

**A framing device across mode and genre:
Indonesian youth language in conversation and print**
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One of the more dynamic drivers of language change in contemporary Indonesia is popular youth language, commonly known as *bahasa gaul* ‘the language of sociability’ (Smith-Hefner 2007, see also Manns 2011). Innovative features of youth language can spread quickly throughout Indonesian society via the pervasive presence of popular media, which cuts across geographic, social and discourse spaces. Although primarily conceived as a colloquial spoken register, Indonesian youth language is having profound effects on written modalities as well. This is particularly apparent in genres produced by and for youth, which form an important part of the twenty-first century Indonesian media and linguistic landscape. As key resources for creating intersubjectivity, features from conversational youth language make their way into print media with the aim of (re)creating a sense of relaxed involvement (Tannen 2007) and alignment (Du Bois and Kärkkäinen 2012) in order to appeal to youth audiences. Broad research questions which arise include: What features of conversational language are employed by writers of youth genres? Why are these (and not others) employed for creating a sense of involvement in print form? Are new linguistic forms that mark high-involvement youth style emerging in non-conversational modes? In what ways can the choices writers make in their use of linguistic features tell us something about the pragmatic functions of these features?

In this presentation I begin to examine some of these questions as regards one particular genre – comics aimed at Indonesian youth. I follow Medwadows’s definition of genre: “When people do roughly similar sorts of textual things in circumstances perceived as roughly similar, then we are in the presence of a social fact – and let’s call it a genre” (2002: 141, see also Bawarshi and Reiff 2010, Glitrow 2010, Heidrun and Wanner 2010) and am particularly interested in examining patterns of language use emerging out of such social facts. Many of the techniques used by comic authors for producing a sense of involvement are found in other print genres aimed at Indonesian youth and often include a constant shifting between high-involvement and more detached styles (Djenar and Ewing 2012). Indeed one way to characterise youth comics as a genre within the broader text type of comics more generally is precisely through this stylistic shifting. One conventional way in which this shift is done – not just in Indonesian, but with various genres across many languages – is to differentiate narrative sections of discourse for representations of speech, where narration is often presented in a more detached style while speech is represented in a more high-involvement style. In addition to the narration-dialog contrast, authors also act as an ‘the interfering narrator’ (Djenar 2012). This includes the use of free indirect discourse (Fludernik 1993), increasing levels of involvement and shifting empathy. Such techniques give rise to a greater focus on interactional involvement.

The elements that illustrate this use of informal language in the first part of my presentation centre such things as lexicon, orthography (representing pronunciation), morphology, stance particles and pronoun choice. In the second part of the presentation I turn to grammar and the question of whether larger grammatical constructions are also used to create a sense of involvement and alignment. Here I look at one specific example of this process: a framing structure that can be characterised as a conditional or topicalisation construction. This structure is marked by *kalo* (sometimes spelled *kalau*), often glossed ‘if’ but more appropriately characterised as a framing particle as it marks a range of structures including clauses, adverbials and nominal elements which always function to frame a concomitant portion of discourse. First the use of *kalo* structures in casual conversation is described in terms of frequency, distribution and discourse functions. This is compared with the use of these same framing constructions in comics in order to see whether this aspect of ‘informal grammar’ is utilised by writers as one means of representing an informal, youthful style. It will be shown that *kalo* structures that use clauses for framing and which can be read as having conditional-like meanings are common in both colloquial conversation and in written genres that incorporate colloquial features. However, *kalo* structures using nouns and other non-clausal material for framing, while ubiquitous in colloquial conversation, are rare in written genres that incorporate other colloquial features.

As a syntactic device, how is the *kalo* construction deployed in creating involvement and alignment? First of all it can ‘feel’ conversational. Additionally one of the key functions of topicalisation *kalo* constructions in conversation is to aid interlocutors in establishing reference in the ongoing push and pull of real-time interaction. This in fact may not be such an crucial function in print form where reference can be established in a more planned fashion by an author. On the other hand, topicalisation structures also occur in expressions of contrast and evaluation. Here they can contribute to expressing affect and point-of-view, and as such have a stronger role to play in the print media examined here. Thus it is suggested that these different framing devices are in fact deployed by users based on different discourse, interactional and cognitive needs and this in turn explains their very different distribution across genres, which otherwise are similarly intended to evoke the involvement of youth sociability.

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