

**Influence of Friendship Circles on Variations in English Language Style Among University Students****Sahrin W. Arianti Ali¹, Amelia Ramadhani R. Ente², Marsela Hasan Rahim³, Jesira Meisara Kaloh⁴, Rahman Taufiqrianto Dako⁵, Adriansyah Abu Katili⁶**

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Abstract

This study investigates how friendship circles influence university students' English language styles, focusing specifically on pronunciation adaptation and communication patterns. The research employed a descriptive qualitative design supported by quantitative data, involving 10 purposively selected students from an English Language Education Program in Indonesia. Data were collected using an online questionnaire consisting of multiple-choice and open-ended questions, then analyzed using three-step model: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal four key patterns of language variation shaped by peer interaction: (1) pronunciation adaptation, (2) communication style, (3) peer influence, and (4) slang and informal lexicon. Students exhibited partial pronunciation accommodation, often adopting certain native-like features while maintaining local accents to balance group belonging and identity. Communication patterns were dominated by casual, slang-filled interactions, with academic discourse used primarily in formal contexts. Peer groups emerged as linguistic communities, subtly shaping pronunciation, lexical choice, and register through daily interactions. These findings contribute to sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic discussions on language variation, highlighting how peer social environments function as powerful spaces of linguistic adaptation and identity negotiation among EFL students. Unlike previous studies that have primarily examined slang use, code-switching, or pronunciation as separate phenomena, this study integrates pronunciation adaptation and communication patterns within a single analytical framework, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how peer interaction simultaneously influences multiple dimensions of English language style in Indonesian EFL contexts.

Keywords: Friendship Circles, Pronunciation, Communication Patterns, Sociolinguistics, Slang, EFL Students, Language Variation

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INTRODUCTION

In today's increasingly globalized world, English functions not only as a medium of instruction but also as a tool for social interaction among university students. Within this context, friendship circles—networks of peers with which students interact informally—play a crucial role in shaping linguistic behavior. Prior research has explored how peer groups influence language variation in informal settings, including the adoption of slang or mixed registers in social media or online learning (Siti Anisa Femi Amalia et al., 2024). In fact, the use of slang words in online learning contexts has been proven to create a more relaxed atmosphere and enhance interaction among students (Lutviana&Mafulah, 2021). However, less is known about how these groups affect deeper aspects of language style, such as pronunciation and discourse patterns. Moreover, these interactions often happen naturally through daily conversations, group discussions, and online chats, making friendship circles one of the most influential social environments where language habits are continuously shaped.

Pronunciation style whether leaning toward native-like articulation or maintaining local accents is one such “deep” stylistic dimension. Studies have shown that dialect and regional origin influence how English learners pronounce English, even among advanced EFL students (Lutviana&Mafulah, 2021). In parallel, communication patterns ranging from formal academic discourse to casual, slang-laden interactions are another dimension of style that peer environments might encourage or suppress. This dynamic interplay between social interaction and individual linguistic choice makes the study of friendship circles especially relevant in understanding language variation among young adults.

Given the existing gap in the literature regarding how friendship circles simultaneously influence pronunciation styles and communication patterns among university students, this study seeks to investigate the role of peer groups in shaping English language use within informal social contexts. Specifically, the study aims to examine how different friendship circles influence students' pronunciation styles, particularly whether they encourage the adoption of more native-like pronunciation or the maintenance of local accents. In addition, the study explores the communication patterns that emerge within different friendship circles, focusing on whether students tend to employ more academic discourse styles or prefer brief, casual interactions characterized by the use of slang, humor, and informal expressions.

By examining both pronunciation variation and discourse style within peer groups, this study contributes to sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic understandings of English use among EFL students in Indonesia. The findings are expected to provide insights for language educators into how peer social environments impact linguistic behavior, which could inform teaching strategies that bridge formal academic expectations and everyday spoken usage. Furthermore, the phenomena of code-switching and code-mixing have become common in communication strategies among university students to express their social identity and also their group solidarity. This is particularly relevant as the use of hybrid slang, such as 'OMG banget,' which was identified in this study, represents a form of code-mixing motivated by social dynamics within friendship circles. This research, therefore, seeks to investigate how these dynamics specifically influence pronunciation styles and communication patterns. By examining these aspects, this research is expected to shed light on how young learners' daily interactions and communication can unconsciously shape their linguistic identities. Furthermore, the findings may serve as a reflection of how English evolves in social networks and informal learning spaces, especially among university students who continuously negotiate between global and local identities.

Although numerous studies have examined the influence of peer groups on language variation, most of the existing research has focused on the use of slang, code-switching, or informal registers in online and social media contexts (Budiasa, 2021; Lutviana&Mafulah, 2021; Saputra et al., 2023). However, there is still limited research that systematically investigates how friendship circles simultaneously shape students' pronunciation styles and communication patterns in everyday interactions among EFL learners. Previous studies have tended to isolate phonological and lexical aspects, rather than examining their interrelation as an integrated linguistic style formed within social environments. Furthermore, studies on pronunciation adaptation have primarily emphasized the influence of learners' dialect backgrounds or exposure to global media (Amirjalili, 2024; SyahreniSiregar, 2017), while the role of local friendship circles as informal ecosystems shaping pronunciation styles has received far less attention in the Indonesian context.

This study offers a novel contribution by combining the analysis of pronunciation styles and communication patterns to explore how friendship circles influence Indonesian EFL university students' English language styles in daily social interactions. The research does not merely describe linguistic variations but also highlights how linguistic identity is negotiated through peer interactions, both online and offline. Using a descriptive qualitative approach supported by quantitative data, this study provides a comprehensive perspective on the role of friendship circles as informal learning spaces that shape students' phonological, lexical, and register choices. These findings are expected to enrich sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic discussions on the relationship between social environments and language development, while also offering pedagogical insights for more contextual and socially responsive English language teaching practices.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design with supporting quantitative elements to explore how friendship circles influence students' English language styles, focusing on pronunciation and communication patterns. The qualitative approach enabled a deeper understanding of students' linguistic behavior in natural peer contexts, while quantitative data provided supporting frequency patterns. The research was conducted at a university in Indonesia and involved 10 purposively selected students from different semesters of the English Language Education Program who actively used English within their friendship circles. Data were collected using a structured online questionnaire distributed through Google Forms, consisting of multiple-choice and open-ended questions covering pronunciation styles (native-like, local, or mixed), peer influence, communication patterns (academic or casual), and slang usage. The data collection took place over one week, and participants' confidentiality and voluntary participation were ensured. All responses were then organized in a spreadsheet for systematic analysis. The questionnaire responses were reviewed carefully to ensure that all answers reflected genuine linguistic behavior rather than forced or artificial responses. The data were analyzed using (Rijali, 2019). Three-step model: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Responses were categorized thematically based on pronunciation, communication style, slang use, and peer influence, then interpreted in relation to (Giles, 2016), (Liu et al., 2017), and (Dasri&Mahmudah, 2025). Quantitative data were tabulated to support the qualitative interpretation. This mixed descriptive approach provided both numerical tendencies and rich explanations to address the research questions effectively.

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-method research approach using a descriptive qualitative design supported by quantitative data. The study was designed to explore how friendship circles influence university students' English language styles, particularly in terms of pronunciation adaptation and communication patterns. The qualitative component was selected to obtain an in-depth understanding of students' linguistic behavior within natural peer interaction contexts, while the quantitative component was used to provide supporting numerical tendencies derived from questionnaire responses. This research did not aim to manipulate variables or test causal relationships as found in experimental designs; instead, it focused on describing and interpreting naturally occurring language practices among participants. Therefore, a descriptive mixed-method design was considered the most suitable approach to address the research questions comprehensively.

The study investigated one main independent aspect, namely friendship circles (peer interaction environment), and examined its influence on several dependent aspects of English language style, including pronunciation adaptation, communication patterns, peer influence on language use, and the use of slang and informal lexicon. These variables were selected to capture how social interaction contributes to linguistic variation among EFL university students. Data were collected through a structured online questionnaire administered using Google Forms, consisting of both multiple-choice and open-ended questions. The responses were analyzed through a three-step qualitative analysis model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while quantitative results were tabulated to support interpretation and strengthen the overall findings.

Population and Sample or Research Subjects

This study involved university students enrolled in the English Language Education Program at a university in Indonesia as the research population. The population was selected because the students

regularly engaged in English communication both inside and outside academic settings, making them suitable participants for investigating language variation influenced by friendship circles. Since this study primarily adopted a descriptive qualitative approach supported by quantitative data, the emphasis was placed on selecting research subjects rather than obtaining statistical representation. Therefore, purposive sampling was employed to identify participants who met specific research criteria. Purposive sampling was considered appropriate because it enabled the researchers to gather rich and relevant information from participants who actively experienced the phenomenon under investigation.

The sample consisted of 10 students selected from different semesters of the English Language Education Program. The participants were chosen based on several criteria: (1) they were active university students, (2) they frequently interacted within friendship circles, (3) they regularly used English in peer communication, and (4) they were willing to participate voluntarily in the research process. The participants were not divided into experimental or control groups because this research did not involve treatment or intervention. Instead, all participants were treated as a single research group and observed based on their naturally occurring communication experiences within their friendship circles. Data were collected collectively through an online questionnaire and later analyzed according to similarities and variations in pronunciation style, communication patterns, peer influence, and slang usage. This participant selection strategy ensured that the data reflected authentic linguistic behavior and provided meaningful insights into how social interaction within friendship circles shapes English language style among EFL university students.

Research Instruments

The primary instrument used in this study was a structured online questionnaire administered through Google Forms. The questionnaire was designed to collect data regarding the influence of friendship circles on students' English language styles, particularly focusing on pronunciation adaptation and communication patterns. The instrument consisted of both multiple-choice and open-ended questions, allowing the researchers to obtain quantitative tendencies as well as richer qualitative explanations from participants. The questionnaire was developed based on the research objectives and theoretical foundations related to sociolinguistics, communication accommodation, and language variation. Several dimensions were included in the instrument: pronunciation style (native-like, local, or mixed pronunciation), communication patterns (academic or casual interaction), peer influence on language use, and the use of slang and informal expressions within friendship circles.

Before the data collection process, the questionnaire items were reviewed by the research team to ensure alignment with the research questions and conceptual framework. Minor revisions were made to improve wording clarity and question sequence so participants could interpret each item more accurately. However, this study did not conduct a formal pilot study or statistical validity testing because the questionnaire functioned as an exploratory instrument within a descriptive qualitative design supported by quantitative data. The data collection procedure was carried out chronologically. First, the researchers designed and organized questionnaire items in Google Forms. Second, the questionnaire link was distributed to selected participants who fulfilled the sampling criteria. Third, participants completed the questionnaire voluntarily during the one-week data collection period while maintaining confidentiality and anonymity. After submission, all responses were automatically recorded and organized into a spreadsheet for systematic processing and analysis.

To maintain the credibility of the instrument, the researchers carefully reviewed all submitted responses and ensured that the answers reflected participants' authentic linguistic behavior rather than forced or artificial responses. The collected data were subsequently categorized and prepared for analysis using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing procedures. This instrument enabled the researchers to gather both descriptive numerical patterns and contextual explanations, supporting a comprehensive understanding of how friendship circles shape English language styles among EFL university students.

Data Analysis

This study employed a mixed descriptive analysis, combining qualitative analysis as the primary analytical approach with supporting quantitative analysis to examine how friendship circles influence students' English language styles, particularly in pronunciation adaptation and communication patterns. The qualitative approach was selected to explore participants' experiences and

language behavior in depth, while quantitative data were used to identify frequency tendencies and strengthen the interpretation of findings. The collected data originated from responses to an online questionnaire distributed through Google Forms and were subsequently organized using a spreadsheet for systematic processing. The questionnaire generated two forms of data: closed-ended responses that produced numerical patterns and open-ended responses that provided descriptive explanations related to students' language use within friendship circles.

The qualitative data were analyzed using the three-step analysis model proposed by Rijali (2019), consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the first stage, data reduction was conducted by selecting, simplifying, and focusing participants' responses according to the objectives of the study. Responses unrelated to pronunciation, communication style, peer influence, and slang usage were excluded. In the second stage, data display was performed by organizing responses into thematic categories to identify recurring language patterns and social influences. Finally, conclusion drawing involved interpreting the categorized findings and connecting them with the theoretical framework of Communication Accommodation Theory, Social Network Theory, and register theory to answer the research questions comprehensively. For the quantitative component, descriptive statistical techniques were applied to calculate frequencies and percentages of participants' responses. No inferential statistical procedures such as t-tests, ANOVA, or regression analysis were employed because the study did not aim to test causal relationships or compare treatment groups. Instead, numerical summaries were used to support and reinforce qualitative interpretations regarding language tendencies among participants.

The analytical method was selected because it aligned with the research objective of understanding language variation as a socially situated phenomenon rather than measuring experimental outcomes. Combining thematic interpretation with descriptive numerical summaries enabled the researchers to capture both the depth and distribution of students' linguistic experiences. To ensure data credibility, the researchers reviewed all questionnaire responses carefully and verified that participants' answers reflected authentic communication experiences rather than artificial or incomplete responses. Credibility was strengthened through data consistency checking and cross-comparison between qualitative explanations and quantitative response patterns, allowing the findings to be interpreted more reliably and reducing the possibility of misrepresentation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study converge to reveal four principal variations in the English language styles of university students, all significantly influenced by their friendship circles: pronunciation adaptation, communication style, peer influence, and slang use. These categories, derived from the analysis of survey responses, provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how linguistic practices are actively shaped within the dynamic context of peer interaction. The data collectively offer profound insights into the ways students navigate between accommodation to group norms and the preservation of their local identity, illustrating that peer groups function as powerful, everyday contexts for language adaptation and identity negotiation. It becomes clear that friendship circles act not just as spaces of interaction but also as micro-communities where each individual learns to balance linguistic creativity and social acceptance. Through these interactions, English use among students takes on diverse forms that mirror both individuality and collective behavior. The analysis not only highlights linguistic outcomes but also sheds light on the social motivations behind students' speech behavior, revealing how friendships become a space for expressing belonging and identity.

Pronunciation Adaptation

The analysis of pronunciation patterns indicates a clear trend toward linguistic hybridity. A significant majority of respondents (8 out of 10) reported using a mix of local and native-like accents, while a smaller group (2 respondents) stated they primarily maintained their local accent. Notably, no participant reported adopting a fully native-like accent, underscoring a widespread phenomenon of partial accommodation. In this process, students strategically adjust certain aspects of their speech to align with their peers without wholly surrendering their regional linguistic identity. This pattern strongly reflects (Giles, 2016), wherein speakers converge toward their interlocutors' speech to a limited extent to gain social approval or express solidarity, while simultaneously retaining distinctive features of their own accent as markers of individual and local identity. Thus, pronunciation emerges not merely as a

linguistic tool but as a strategic resource for signaling both group belonging and cultural distinctiveness. The analysis not only highlights linguistic outcomes but also sheds light on the social motivations behind students' speech behavior, revealing how friendships become a space for expressing belonging and identity. This selective accommodation also illustrates the concept of covert prestige, where maintaining non-standard accent features can hold social value within peer groups even when they deviate from formal norms.

Communication Style

Regarding communication style, the data reveals a predominant preference for informality within friendship circles. Specifically, 5 respondents reported a strong preference for casual interaction, characterized by short sentences, slang, and humor. 3 respondents described using a flexible mix of academic and casual styles, while only 1 respondent preferred a primarily academic style. One participant indicated rarely using English in peer communication. This finding robustly aligns with (Dasri&Mahmudah, 2025), which posits that language choice is governed by the field (subject matter), tenor (relationship between speakers), and mode (channel of communication) of the interaction. Friendship circles naturally foster a low tenor and informal register, encouraging relaxed discourse, whereas academic tasks necessitate a more structured and formal mode. This demonstrated ability for register-shifting underscores the students' sophisticated metalinguistic awareness and their capacity to adapt their English usage to suit specific contexts and audiences. Interestingly, this ability to move between formal and informal registers also reflects the students' confidence and familiarity with English as part of their everyday communication tool. This finding highlights how the informal context of friendship allows students to express ideas freely, without the constraints of formal academic language. It also suggests that social comfort and emotional safety within peer groups play an important role in shaping communicative confidence.

Peer Influence on Language Style

The survey results clearly demonstrate the pervasive impact of peer groups on linguistic habits. A total of 60% of students acknowledged that their English language style was noticeably influenced by their friendship circles, while 40% reported minimal to no influence. Many who reported influence described the process as subtle and unconscious, often becoming a daily habit or a means to fit in. These observations are powerfully explained (Bozca& Koban Koç, 2023), which illustrates how strong, multiplex social ties within close-knit groups foster linguistic convergence and enforce group norms. Furthermore, the findings resonate with (Syarif, 2025), which argues that individuals adopt behaviors, including linguistic ones, that reinforce their sense of belonging to a valued social group. Consequently, friendship circles act as potent linguistic communities, exerting a consistent, though often imperceptible, influence on members' speech patterns, from pronunciation and vocabulary to overall tone. This continuous exposure to peer influence often leads to unconscious imitation, showing that language change in small communities can start from simple habits repeated over time.

Slang and Informal Lexicon

The use of slang and informal lexicon was identified as a cornerstone of in-group communication. An overwhelming majority of respondents (9 out of 10) reported using slang often or sometimes in their English conversations. This slang frequently involved blending English with Indonesian expressions, creating a unique, hybrid vernacular. Commonly cited examples included terms of endearment like "*bestie*" and "*bro*," exclamations such as "*OMG lah*," and localized digital laughter like "*wkwkwk*." Only one respondent reported never using slang. The pervasive use of social media allows young learners to exchange and adopt new forms of English slang rapidly, showing how online communication reinforces informal linguistic habits beyond classroom contexts. This prevalent use of slang aligns perfectly with (Aliyah Salsabila et al., 2018), conception of slang as a vibrant symbol of group solidarity and identity. Within the student friendship circles documented in this study, slang operates as a central mechanism for in-group bonding and playful identity construction. It serves as a clear sociolinguistic marker that delineates group boundaries and reflects a shared peer culture characterized by linguistic creativity and mutual affiliation. Slang among youth also functions as a symbolic language code that strengthens social identity, emotional connection, and group belonging, turning everyday conversation into a marker of shared culture (Pesina et al., 2024). The creative use of

slang also demonstrates students' ability to adapt and innovate language to suit their emotional expressions and group identity, making it a vital part of modern youth communication.

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate how different friendship circles influence students' English language styles, focusing on pronunciation and communication patterns. Through the collected data, it becomes evident that language use among peers is more than just a matter of grammar or pronunciation, it is deeply rooted in social connection and shared experience. Two research questions guided the study:

(1) *How do different friendship circles influence students' pronunciation styles in English, particularly in terms of adopting more native-like pronunciation versus maintaining local accents?*, and (2) *What communication patterns are used within different friendship circles — do students tend to use academic discourse styles or short, casual interactions with slang and jokes?*

The findings reveal that students demonstrate partial adaptation of pronunciation and strong preference for casual communication styles in peer settings. These patterns highlight the role of peer networks as sociolinguistic environments where language practices are shaped, negotiated, and performed. Similar findings were reported by (Mesa et al., 2025), who found that close peer networks shape how students unconsciously adapt their pronunciation and vocabulary in informal learning settings. This connection underscores that the development of language style among students is an organic process. It happens naturally as part of social belonging rather than being consciously learned. In other words, language variation becomes an outcome of shared experience rather than formal instruction. Furthermore, these findings are consistent with recent sociocultural perspectives in second language acquisition, which emphasize that linguistic development is not an isolated process but emerges through continuous social interaction and participation in peer communities. (Lantolf et al., 2021) highlight that learners co-construct their linguistic competence through dialogic engagement, negotiation of meaning, and shared identity formation in communicative contexts. Similarly, (Guo & Lee, 2023) in her systematic review on informal digital learning of English (IDLE) found that students' online and offline peer engagements serve as vital spaces for pronunciation adaptation and discourse practice, reinforcing the role of social participation in shaping language style. Therefore, friendship circles can be understood as informal learning ecosystems where linguistic norms are dynamically constructed and reinforced through emotional connection and mutual feedback.

Influence of Friendship Circles on Pronunciation

In response to the first research question, the findings show that students tend to partially accommodate their pronunciation to align with their friendship circles. A majority of respondents reported using a mix of local and native-like accents, with no students fully adopting a native-like accent. This behavior reflects (Giles, 2016), which suggests that speakers modify their speech to either converge with or diverge from their interlocutors depending on social motivations. In this case, students converge partially to signal solidarity and group belonging, but also retain their local phonological identity. The tendency to maintain a local accent aligns with findings that students' native dialects consistently play a role in shaping the way they pronounce English at the university level (Siti Anisa Femi Amalia et al., 2024).

This selective adaptation may also be understood through (SyahreniSiregar, 2017) framework of linguistic variation, where speech differences reflect both individual identity and group norms. Students adapt pronunciation features that are socially salient within their friendship circles—such as word stress or vowel quality—while maintaining local accent features that index their regional and cultural identity. The data also indicate that influence is not uniform across groups. Some friendship circles emphasize more fluent and native-like pronunciation, leading members to adjust their speech more significantly. Others maintain local accents as the norm, leading to less phonological accommodation. This aligns with (Liu et al., 2017) theory of social networks, which explains that dense networks with strong ties promote linguistic stability, whereas looser networks allow for more variation and innovation. Furthermore, this peer influence has been proven to have a strong impact on students'

willingness to communicate, both in online and face-to-face learning contexts (Bozca& Koban Koç, 2023). Additionally, students' pronunciation styles are also shaped by their exposure to global media such as TikTok and YouTube, which often introduce specific pronunciation trends or accent preferences that become socially desirable within their peer circles. (Amirjalili, 2024) observed that short-form video platforms not only enhance learners' phonological awareness but also influence their accent attitudes by exposing them to authentic native and non-native pronunciation models. Likewise, (Zadorozhnyy & Lee, 2025) revealed that informal digital learning environments significantly boost learners' willingness to communicate and lead to spontaneous pronunciation imitation of online content creators. Consequently, digital engagement and peer interaction operate hand in hand, forming a multidimensional ecosystem that molds students' pronunciation adaptation in contemporary EFL contexts.

Communication Patterns in Friendship Circles

The second research question examined whether students use academic discourse or casual styles within their friendship circles. The findings indicate that casual interaction styles dominate, with students frequently using short sentences, slang, jokes, and hybrid English-Indonesian expressions. Only a minority reported using academic discourse, and usually in formal contexts such as group assignments or presentations. This pattern reflects (Dasri&Mahmudah, 2025) register theory, where linguistic choices depend on the context of situation — particularly the field (what is happening), tenor (who is involved), and mode (channel of communication). Friendship circles represent informal, high-involvement contexts that encourage relaxed, playful, and hybrid registers. In contrast, academic settings encourage standardized, formal, and explicit language use.

The frequent use of slang (e.g., *bestie*, *OMG lah*, *wkwkwk*) illustrates how students construct in-group identities through shared linguistic repertoires. Slang serves both communicative and social functions — it allows for efficient, expressive communication while reinforcing group solidarity. In this study, slang was often localized, blending English with Indonesian, which aligns with (Aditiawarman et al., 2025) observation that digital youth cultures frequently remix global English with local linguistic resources to build unique identities. This phenomenon aligns with (Saputra et al., 2023) study on youth slang among Indonesian millennials, which found that hybridized English-Indonesian expressions such as “*OMG banget*” or “*bestie wkwk*” function as linguistic resources to express intimacy, solidarity, and shared humor. (Budiasa, 2021) further noted that slang in digital conversations fosters in-group belonging and emotional safety, reflecting young speakers' adaptability and creativity in communication. Similarly, (Guo & Lee, 2023) emphasized that hybrid English forms emerging from online and offline social networks represent not linguistic deficiency but linguistic innovation— illustrating how English is localized to reflect cultural nuance. These findings strengthen the notion that the casual, slang-filled communication styles among students signify high sociolinguistic competence, enabling them to navigate diverse communicative contexts with cultural intelligence.

Integration with Existing Research

These findings are consistent with broader sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic literature. Previous studies have shown that peer networks exert significant influence on linguistic behavior, particularly in multilingual contexts (Ningsih et al., 2024). The selective adoption of native-like features mirrors patterns found in second language acquisition contexts, where social interaction plays a critical role in shaping pronunciation. Similarly, the preference for casual interaction styles reflects global trends in English as a youth and peer-group language, where hybrid varieties emerge in informal spaces. These hybrid forms not only facilitate communication but also function as identity markers, signaling belonging to particular social groups.

Implications

The findings have several implications for language teaching and sociolinguistic research. First, understanding how friendship circles shape pronunciation can inform pronunciation teaching, emphasizing peer interaction as a site of learning rather than viewing accent solely as an individual trait (Pitriyah et al., n.d.). Second, the dominance of casual communication styles suggests that educators should acknowledge and integrate informal registers into classroom activities, helping students navigate between academic and non-academic English more effectively. Finally, the localized slang and hybrid

styles point to emerging forms of Indonesian-English youth language that deserve further ethnographic and discourse analytic investigation. Therefore, this study expands the understanding of sociolinguistic variation by showing that friendship-based interaction is not only a social influence but also a pedagogical resource that enhances authentic English use among EFL learners. In addition, this study provides a meaningful reminder for all the educators to value the informal linguistic expressions that students bring from their social interactions and communication. These expressions can serve as authentic learning materials that connect classroom English with the language of real life. Overall, this study emphasizes that language is not learned in isolation but grows within the warmth of social relationships, making friendship circles both a linguistic and emotional learning environment for EFL

SIMPULAN

This study demonstrates that friendship circles play a significant role in shaping university students' English language styles by influencing both pronunciation adaptation and communication patterns. Rather than simply encouraging the imitation of linguistic forms, peer interaction creates an informal learning environment where students continuously negotiate between global English norms and their local linguistic identities. The findings indicate that pronunciation, register selection, and the use of hybrid slang are socially constructed through everyday interactions, suggesting that language development extends beyond formal classroom instruction into students' social environments.

A major contribution of this study lies in its integrated examination of pronunciation adaptation and communication patterns within the same sociolinguistic framework. While previous studies have generally investigated slang, code-switching, or pronunciation independently, this research demonstrates that these linguistic features operate simultaneously as interconnected expressions of identity, group solidarity, and communication strategies among Indonesian EFL university students. Consequently, friendship circles should be understood not merely as social groups but as informal linguistic communities that facilitate authentic language practice and identity formation.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings suggest that English language instruction can benefit from recognizing students' peer interactions as valuable learning resources. Incorporating collaborative activities that reflect authentic communication practices may help bridge the gap between classroom English and naturally occurring language use. Future research is recommended to employ longitudinal designs, larger participant samples, and cross-cultural comparisons to examine how peer influence evolves over time and across different educational settings. Such investigations would further deepen the understanding of the dynamic relationship between social interaction, language variation, and second-language development.

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