gap (Ariyana, 2021). However, studies specifically highlighting Generation Alpha's language attitudes in Indonesian digital literacy practices are still relatively limited.

Based on this background, this study aims to describe the language attitudes of Generation Alpha in Indonesian digital literacy practices. This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of sociolinguistics and digital literacy studies, as well as practical benefits as a reference for educators and policymakers in designing digital literacy learning oriented towards strengthening positive attitudes towards Indonesian. In addition, the results of this study are expected to serve as evaluation and reflection material for schools in fostering good and responsible language awareness among students in the digital space.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design to examine the language attitudes of Generation Alpha students in Indonesian digital literacy practices. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to comprehensively understand linguistic phenomena, considering the social context and language use in the digital environment. A descriptive design was used to describe the tendencies in language attitudes that emerge without any treatment or intervention for the research subjects. The study population included Generation Alpha students who actively utilize digital media for learning and communication. The sample was selected purposively, considering the intensity of digital media use and the subjects' involvement in digital literacy practices. As recommended in qualitative research (Safrudin et al., 2023), the instruments used in this study included observation sheets and interview guidelines. Data collection was conducted by observing digital literacy activities and conducting interviews to gain a deeper understanding of the data obtained. Data analysis was conducted qualitatively through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Qomaruddin & Sa'diyah, 2024). Language attitudes were analyzed by classifying them into positive, neutral, and negative categories based on language attitude indicators. The research findings are then presented descriptively to describe the tendencies of Generation Alpha's language attitudes in Indonesian digital literacy practices.

III. RESEARCH RESULTS

The research also shows that the context in which digital media is used influences variations in Generation Alpha's language attitudes. In the context of online learning, students tend to display more positive language attitudes by using Indonesian in a more orderly and formal manner. Conversely, in everyday communication on social media, students' language attitudes tend to be more flexible, characterized by the use of non-standard language styles, abbreviations, and code-mixing. These differences in context indicate that Generation Alpha's language attitudes are situational and heavily influenced by prevailing communication norms in the digital space.

In addition to the context of use, the intensity of interaction with digital media is also a factor influencing Generation Alpha's language attitudes. Students with high levels of digital media use tend to use language more freely and pragmatically. This situation indicates that digital literacy practices without guidance and reinforcement of linguistic values have the

potential to shape language attitudes that are less supportive of the proper use of Indonesian. Therefore, the results of this study emphasize the importance of digital literacy education that is oriented not only toward technological skills but also toward developing positive and responsible language attitudes.

The findings regarding variations in language attitudes can be interpreted based on Garvin and Mathiot's (1968) theory of language attitudes, which encompasses language pride and awareness of language norms (Ni Luh Pt, 2023). Positive language attitudes demonstrated by students reflect pride in Indonesian and an awareness of using it appropriately in context. Conversely, neutral and negative language attitudes indicate a weakening of both aspects, particularly in the use of language in informal and free digital spaces. Therefore, strengthening language pride and awareness of language norms needs to be an integral part of digital literacy practices so that Indonesian continues to function as an identity and a dignified means of communication for Generation Alpha. Based on observations and in-depth interviews, several research findings were obtained, which are discussed below.

1. Positive Language Attitudes of Generation Alpha

Positive language attitudes were seen in some students who consistently use Indonesian as a means of communication in digital literacy practices. This attitude is reflected in the use of Indonesian as the primary language in online learning activities, both when expressing ideas in virtual discussions, composing academic responses on digital learning media, and establishing formal communication with teachers. Students in this category demonstrate an understanding of Indonesian's position as the national language and medium of instruction. Furthermore, they demonstrate a tendency to maintain politeness and use language forms that are relatively consistent with linguistic rules, even when interactions occur in a digital environment that tends to be flexible.

2. Neutral Language Attitudes of Generation Alpha

Neutral language attitudes are evident in students who use Indonesian contextually and orientate themselves toward practical communication. In digital literacy practices, this group tends to use Indonesian in academic activities, such as participating in online learning and completing assignments through digital media. Conversely, in informal interactions on social media, students prefer to use flexible language variations, including mixed language,

abbreviations, and non-standard forms. This pattern indicates that Indonesian still functions as a primary means of communication, but its use is not yet fully accompanied by pride in the language and awareness of linguistic norms. This condition indicates a difference in language orientation between academic environments and informal digital spaces, which impacts the consistency of students' language attitudes.

3. Negative Language Attitudes of Generation Alpha

Negative language attitudes are evident in students who tend to rely heavily on foreign languages and practice code-mixing in digital literacy activities. In this group, foreign languages, particularly English, are often the primary choice in digital interactions, even when communication takes place in the context of Indonesian. This pattern is reflected in the dominance of foreign terms in online conversations, the use of short responses that combine elements of foreign languages and Indonesian, and vocabulary choices that do not consider contextual appropriateness. Furthermore, the use of non-standard language varieties, excessive use of abbreviations, and disregard for linguistic rules are other characteristics of negative language attitudes. This condition indicates students' low awareness of the function and position of Indonesian as the national language and language of instruction in the digital space.

DISCUSSION

1. Language Attitudes of Generation Alpha from the Perspective of Language Attitude Theory

The intensity of digital literacy practices in the daily lives of Generation Alpha significantly influences the formation of their language attitudes. Generation Alpha grew up in a digital environment that offers fast, broad, and relatively unlimited access to information, so from an early age they were exposed to diverse forms of language use. This exposure originates not only from learning activities but also from social media and various digital platforms, which serve as the primary interaction spaces for this generation. These conditions shape flexible and pragmatic language tendencies, while also influencing how Generation Alpha interprets the function and position of Indonesian in digital communication.

The results of this study align with the findings of Sumartini (2025), who stated that advances in digital technology play a significant role in shaping Generation Alpha's language behavior, particularly through the use of slang, the adoption of foreign terms, and the

tendency to simplify language in digital communication. Continuous exposure to these language varieties has led to the increasing prevalence of code-mixing and the use of non-standard varieties in the digital space. This demonstrates that digital literacy is not only related to technical aspects but also has a direct impact on the language attitudes of the younger generation (Sumartini, 2025). Furthermore, she emphasized that digital literacy needs to be directed at strengthening language values and awareness so that the younger generation can use language wisely and responsibly. Without adequate guidance, digital literacy practices have the potential to shape language attitudes that are less supportive of maintaining Indonesian, such as the dominant use of foreign languages and the disregard for linguistic norms. Therefore, digital literacy needs to be positioned as a strategic tool in forming language attitudes and awareness, not just mastery of technology.

Thus, integrating digital literacy with language education is a crucial aspect in shaping the language attitudes of Generation Alpha. Digital literacy education that emphasizes pride in Indonesian and awareness of linguistic norms is expected to foster positive language attitudes. This effort is crucial so that Generation Alpha not only possesses technological skills but also language attitudes that support the preservation and dignity of Indonesian in the digital space.

2. Digital Literacy and the Formation of Generation Alpha's Language Attitudes

Generation Alpha's intense involvement in digital literacy practices has a strong influence on the formation of language attitudes and patterns of Indonesian use in the digital space. This generation grew up in an environment heavily influenced by technology, so communication, accessing information, and learning processes often take place through digital media. This situation fosters the formation of language usage patterns that tend to be flexible, efficient, and practical, which in turn influences how Generation Alpha understands the function and position of Indonesian in various communication situations.

The findings of this study align with the findings of Vera et al. (2025), which showed that digital literacy plays a significant role in shaping the mindset, behavior, and communication styles of Generation Alpha. The high dependence on digital media encourages this generation to use language more freely, such as the use of non-standard varieties, slang, and code-mixing practices in digital interactions. This phenomenon indicates that digital literacy is not solely related to mastery of technical aspects, but also has a direct

impact on the younger generation's linguistic attitudes towards Indonesian (Vera Dewi Susanti et al., 2025). Furthermore, Vera et al. (2025) emphasized that strengthening digital literacy in Generation Alpha needs to be accompanied by character development, ethics, and linguistic values. Without adequate guidance, digital literacy practices have the potential to shape linguistic attitudes that do not support the correct use of Indonesian, such as low awareness of linguistic norms and reduced pride in the national language. This suggests that digital literacy should be directed not only at technological mastery, but also at developing linguistic attitudes and awareness.

Thus, digital literacy needs to be positioned as a strategic tool in shaping the language attitudes of Generation Alpha. Integrating digital literacy with language education is a crucial step in instilling pride in the Indonesian language and awareness of linguistic norms. Through this approach, Generation Alpha is expected to not only possess the competence to utilize digital technology but also develop positive and responsible language attitudes, so that Indonesian continues to serve as a dignified identity and means of communication amidst the dynamics of digital transformation.

3. Implications of Generation Alpha's Language Attitudes for the Preservation of Indonesian

The diversity of language attitudes demonstrated by Generation Alpha in digital literacy practices has important implications for efforts to preserve Indonesian in the era of digital transformation. Positive language attitudes, reflected through the conscious, polite, and appropriate use of Indonesian in the digital space, have the potential to strengthen the role of Indonesian as the national language and language of education. When Generation Alpha consistently uses Indonesian in digital literacy activities, both in online learning and formal communication, the language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a representation of linguistic identity that is continuously practiced and preserved.

Conversely, the emergence of neutral and negative language attitudes characterized by a tendency to use mixed languages, the dominance of foreign vocabulary, and a disregard for linguistic norms can weaken the position of Indonesian in the digital space. If this trend continues without adequate guidance, Indonesian has the potential to experience a shift in function, especially among the younger generation who have a high intensity of digital media use. This is in line with the findings of Abdurrozak and Hilalludin (2025) who showed that

social media, particularly TikTok, plays a significant role in shaping the language habits and vocabulary patterns of Generation Alpha, including the emergence of new terms that often deviate from standard linguistic rules. This phenomenon confirms that the digital space is a strategic arena in determining the direction of the development and maintenance of Indonesian (Abdurrozak, 2025). Furthermore, Abdurrozak and Hilalludin (2025) revealed that the use of slang and viral vocabulary on social media reflects the linguistic creativity of Generation Alpha, but also presents a serious challenge to language maintenance. This linguistic creativity has the potential to have a positive impact if directed appropriately, but can have a negative impact if not balanced with awareness of linguistic norms. In this context, language attitudes become a determining factor in whether digital literacy practices will contribute to the enrichment or decline of the quality of Indonesian language use among the younger generation.

Therefore, the findings of this study emphasize the importance of integrating digital literacy with language education, oriented towards strengthening language attitudes. Digital literacy education should not only focus on developing technical skills in utilizing digital media, but also need to instill pride in Indonesian and an awareness of linguistic rules. This view emphasizes that language preservation does not solely depend on policies or regulations, but rather on the attitudes and language practices of its speakers in everyday life, including in the digital space. Therefore, the implications of Generation Alpha's language attitudes for the preservation of Indonesian require the active involvement of educators, parents, and educational institutions in developing character-based digital literacy. Through appropriate mentoring, the digital space can be utilized as a strategic tool to strengthen the function of Indonesian, rather than as a threat to its sustainability. Positive language attitudes based on normative awareness are expected to enable Generation Alpha to become agents of Indonesian preservation that are adaptive to technological developments while remaining grounded in national linguistic identity.

IV. CONCLUSION

The results of this study reveal that Generation Alpha's language attitudes in Indonesian digital literacy practices exhibit diverse and contextual characteristics, reflected through positive, neutral, and negative language attitudes. This diversity of attitudes demonstrates that digital literacy serves not merely as a means of developing language skills but also as a

strategic space in shaping the language attitudes and awareness of the younger generation. These findings confirm that Generation Alpha's language attitudes are influenced by the context in which language is used, the intensity of interaction in digital spaces, and the role of education in shaping their language orientation.

From a theoretical perspective, the results of this study reinforce the relevance of the concept of language attitudes proposed by Garvin and Mathiot, particularly regarding aspects of language pride and awareness of linguistic norms. Positive language attitudes reflect pride in Indonesian and awareness of using language appropriately in the communication context, while neutral and negative language attitudes indicate a weakening of both aspects, particularly in the digital environment that tends to be free and informal. Thus, this study broadens understanding of the application of language attitude theory in the context of digital literacy among Generation Alpha.

Furthermore, this study confirms that digital literacy has a direct impact on efforts to maintain Indonesian. Digital literacy practices that are not accompanied by strengthening linguistic values have the potential to encourage language shift, while digital literacy integrated with language education can strengthen the role of Indonesian as the national language and the language of instruction in the digital space. Therefore, digital literacy needs to be positioned as a strategic tool in developing language attitudes that support the preservation and dignity of Indonesian amidst the dynamics of digital transformation.

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