

A Sociolinguistic Study of Lifestyle and Language Change among Young Adults

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between lifestyle patterns and language change among young adults using a sociolinguistic approach. Language change is viewed as a socially driven process influenced by everyday interaction, media exposure, and engagement with contemporary trends. The objectives of the study include describing the lifestyle characteristics of young adults, identifying patterns of language use in daily interaction, and analyzing the contribution of lifestyle to linguistic variation and evolution. A descriptive quantitative method was employed, using a structured online questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument. Data were collected over a three-week period from 31 participants aged 18–26 from diverse social backgrounds. The findings indicate that participants with more dynamic and modern lifestyles tend to exhibit higher levels of linguistic variation, including frequent use of informal language, code-mixing, and the adjustment of speaking styles according to interlocutors and social situations. The results also indicate variation in language use across domains, particularly in family and social contexts, reflecting the respondents' sociolinguistic awareness. These findings demonstrate that language change among young adults does not occur randomly but is closely linked to lifestyle, patterns of social interaction, and exposure to digital media. This study contributes to the field of sociolinguistics by providing empirical evidence of the role of lifestyle as a key social factor influencing language change and by emphasizing the importance of everyday social practices in shaping contemporary language use.

Keywords: *Lifestyle Patterns, Language Use, Sociolinguistics*

Introduction

Language is a system that continually evolves alongside social interaction and cultural advancement (Purbosari, 2024). In sociolinguistics, language is regarded not merely as a medium of communication but also as a social action shaped by speakers' experiences, identities, and contextual backgrounds. Therefore, changes in language reflect broader social processes within speech communities (Wardhana et al., 2025). One of the central concerns in sociolinguistic studies is understanding how social dimensions shape linguistic variation and the development of language (Syaharani et al., 2025). Language is not used in a social vacuum; rather, it is continuously influenced by factors such as age, social class, community membership, and patterns of interaction (Palandi, 2025).

For instance, individuals belonging to different age groups often display distinct linguistic features, while members of particular social or cultural communities tend to share characteristic ways of speaking that signal group identity and solidarity. Moreover, patterns of interaction such as formal versus informal settings or digital versus face-to-face communication further affect how language is produced and interpreted. These social influences lead speakers to consciously or unconsciously adjust their language choices in order to accommodate their interlocutors and situational demands (Putri et al., 2026). Consequently, linguistic variation emerges as a

systematic and meaningful phenomenon, reflecting social norms and communicative goals, rather than as a random or chaotic process of language change (Wardhaugh et al, 2021).

Lifestyle is a crucial social element that significantly shapes the way individuals interact in their everyday lives (Rahmawati et al, 2025). It influences not only how often people communicate with others, but also the modes of communication they prefer, such as face-to-face interaction, social media, or other digital platforms (Naura, 2024). In addition, lifestyle determines the types of media individuals consume and the extent to which they engage with popular culture and social trends, all of which contribute to the formation and evolution of language use (Basongan et al., 2025). As lifestyles change particularly in response to technological advancements and shifting social practices people tend to adopt new language choices, adjust their speech patterns, and incorporate emerging vocabulary into their daily communication. Over time, these lifestyle-driven shifts result in noticeable changes in word usage and linguistic tendencies, highlighting the dynamic relationship between social life and language development (Adhar et al., 2024).

Younger generations are often regarded as the primary drivers of language change because of their dynamic social interactions and strong openness to innovation (Sofiyana et al., 2025). Their frequent engagement with peers, popular culture, and especially digital media creates a communicative environment that fosters linguistic creativity and experimentation. Through everyday interactions both offline and online young people actively negotiate identity, solidarity, and group membership, which often leads to the adoption of new linguistic forms. Research on lexical variation consistently shows that new terms, expressions, and stylistic patterns tend to emerge from the social practices of younger generations before gradually spreading to wider speech communities (Pratama et al., 2025). As a result, youth language plays a crucial role in shaping ongoing linguistic change and reflecting broader social and cultural transformations (Sadigzade, 2025).

Language variation can also be examined through sociolinguistic scales, which illustrate how speakers adjust their language use in response to social dimensions such as levels of formality, interpersonal distance, and communicative context (Irayani, 2025). These scales highlight the fact that language choices are closely tied to situational demands, for example, whether an interaction is formal or informal, intimate or distant, and public or private. By applying sociolinguistic scales, researchers can systematically analyze why speakers shift vocabulary, style, or even language varieties across different settings (Safar et al, 2025). This framework helps reveal that such adjustments are not arbitrary but follow socially recognized patterns and norms. Consequently, sociolinguistic scales emphasize the structured and predictable nature of language variation, demonstrating how linguistic behavior reflects broader social relationships and communicative purposes within society

In the era of globalization and digital communication, lifestyle transformations are increasingly intertwined with technology (Marzona, 2025). Online interactions encourage more casual language use, greater flexibility in writing styles, and the integration of diverse linguistic resources (Manik et al., 2024). Studies on digital communication reveal that multilingual language users often engage in code-mixing to express their identity and social status (Wirasa et al, 2025). Several studies within the field of sociolinguistics in Indonesia indicate that social factors and exposure to popular culture have a strong influence on the speech patterns of younger generations (Anhar et al., 2024; Ramdhani et al., 2025). Changes in interaction styles, especially those shaped by peer relationships and digital communication, contribute to the emergence of new linguistic forms and variations. In addition, the widespread consumption of

popular media, such as social networking platforms, online videos, and entertainment content, introduces new expressions and stylistic features into everyday speech (Sofiyana, 2025).

Emphasizes that patterns of interaction and media consumption are key factors in shaping language variation, especially within informal communication contexts. In these settings, speakers are not constrained by strict linguistic norms, which allows them to be more flexible and creative in their language choices. The influence of digital media, popular culture, and peer interaction encourages the adoption of new expressions, styles, and mixed language forms. These findings highlight how contemporary social environments in Indonesia play an active role in influencing and reshaping the linguistic behavior of younger speakers, reflecting broader social and cultural changes in their everyday communication.

Furthermore, studies on youth language suggest that informal and digital environments provide fertile ground for more relaxed language use and ongoing linguistic innovation. In such settings, strict normative rules are often less emphasized, allowing young speakers greater freedom to experiment with vocabulary, style, and language combinations. That young speakers frequently employ freer and more varied communication styles as a way to express identity, build intimacy, and strengthen a sense of belonging within their social communities. Through these flexible linguistic practices, language becomes not only a tool for communication but also a resource for social connection and group affiliation among young people.

This study addresses the lack of detailed understanding of how youth linguistic innovation in informal and digital environments functions as a social practice rather than merely a stylistic deviation from standard language norms. While previous research has noted that young people use relaxed and experimental language forms, there remains an underexplored problem concerning how and why these flexible linguistic practices are strategically employed to construct identity, foster intimacy, and reinforce group belonging. By focusing on youth language use in informal and digital contexts, this study seeks to clarify the social meanings and functions of linguistic experimentation, highlighting language as a key resource for social connection within youth communities

Language transformation is also driven by a combination of internal linguistic mechanisms and external social forces operating simultaneously within speech communities. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the evolution of vocabulary, structure, and usage emerges as a natural response to changes in social interaction, technological advancement, and cultural exchange. The language change is not merely a historical process but an ongoing phenomenon shaped by globalization, digital communication, and everyday social practices, which accelerate the diffusion of new linguistic forms across generations. In addition, contemporary sociolinguistic research emphasizes that language evolution spreads unevenly across social groups rather than affecting all speakers simultaneously. Young speakers, in particular, play a crucial role as agents in introducing and stabilizing linguistic innovations through peer interaction and engagement in digital media. Recent studies reveal that linguistic change often originates in informal contexts before gradually entering wider communicative domains, reflecting the close relationship between lifestyle, social networks, and language use.

Contemporary sociolinguistic research has established that language change does not spread uniformly across social groups and has highlighted the influential role of young speakers as early adopters and promoters of linguistic innovation, particularly within informal and digital contexts. Previous studies have largely focused on identifying patterns of linguistic change and documenting the environments in which innovations emerge, emphasizing peer interaction and digital media as key sites of diffusion. However, what remains insufficiently explored is how

these innovations are socially negotiated, sustained, and assigned meaning within youth networks over time, especially in relation to identity construction and group alignment. This gap points to a need for research that moves beyond describing uneven language change to examining the micro-level social processes through which young speakers actively shape and normalize emerging linguistic forms.

Based on this context, the present study explores the relationship between everyday life and language transformation from a sociolinguistic perspective. This research aims to describe the lifestyle characteristics of young adults, identify patterns of language use in their daily interactions, and evaluate how lifestyle factors contribute to language change. The novelty of this study lies in its integrative approach, which combines sociolinguistic theory, lifestyle analysis, and empirical data obtained through questionnaires. By bringing these elements together, the study offers in-depth insights into contemporary language variation and highlights the dynamic interaction between social life and linguistic practices in modern society.

Method

This study employs a descriptive quantitative design from a sociolinguistic perspective to investigate the relationship between lifestyle and language change. This design is considered appropriate because the aim is to describe the characteristics of the respondents' lifestyles and their patterns of language use based on self-reported data, rather than to examine causal relationships. Quantitative descriptive methods are frequently used in sociolinguistics to capture language variation influenced by social factors (Wardhaugh et al, 2021).

The participants in this study consisted of 31 young adults aged between 18 and 26 years who came from diverse social backgrounds. They were not limited to a single academic discipline or professional field, which allowed the research to capture a wider range of social experiences and patterns of language use. By involving participants with different social trajectories and interactional environments, the study was able to observe variations in linguistic practices more comprehensively. This approach is consistent with core sociolinguistic principles that stress the importance of analyzing language use across diverse social contexts in order to better understand how social factors shape linguistic behavior.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire as the primary instrument for gathering information. The questionnaire was distributed online and completed voluntarily by the respondents, allowing for efficient data collection while accommodating participants' availability. It was designed to obtain not only basic demographic information but also detailed data related to lifestyle and patterns of language use in everyday communication. Through this instrument, the researcher was able to systematically capture information about speakers' linguistic behavior, social habits, and communicative preferences. The use of questionnaires thus provided a structured and reliable means of examining the relationship between social factors and language use.

The questionnaire consisted of several sections. The first section collected data on the respondents' age and gender. The second section addressed lifestyle indicators, such as the extent of respondents' involvement in social trends, social media use, and interactional environments in everyday life. The third section focused on language change, including language choice across different situations, the use of informal language, code-mixing practices, and the adjustment of speech according to interlocutors. This structure facilitated a comprehensive examination of the relationship between lifestyle and patterns of language use (Warddhani, 2020).

Data validation was conducted by adapting questionnaire items from established sociolinguistic studies, obtaining expert review to ensure content validity and clarity, and carrying out a pilot study to test item reliability and comprehensibility. Revisions were made based on the pilot results. This structure facilitated a comprehensive examination of the relationship between lifestyle and patterns of language use.

Prior to data analysis, all responses were carefully reviewed to ensure completeness and internal consistency. Once the data were verified, they were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, specifically by calculating frequencies and percentages. The results were then presented in tabular form to facilitate clear identification of patterns related to lifestyle and language use among the respondents. This descriptive approach is appropriate for sociolinguistic research, as it allows researchers to identify general trends and variations in language behavior without attempting to establish causal relationships.

In conclusion, the findings of this study are interpreted by directly connecting the research results with established sociolinguistic theories of language variation and language change. This analytical process helps to explain how different aspects of individuals' lifestyles—such as patterns of social interaction, media consumption, and engagement with contemporary culture—influence the ways they speak in everyday contexts. The results demonstrate that language use is closely intertwined with social life, as speakers continuously adapt their linguistic choices to reflect their identities, social relationships, and communicative needs. By integrating quantitative data with sociolinguistic theory, this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of the social dynamics underlying language change and highlights the role of daily social practices in shaping linguistic variation in modern society (Rahmadani et al, 2025).

Results

This section explains the procedures for data collection, the results of the data analysis, and a discussion of the relationship between an individual's lifestyle and changes in language use. The research findings are presented descriptively and supported by tables to facilitate understanding, and they are then interpreted based on sociolinguistic concepts and previous studies.

The research data were obtained through an online questionnaire distributed to respondents aged between 18 and 26 years. The data were collected over a period of three weeks and involved 31 respondents from diverse social backgrounds. All submitted responses were reviewed to ensure completeness before the analysis was conducted.

Respondent Characteristics

The characteristics of the respondents in this study include age, gender, and daily activities. A summary of the respondents' demographic data is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	Number of Respondents
Age	18-20 years	12
	20-23 years	17
	23-26 years	2
Gender	Female	21
	Male	9

Based on Table 1, the majority of participants were in the 20–23 age group (17 participants), followed by those aged 18–20 years (12 participants), with only a small number in the 23–26

age group (2 participants). In terms of gender, female respondents significantly outnumbered males, with 21 females compared to only 9 males. This information indicates that the participants in this study were predominantly young individuals who are actively engaged in social interactions.

Results of Lifestyle Variable Analysis

The results of the data analysis reveal that the respondents exhibited varying levels of participation in following current trends, particularly in areas such as social media and the entertainment industry. An overview of the respondents' levels of participation in following trends is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Respondents' Level of Activeness in Following Trends*

No	Level of Activeness	Number of Respondents
1	Inactive	1
2	Not very active	4
3	Moderately active	9
4	Active	10
5	Very active	7

According to Table 2, the majority of participants fall into the active to very active categories, indicating that their lifestyles are strongly influenced by current trends and social media platforms.

Results of Language Change Variable Analysis

The evaluation results of the language change variable indicate variations in language use in daily life. An overview of the language practices employed by respondents when interacting with family members is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. *Language Used in the Family Environment*

No	Type of language	Number of Respondents
1	Indonesian language	18
2	Regional language	16
3	Code mixing	7

In addition, participants also show a tendency to adjust their way of speaking according to their interlocutors. A summary of the frequency of language changes can be seen in Table 4

Table 4. *Adjustment of Speech Style Based on Interlocutors*

No	Frequency	Number of Respondents
1	Rarely	3
2	Quite often	8
3	Very often	20

Based on Table 4, most respondents routinely adjust their way of speaking according to their interlocutors, indicating a social awareness in language use. Based on the data presented in Tables 2 to 4, it can be concluded that respondents more active lifestyles in following trends and social media are closely associated with variation and transformation in language use. Respondents who adopt more contemporary lifestyles show a greater tendency to employ code-mixing and to adjust their speech styles according to the prevailing social context. These findings are consistent with sociolinguistic studies indicating that language change is influenced by social factors, such as social environment, lifestyle patterns, and the level of activeness in social interactions.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate a clear relationship between lifestyle patterns and changes in language use among young adults. The level of respondents' engagement in social trends, particularly through social media and popular culture, shows a strong association with variations in language use, such as code-mixing and the adjustment of speaking styles. This supports the sociolinguistic view that language is not static but continually evolves through social activities and everyday interactions (Wardhaugh et al, 2021).

The majority of respondents who were classified as active and very active in following social trends (Table 2) indicate that contemporary lifestyles play a significant role in shaping the ways they use language. Social media platforms function not only as tools for communication but also as dynamic spaces where new linguistic forms emerge, spread rapidly, and gain social recognition among users. Through constant exposure to global content, popular culture, and peer interactions online, speakers are more likely to adopt new expressions, borrow lexical items, and experiment with mixed language forms in their everyday speech. These findings are consistent with studies on language variation and change that emphasize the strong influence of globalization and media exposure on daily language practices, particularly among younger generations who are highly engaged with digital environments (Adli, 2022).

In language use within the family environment (Table 3), the data show that Indonesian remains the most frequently used language, followed by regional languages and code-mixed language. This pattern reflects the continued dominance of Indonesian as the national language while also indicating the persistence of regional language identities among younger generations. The use of regional languages alongside Indonesian suggests that family interactions remain an important domain for maintaining local linguistic traditions. Meanwhile, the presence of code-mixing demonstrates that respondents actively negotiate their identities by drawing on multiple linguistic resources to suit particular communicative contexts. This practice aligns with discussions in variationist sociolinguistics, which view code-mixing not as a sign of linguistic deficiency but as a strategic and meaningful choice that allows speakers to express affiliation, intimacy, and social positioning within their communities (Wardhaugh et al, 2021).

The frequent adjustment of speaking styles according to interlocutors (Table 4) indicates that the respondents demonstrate a high level of sociolinguistic awareness. Most participants reported that they often modify their way of speaking depending on whom they are interacting with, reflecting sensitivity to social roles, interpersonal relationships, and situational contexts. Such adjustments may involve changes in vocabulary, level of formality, or the use of code-mixing to accommodate different communicative needs. This behavior is consistent with sociolinguistic theories that conceptualize language choice as a strategic social action, in which speakers actively select linguistic forms to achieve social goals such as showing respect, creating solidarity, or maintaining appropriate social distance, rather than as a purely linguistic or mechanical process.

Respondents with contemporary lifestyles also demonstrate a stronger tendency toward linguistic flexibility, particularly in informal interactions. Their frequent exposure to digital communication environments, such as social media and online messaging platforms, creates greater opportunities for encountering and experimenting with emerging linguistic forms. As a result, they are more inclined to adopt new lexical items, abbreviations, and mixed-language expressions that are perceived as modern, efficient, and expressive. This flexibility reflects not only adaptation to the fast-paced nature of digital communication but also a strategic use of language to signal identity, familiarity, and alignment with contemporary social trends.

This flexibility enables speakers to adapt their language to the fast-paced and highly interactive nature of digital communication, where efficiency, immediacy, and expressiveness are highly valued. In such environments, linguistic forms can change rapidly as speakers respond to new trends, technologies, and modes of interaction. These findings are consistent with research on lexical variation, which suggests that lifestyle patterns and the density of social networks play a crucial role in accelerating language change. This is particularly evident among younger speakers, who are highly connected, socially active, and deeply engaged in contemporary cultural practices, allowing new linguistic forms to circulate quickly and become normalized within their communities.

The results of this study are also consistent with research emphasizing that lifestyle is a multidimensional construct influencing behavior beyond health-related practices. While lifestyle studies have often focused on physical or health behaviors, recent research demonstrates that lifestyle choices also shape communicative behavior and patterns of social interaction (Pinto et al., 2022). In this study, lifestyle is reflected through individuals' levels of engagement with social trends and patterns of media consumption, both of which indirectly influence language use. Frequent exposure to popular culture and digital media provides access to new linguistic forms and styles that are later incorporated into everyday communication. As a result, lifestyle becomes an important mediating factor that shapes how speakers select, adapt, and combine linguistic resources in different social contexts.

From a broader sociolinguistic perspective, these findings reinforce the view that young adults act as key agents of language change. Their active participation in trend-driven and digitally mediated communities creates conditions in which linguistic innovations can emerge and spread rapidly across social networks. Through frequent interaction, both online and offline, young adults adopt, adapt, and transmit new linguistic forms, allowing these innovations to gain wider social acceptance. These observations are in line with global perspectives on language variation that emphasize the importance of everyday social practices, mobility, and interconnectedness in driving linguistic change, highlighting how language evolves in response to shifting social dynamics in contemporary societies.

In addition, the imbalance in gender representation, in which female respondents outnumbered male respondents, may have influenced the results of this study, particularly in relation to patterns of linguistic adaptability. Previous sociolinguistic research suggests that women often play a prominent role in adopting and disseminating linguistic innovations, especially within informal interactional settings and digital communication environments. Their active engagement in social networks and heightened sensitivity to communicative norms may contribute to greater flexibility in language use. Consequently, the dominance of female participants in this study could partially explain the strong tendency toward linguistic innovation and adaptability observed in the findings.

Despite these insights, the findings of this study should be interpreted with caution due to the relatively limited sample size and the reliance on self-reported questionnaire data. Self-report methods may not fully reflect actual language behavior as it occurs in real-life interactions, since respondents' answers can be influenced by personal perceptions, memory, or social desirability. As a result, there may be differences between reported language use and actual communicative practices. Nevertheless, questionnaires remain a valuable and practical tool in sociolinguistic research, as they enable researchers to identify general patterns, tendencies, and correlations across a group of speakers, particularly when direct observation or recording of interactions is not feasible.

Overall, this discussion confirms that lifestyle patterns, levels of social participation, and exposure to contemporary trends play a significant role in shaping linguistic variation and transformation among young people. The findings show that language use is closely connected to everyday activities, social networks, and modes of communication, particularly those mediated through digital platforms. By highlighting how young speakers adapt their linguistic choices in response to lifestyle-related factors, this study extends existing sociolinguistic research and provides further evidence that language change is deeply embedded in daily social practices. In particular, it demonstrates how digital environments function as influential spaces where personal and social identities are negotiated through language, contributing to ongoing processes of linguistic variation and change in modern society.

Conclusion

This study examines the relationship between lifestyle patterns and changes in language use among young adults using a sociolinguistic, questionnaire-based approach. The findings indicate that respondents' ways of living—particularly their engagement with social trends, media, and interactional environments—are closely associated with how they use language in everyday communication. Most respondents demonstrated the ability to adjust their speech according to situational contexts, such as using informal language, engaging in code-mixing, or modifying their speaking style depending on their interlocutors and social backgrounds. The results indicate that language change among young people does not occur spontaneously but is influenced by social habits that are formed through everyday activities. Respondents with more active and modern lifestyles tend to display greater variation in language use, supporting sociolinguistic theories that view language as a continually evolving social practice shaped by interaction and identity. However, these findings should be interpreted with caution, as they are based on data from a limited number of respondents and therefore suggest tendencies rather than generalizable patterns of language change.

This study contributes to the field of sociolinguistics by providing empirical evidence of the relationship between lifestyle and language change from the perspective of speakers themselves. By integrating lifestyle analysis with questionnaire-based data, this research extends previous studies that have primarily focused on textual or discourse-based analyses. However, this study has several limitations. The sample size is relatively small and involves only young adults, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other groups. In addition, the use of questionnaires relies on respondents' self-perceptions and honesty in their responses, which may not fully reflect their actual language use in real communicative situations. Future research should explore longitudinal and cross-cultural perspectives, incorporating qualitative methods to examine how evolving lifestyles shape language change across diverse youth communities.

Acknowledgment

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