THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON SYNONYMS IN EVERYDAY LANGUAGE FROM A SEMANTIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract This study aims to examine how social media affects semantic changes in the use of everyday language, particularly in synonym usage. The objective is to explore the impact of social media on the semantic shift and variation of synonyms in daily communication. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed in this research. The data were collected through observation of language use on social media platforms such as Twitter and TikTok, supported by documentation and analysis of user-generated content that showcases frequent synonym usage. The findings reveal that social media significantly influences the choice and meaning of synonyms in everyday language, often encouraging more expressive, creative, and informal word usage. Additionally, the study highlights several forms of semantic shifts, such as broadening, narrowing, and meaning change, which are driven by social and cultural interactions in the digital space. These results demonstrate that social media plays a crucial role in shaping contemporary language dynamics from a semantic perspective.
Keywords: Communication, Language, Semantics, Social Media, Synonyms

Abstrak Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bagaimana media sosial memengaruhi perubahan semantik dalam penggunaan bahasa sehari-hari, khususnya dalam penggunaan sinonim. Tujuan utama penelitian ini adalah untuk mengeksplorasi dampak media sosial terhadap pergeseran semantik dan variasi sinonim dalam komunikasi sehari-hari. Pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Data dikumpulkan melalui pengamatan penggunaan bahasa di platform media sosial seperti Twitter dan TikTok, didukung oleh dokumentasi dan analisis konten yang dihasilkan pengguna yang menampilkan penggunaan sinonim yang sering. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa media sosial secara signifikan mempengaruhi pilihan dan makna sinonim dalam bahasa sehari-hari, seringkali mendorong penggunaan kata yang lebih ekspresif, kreatif, dan informal. Selain itu, penelitian ini menyoroti beberapa bentuk pergeseran semantik, seperti perluasan, penyempitan, dan perubahan makna, yang dipicu oleh interaksi sosial dan budaya di ruang digital. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa media sosial memainkan peran krusial dalam membentuk dinamika bahasa kontemporer dari perspektif semantik.
Kata Kunci: Komunikasi, Bahasa, Semantik, Media Sosial, Sinonim

INTRODUCTION

One of the most basic aspects of human nature is language. Language serves as a communication tool that enables people to share their ideas, emotions, and experiences with one another. Language is not a static thing; rather, it is always changing and evolving. The social, cultural, and technological dynamics of society are reflected in this process of transformation. Language has a significant impact on society. Language serves as a tool for social and cultural identity construction in addition to being a medium of communication. Communication through language promotes social engagement and the sharing of knowledge. People in a culture can use language to express their thoughts, ideas, and desires to other people. Every language has certain structures and models

related to orthography, pronunciation, and intended meaning. A language-speaking group's age, education, religion, occupation, and regional cultural background are some of the factors that can contribute to language variety (Ertika, 2019).

The cultural aspects of society have been impacted by communication and information technology advancements over time, particularly in the information technology era's use of social media. The way people connect and communicate has changed significantly as a result of the emergence of digital technology. One result of these technical developments is social media, which has grown into a broad and all-encompassing communication platform that enables instantaneous connections and information sharing. In addition to offering a forum for communication, social media sites like Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok also have an impact on linguistic usage trends. To fulfill the demands of quick and effective communication, new vocabulary, more casual communication methods, and even innovations in sentence structure have emerged within the social media ecosystem.

Social media's impact on language extends beyond modifications to form and style; it also affects semantics, or the meaning of the words employed. As a result of digital culture, certain terms acquire new meanings or connotations. In certain instances, new terminology that are more well-liked by social media users may even take the place of outdated ones. This phenomena demonstrates how social media is a major force behind semantic development, altering how people perceive and use words.

The study of the meaning of words, phrases, sentences, and texts is known as semantics (Ramli et al., 2023). Analyzing the meaning of words and phrases as well as the connection between meaning and context is known as semantics. The Greek word "semantikos," meaning "relating to meaning," is where the word "semantics" originates. The term "semantics" in linguistics refers to the study of language meaning, which includes analyzing the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences as well as how they are understood and communicated. Synonyms, antonyms, hypernyms, hyponyms, polysemy, and homophones are among the fundamental ideas that make up semantics. Semantics is the study of meaning in context, including how words are interpreted in texts and sentences. Understanding semantics is crucial in daily communication to make sure the recipient understands what is being said. As a component of semantics' meaning relations, synonyms are crucial for improving language and communication. According to Saeed

(2009), synonyms are words that signify the same thing or almost the same thing, even though their usage may vary depending on the situation. According to Wijana (2016), synonyms in language are frequently incomplete, with meanings changing depending on the context or linguistic style. Preference for particular synonyms in the social media context is frequently impacted by popularity and efficiency, which reflects the cultural dynamics of digital communication.

Semantically speaking, synonyms reflect social and cultural factors in addition to enhancing linguistic variety. Some synonyms could pick up new implications or meanings that are pertinent to digital culture. This phenomena demonstrates how social media affects synonym usage choices and semantic change in daily communication.

Based on the above explanation, the researcher is interested to research "The Effect of Social Media on Synonyms in Everyday Language from a Semantic Perspective".

PREVIOUS WORKS

There are some previous researches, such as:

1. A Tale of Two Laws of Semantic Change: Predicting Synonym Changes with Distributional Semantic Models. The researchers for this study are Bastien Liétard, Mikaela Keller, and Pascal Denis. This study investigates how the meanings of words evolve over time, particularly focusing on the phenomenon of synonymy. The research examines two competing hypotheses in historical linguistics: the Law of Differentiation (LD), which posits that synonyms tend to take on different meanings over time, and the Law of Parallel Change (LPC), which suggests that synonyms undergo the same semantic change and remain synonymous. The study addresses two main questions: (1) To what extent do LD and LPC apply to historical synonym pairs? (2) What computational approaches can effectively predict the persistence or disappearance of synonymy over time? The researchers employed a dataset of English synonyms from 1890 and 1990, utilizing both unsupervised and supervised computational methods based on Distributional Semantic Models (DSMs). The findings indicate that a significant percentage (55-80%) of synonyms from 1890 are no longer synonymous in 1990, providing empirical evidence in favor of LD. The study highlights challenges such

as polysemy and the confusion between synonymy and hypernymy, and it proposes a framework for evaluating models of semantic change.

2. The Use of Synonyms in Warganet Comments on Kumparan's YouTube Channel Titled "Indonesia Dinobatkan Lagi Jadi Negara Paling Dermawan di Dunia 2021Indonesia Dinobatkan Lagi Jadi Negara Paling Dermawan di Dunia 2021". Walda Tria Fitriana, Anita Widjajanti, and Yoga Yolanda conducted this research. The purpose of this study is to describe the use of synonyms in netizen comments and identify the types of synonyms used. Qualitative descriptive method was applied in this study. Data were collected from netizens' comments on a YouTube video announcing Indonesia as the most generous country, focusing on comments containing synonyms. The results show that there are three forms of synonym usage: (1) synonyms between words and words, (2) synonyms between words and phrases, and (3) synonyms between phrases and phrases. The findings show that the use of synonyms serves to emphasize comments, express emotions, and complete sentences, with the proportion of synonyms between words and words reaching 60%, synonyms between words and phrases 25%, and synonyms between phrases and phrases 15%.

3. Language Change in Social Media. The researchers for this study are Syamsul Bahri, Elisa Betty Manullang, Putri Syah Nadillah Sihombing, and Kevin Enzo Eleazar. This study explores the phenomenon of language change occurring in social media platforms. The research focuses on how users often deviate from standard language norms, leading to confusion in understanding meanings. The study aims to answer two primary questions: (1) What types of language changes are observed in social media? (2) How do these changes manifest across different social media platforms? The researchers conducted a qualitative study, gathering data from various social media applications, including Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook. The analysis revealed that semantic change was the most significant type of language change, accounting for 32% of the observed changes, followed by vocabulary change (26%), syntax change (13%), morphological changes (10%), and phonological change (9%). The findings indicate that social media users frequently create new meanings and forms, reflecting the dynamic nature of language in digital communication.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach because it is suitable for thoroughly describing the phenomenon of synonym use in everyday language influenced by social media from a semantic point of view. Sugiyono (2009) states that this method is used to investigate the state of natural things, with the researcher serving as a crucial tool and information gathered using documentation, interviewing, and observation methods. This method aims to accurately, objectively, and methodically describe the facts and features of a specific population or region. The descriptive qualitative method used in this study enables researchers to document the meaning, subtleties, and variances in synonym usage that arise in people's digital interactions, particularly on social media.

The subjects of this study are active social media users who interact on platforms such as Twitter, TikTok, and Instagram, and also review several scientific sources. This group was chosen because of their tendency to use creative and dynamic language on social media, including the use of synonyms in everyday discourse. This study uses survey research. The data analysis method in survey research consists of two steps, namely interpreting the meaning of data, evaluating data, and concluding data analysis. The collected data—originating from social media observations, textual analysis, and limited interviews—are first classified based on types of synonyms, contexts of usage, and the social media platforms where they appear. Subsequently, patterns and semantic shifts are identified and interpreted in light of relevant semantic theories. This analytical strategy enables the researcher to explore how social media influences the selection and meaning of synonyms in daily communication, aligning with the objectives of the study.

DATA ANALYSIS, RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data Analysis

a. **Synonymy**

Synonymy is a relationship between two or more words that have the same or nearly the same meaning, but often differ in nuance, style, or context of use. Saeed (2009) defines synonyms as words that can replace each other in some contexts, although they are not always completely identical. Wijana (2016) also states that synonyms in language are partial, which means that not all words that have similar meanings can be used in the same situation. Synonyms serve to enrich the language and provide speakers with options

in conveying ideas more precisely. In everyday communication, synonyms allow speakers to choose the word that best suits the context, purpose or style of communication. For example, the words "big" and "giant" have similar basic meanings but differ in intensity and connotation. "Giant" tends to be used to reinforce a visual image or a more visceral emotion. In semantic studies, synonyms not only enhance language but also offer flexibility in message delivery; their variety enables speakers to select words that best fit the context and communication goal.

This dynamic change in synonym usage is a reflection of how language is changing in digital environments. People choose phrases that are more emotionally resonant or culturally popular in large part due to the influence of social media, especially sites like Twitter and TikTok. Users frequently use synonyms that are more emotive, casual, or contextually popular—even if they are not conventionally interchangeable—in an effort to communicate their reactions rapidly and effectively. This linguistic flexibility supports the notion that language is both socially created and digitally altered by demonstrating how social media creates new meanings as well as new patterns of synonym preference in everyday conversation.

Language is changing rapidly and dynamically on social media, particularly on Twitter and TikTok. Despite the fact that synonyms have different meanings, people frequently use them interchangeably to convey their thoughts or sentiments. For instance, on TikTok, the term "keren" is sometimes substituted with "gokil" to describe something exceptional, whereas "mantap" might be used to convey admiration or approval. Even while the word "epic" originally referred to anything huge or large, it is also frequently used to describe things that are fascinating or astounding. This phenomenon shows how social media influences word preference in everyday communication, with more expressive and casual use of synonyms.

b.   **Social Media**

According to Puspitarini, D. S., & Nuraeni, R. (2019), social media is an online platform that enables users to engage, collaborate, share, establish virtual social connections, and represent themselves (Nasrullah, 2015: 11). Social media is accessible through computers and smartphones and includes a variety of communication formats, including text, photos, and videos. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as a collection of web-based apps that are based on Web 2.0 technology and philosophy,

allowing for the production and sharing of user-generated content. In Indonesia, social media is growing quickly, and the number of users rises annually. Indonesia will rank among the nations with the highest numbers of social media users worldwide by 2023, with over 170 million users, according to research from We Are Social and Hootsuite.

Social media's explosive growth has had a profound impact on how people communicate, particularly in daily online interactions. Social media encourages linguistic innovation and speeds up the spread of new terms, including differences in synonym usage, as it emerges as a major platform for informal communication. In addition to giving users the means of creative self-expression, platforms like Twitter and TikTok also influence language usage and perception, especially with regard to word choice and meaning. Here are some examples of frequent synonym usage on Twitter and TikTok, illustrating how flexible word choice can be in a social media context:

- Keren vs. Gokil – *"Wah, itu keren banget sih!"* vs. *"Gokil banget sih itu!"*
- Mantap vs. Epic – *"Makanan ini mantap banget!"* vs. *"Ini epic banget!"*
- Bagus vs. Keren – *"Film itu bagus banget!"* vs. *"Film itu keren banget!"*
- Lucu vs. Gokil – *"Video ini lucu banget!"* vs. *"Video ini gokil abis!"*
- Semangat vs. Gas – *"Ayo semangat ya!"* vs. *"Gas terus, jangan berhenti!"*

The selection and interpretation of synonyms is one area where social media has a particularly noticeable impact on common language. Because to prevailing trends, cultural quirks, or viral usage, people frequently prefer some synonyms over others in digital settings where succinctness, relatability, and emotional resonance are crucial. As a result, the range of synonyms has decreased, with certain phrases becoming more common due to their popularity and others becoming less common. For instance, while *bagus*, *keren*, and *mantap* may all convey a sense of approval, social media users tend to prefer *keren* or *epic* for their perceived modern or youthful connotation. Such choices demonstrate how social media can subtly alter the semantic weight of a word, promoting certain meanings while diminishing others. As a result, this dynamic affects not only the development of individual word meanings but also the social usage of language, giving priority to relevance, involvement, and the display of one's digital identity. From a semantic perspective, this illustrates a continuing trend in which digital culture, rather than conventional lexical norms, is increasingly influencing synonym usage.

c.   Semantics Perspective

The study of meaning in language is known as semantics. It involves analyzing how words, phrases, and sentences acquire distinct meanings according on the context in which they are employed. The study of semantics focuses on the connection between signals (words or phrases) and their meanings, as well as how such meanings might alter over time and in various situations. The area of language structure known as semantics deals with the meaning of expression and the structure of speech meaning. The science of word meaning is another definition of semantics (Suhardi. Introduction to General Linguistics. (Jokjakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2013), pp. 68) in Gani, S. (2019). Meaning encompasses the significance of speech, the role that linguistic units play in comprehending perception, and the behavior of individuals or groups. Linguistic meaning change is a common phenomenon that can be categorized into three types: meaning expansion, where a word acquires a new, broader meaning, like "mouse," which now refers to a computer device; meaning narrowing, where a word becomes more specific, like "meat," which now more frequently refers to animal meat; and contextual meaning change, where a word's meaning varies depending on the context, like "cool," which means "cool" in an informal context but "cold" in a temperature context. Terms like "spam," which originally referred to canned food items but is now more commonly used to describe unwanted emails, and "selfie," which describes a picture of oneself taken with a mobile phone camera, are specific instances of semantic shift.

From a semantic point of view, the impact of social media on synonym usage shows a clear pattern of meaning variation and change. As social media platforms like Twitter and TikTok continue to dominate communication patterns, users often repurpose existing words, particularly synonyms, to fit new digital contexts. These shifts are not just stylistic, but reflect deeper semantic processes such as meaning broadening, narrowing, or contextual reinterpretation. For example, words like *gokil* and *epic*, once used in specific informal or hyperbolic contexts, have broadened in meaning and are now often used synonymously with *keren* to express general admiration or excitement. This phenomena supports the semantic theory, which holds that meaning is dynamic and ever-changing according to usage, cultural norms, and technology contexts. Users choose synonyms that are more expressive, trendy, or emotionally resonant in the digital age, where relatability and brevity are crucial. Because social media speeds up the adoption

or modification of particular meanings, it thus plays a crucial role in semantic change. A deeper comprehension of how common language changes in response to media influence is made possible by examining synonym usage via a semantic lens. Additionally, it shows how meaning is jointly negotiated in online groups, demonstrating the critical role that digital communication plays in influencing language usage in modern society.

Finding

Based on the data analysis presented in the previous chapter, the researcher found that social media, especially platforms such as Twitter and TikTok, have a significant influence on the use and perception of synonyms in everyday language. The results demonstrate how the digital environment changes the subtleties, frequencies, and semantic functions of words in casual communication in addition to promoting the exchange of words with related meanings. From a semantic standpoint, these results demonstrate dynamic patterns of language change driven by emotional expressions, cultural trends, and digital interaction methods.

Users' propensity to favor some synonyms over others depending on factors like expressive strength, relatedness, or popularity is one of the main conclusions. For instance, when describing something spectacular, users are more likely to use the terms "keren" and "epic" than "bagus" since they have a more emotional impact and fit the conversational tone of social media. These selections show changes in the way meaning is allocated and perceived in digital contexts, in addition to stylistic preferences. Additionally, the fact that terms like "gokil," "mantap," and "keren" are frequently used interchangeably indicates that consumers are more interested in resonance and involvement than in exact definitions. This practice's creation of semantic overlap is indicative of a larger trend of contextual reinterpretation, in which words are modified to accommodate the spontaneity and inventiveness of online social interactions. These findings suggest that:

1. Rather than following exact dictionary definitions, synonym selection is more influenced by emotional tone and cultural relevance.
2. The usage of many words on digital platforms causes their meanings to change contextually and semantically.
3. Social media has evolved into a space where people actively negotiate language, working together to give well-known terms new or enlarged meanings.

4. Social media language reflects a blend of social expressive and semantic purposes, leading to unofficial innovations that could eventually impact mainstream usage.

This insight provides a clearer understanding of how synonyms function in the context of modern digital communication, emphasizing that language development is no longer confined to formal environments but is dynamically shaped by online social interactions.

Discussion

Research outcomes demonstrate that the development of social media has significantly shaped how language is used in daily communication. Platforms such as Twitter and TikTok, which prioritize brevity, spontaneity, and creativity, have become fertile ground for the emergence of new linguistic patterns, including the preference and dominance of certain synonyms. From a semantic perspective, this transformation reveals both lexical shifts and pragmatic adaptations in how people express similar meanings with different lexical choices. Social media, frequently based on trends, memes, or viral material, makes it easier for specific words or expressions to spread quickly and widely. Consequently, certain synonyms gain dominance over others—not because they are more semantically superior, but rather because of user preference and cultural popularity. For instance, while "keren," "gokil," "mantap," and "epic" all express appreciation or enthusiasm, the audience, social context, and platform rules frequently impact the decision between them. In contrast to "epic," which is derived from international internet slang and reflects cross-cultural influences in digital communication, "gokil" may have a more funny or informal nuance.

This phenomena illustrates a semantic shift, in which words' meanings become increasingly ambiguous and occasionally unrelated to their original context. For example, in informal internet environments, the English word "epic," which historically denotes something large or heroic, is now frequently used to describe anything remarkable or interesting. Similarly, the word "gas," which originally meant fuel, has come to mean inspiration or encouragement (e.g., "Gas terus!"). These changes demonstrate the dynamic connection between sociolinguistics and semantics, where meaning is created by social interaction and digital community norms in addition to dictionary definitions. As a result, social media serves as a vehicle for semantic change as well as a medium for expression. Although this development increases linguistic

diversity, it may also decrease lexical diversity if some synonyms become less common and others are consistently preferred.

The results show that the usage of synonyms in everyday language is significantly impacted by social media. Certain synonyms become more prevalent, meanings change, and semantic preferences are reshaped by digital culture, contextual adaption, and collective behavior. These observations highlight the significance of looking at language change from the perspective of changing digital interaction as well as formal structures.

CONCLUSION

This study comes to the conclusion that social media influences the use of synonyms in everyday language, especially in digital communication on platforms such as Twitter and TikTok. The findings show that users tend to choose synonyms based not only on meaning, but also on the social and emotional contexts shaped by digital culture. Words such as "cool," "gokil," "epik," and "mantap" are used interchangeably to express the same sentiment, although semantically they may contain different nuances. This flexible use of synonyms illustrates the semantic shifts and lexical adaptations that occur in informal digital interactions.

From a semantic perspective, social media's effect propels the dominance of particular vocabulary choices, which frequently results in meaning shifts and the simplification of synonymous variations. The demand for relatedness, emotional focus, and conciseness in communication is what is causing these shifts. Furthermore, the context of usage, viral trends, and popularity all have a significant impact on synonym preferences, demonstrating how language changes in reaction to social dynamics in the online world. Overall, our research demonstrates that social media is not only a communication tool but also a potent linguistic field that is continuously altering how language, particularly synonyms, is used and perceived in daily life.

Several recommendations may be made based on the findings of this study regarding the effect of social media on the use of synonyms in everyday language from a semantic perspective. First and foremost, language teachers and educators should consider integrating current language trends found in social media into learning activities to help students recognize how meanings can shift in different contexts. This will not only make learning more relevant but also foster critical awareness of semantic variation. Second, content creators and social media users are encouraged to be more mindful of

synonym usage and its potential to influence public language habits, especially when certain terms may lose their original meaning. Third, linguistic researchers are suggested to conduct further studies involving a larger sample and broader social media platforms, which may uncover deeper patterns of synonym variation and semantic shifts in digital communication. Finally, curriculum developers should also consider the impact of digital culture on language use and reflect such realities in language education policies and materials.

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