



The Jakarta Dialect as a Lingua Franca in Indonesian Gaming Communities: A Sociolinguistic Study

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Abstract: This study investigates the sociolinguistic role of the Jakarta dialect, especially features like *lo* and *gue*, within Indonesian online gaming communities. Although Indonesia is linguistically diverse, preliminary findings from related research such as the study on language and identity in online gamer communities. Meanwhile, recent work on digital dialect and regional variation shows hybrid phrases combining English and local idioms are used, but when speaking in voice chats or informal conversation, Jakarta dialect often dominates. Drawing on Fishman's domain theory, Labov's prestige framework, and Holmes's identity solidarity construct, this paper explores how language choice in gaming enables gamers from different regions to assert group identity and create solidarity. Data will be collected via chat-log screenshots, Discord interactions, and interviews with participants across multiple regional backgrounds. The study aims to elucidate how and why the Jakarta dialect becomes a lingua franca in these communities, and what this means for local dialect maintenance.

Keywords: Jakarta dialect, Indonesian gaming communities, language choice, linguistic identity, lingua franca, sociolinguistics.

INTRODUCTION

Language does not merely facilitate communication; it functions as a marker of social identity, group membership, and power relations. In a country as linguistically pluralistic as Indonesia, with hundreds of regional languages and dialects, every context of interaction prompts a choice; which language or dialect to use, when, and with whom. In face-to-face settings, many speakers rely on Bahasa Indonesia or their local dialects. However, in digital interaction, especially in gaming spaces such as in-game voice chat or Discord, distinct patterns of language choice emerge that may cut across regional divisions.

A growing body of research underscores this shift. Malisi, Suharsono, & Setiawan (2017) show that gamers in online communities make deliberate lexical choices to mark identity and belonging, even across groups based on

different games. More recently, studies of regional variation and digital dialect indicate that while hybridized forms (mixing English, local idioms, code-switching) appear in text chat, spoken and voice interactions lean toward varieties that are broadly intelligible and socially neutral. Informal reports and preliminary observations suggest that many gamers adopt the Jakarta dialect, especially using *lo* and *gue*, when interacting with peers from different regions.

This observation raises several sociolinguistic questions: Why does the Jakarta dialect, rather than a regional dialect or strictly formal Bahasa Indonesia, become the preferred variety for cross-regional gaming communication? What social meanings do *lo*, *gue*, and related linguistic features carry among gamers? And how do these choices relate to prestige, identity, and notions of solidarity? Addressing these questions requires combining theory and field data.

In this paper, we utilize theoretical perspectives including Fishman's domain of language use, Labov's models of prestige, and Holmes's framework for language and identity. Through mixed methods—voice recordings, participant observation, interviews—across multiple regional backgrounds, we aim to map how the Jakarta dialect functions as a lingua franca in Indonesian gaming communities. The results will contribute to understanding how digital contexts affect dialect use, possibly influencing long-term maintenance of regional varieties.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Fishman's Domain Theory in Sociolinguistics

Joshua Fishman's seminal work in the sociology of language introduced the concept of *domains of language use* to explain patterned variations in bilingual and dialectal speech. In his early formulation, Fishman (1965) posed the question "who speaks what language to whom and when," underscoring that language choice is systematically conditioned by social context. To address this, Fishman (1972) developed domain analysis, proposing that society can be segmented into various context-defined domains within which particular languages or language varieties tend to be deemed appropriate. A *domain* is essentially a socio-cultural sphere of interaction (for example, "home" or "school") characterized by a typical constellation of interlocutors, settings, and topics. Within each domain, speakers learn what code is "proper" for that context: "*Proper usage indicates that only one of the theoretically co-available languages or varieties will be chosen by particular classes of interlocutors on particular kinds of occasions to discuss particular kinds of topics*" (Fishman 1972:15). In other words, even multilingual speakers do not choose languages randomly, but rather in alignment with social norms attached to the situation. Fishman defined domains "*in terms of institutional contexts or socio-ecological co-occurrences,*" essentially "major clusters of interaction situations" in a society. By examining language use through domain

categories, one links individual linguistic behavior to broader social structure: language choice in a given interaction is “*related to widespread socio-cultural norms and expectations*” that prevail in that context.

Crucially, Fishman noted that there is no single, invariant set of domains applicable to all communities; domain categories must be grounded in each speech community’s own sociocultural patterning. Domains can be identified intuitively (by common perceptions of context like “home” vs. “work”), theoretically (by distinguishing interaction types such as intimate vs. formal), or empirically (by observing actual usage patterns). Typical domains that recur in many studies include those aligned with key social institutions and relationship circles. For example, Fishman’s research on New York Puerto Ricans identified five key domains of language use: *family, friendship, religion, employment, and education*. In other settings, researchers have found a similar emphasis on family and friendship (peer group) as intimate domains, versus more formal domains like school, workplace, government, or religious gatherings.

Domains and Language Choice in the Indonesian Context

Importantly, the register/style of Indonesian used varies with social context, much as a language choice would. Sociolinguist Ronald Wardhaugh notes that speakers can “speak very formally or very informally, with choice being governed by circumstances”. In Indonesia, it is widely recognized that one does *not* speak the same Indonesian in a university classroom or a business meeting as one would in a café with friends. The formal register, sometimes called *bahasa Indonesia yang baik dan benar* (“good and correct Indonesian”), is expected in official domains like government, academia, or other high-register contexts, whereas a colloquial register is pervasive in casual environments. In fact, using highly formal speech with friends would be perceived as stilted or pretentious; “*it would be unusual to communicate on a casual basis with very formal Indonesian*”, as one account notes. Instead, Indonesians typically resort to what is popularly known as Bahasa Gaul, the informal slang “language of sociability” among youth. *Bahasa gaul* (literally “social/cool language”) is not a separate language but a loose term for non-standard Indonesian usage, a register rich in slang, borrowed words, and relaxed grammar that indexes informality and modern youth identity. Smith-Hefner (2007) describes *bahasa gaul* as the emblematic speech style of contemporary Indonesian urban youth, one that “*registers youth modernity*” and facilitates a more “*egalitarian and interactionally fluid*” mode of communication among peers. In other words, this informal register allows young people to forge relationships that feel more personal, equal, and expressive, in contrast to the hierarchical tone of formal language. Studies have observed that Indonesian young people across different ethnic backgrounds have gravitated towards a shared slang repertoire as part of a national youth culture.

A striking feature of Indonesia's informal register is the heavy influence of the Jakarta dialect (often called *Jakartan Indonesian* or *Betawi Malay*). Due to Jakarta's position as the capital and a trend-setter in media and pop culture, its local speech has been broadcast and emulated nationwide. The result is that "*regional slang from the capital of Jakarta is heavily exposed and promoted in national media, and [has become] the de facto Indonesian slang*". Many colloquial terms used by youths throughout Indonesia originate from Jakarta's dialect. For example, common slang words include *cewek* "girl" and *cowok* "guy", *nongkrong* "to hang out", and so forth, all traceable to Jakartan usage. Most notably, the first- and second-person pronouns 'gue' (or *gué*, meaning "I/me") and 'lu'/'lo' ("you") have become ubiquitous in youth speech. These pronouns, which historically were features of Jakarta's local Malay dialect, are now widely used by young Indonesians in casual conversation regardless of their regional origin. Linguist James Sneddon observes that Jakartan speech styles carry connotations of urban modernity and youthful cool; using them allows youth to "*identify with the mystique of the modern metropolis*" and symbolically "*sets them apart from the backward countryside*". In short, *gue-lo* has spread as part of a prestige youth slang, it is perceived as trendy and cosmopolitan.

Dialect Choice in Indonesian Online Gaming: A Domain Analysis

The phenomenon of dialect usage among Indonesian online gamers can be fruitfully analyzed through Fishman's lens of domains. Online gaming constitutes a distinct communicative domain, a digital peer group domain, with its own normative language behaviors. Several characteristics define this domain. First, online multiplayer games are inherently *informal, recreational settings*: players participate for leisure, cooperating or competing in virtual environments akin to a digital "playground." This situational informality parallels the offline *friendship* or *street* domains that Fishman and others have described. The interpersonal dynamics in gaming are typically horizontal (peer-to-peer) rather than hierarchical; teammates or fellow players interact as social equals, often using nicknames or pseudonyms, and a playful, bantering tone is common. According to domain theory, such an interactional context will invite an informal code. Indeed, participants instinctively gravitate toward a casual register to match the domain's relaxed norms. Second, online gaming communities in Indonesia are usually linguistically heterogeneous. Players come from various regions and language backgrounds, meeting in a shared virtual space. Their most accessible common code is Bahasa Indonesia, the national language. But crucially, which *style* of Indonesian do they use? Given the domain's peer-oriented and non-formal nature, gamers overwhelmingly prefer colloquial Indonesian over formal speech. Observational accounts and participant testimonies indicate that the chat and voice communication in Indonesian gaming sessions abound with slang, abbreviations, and mix of local jargon, very much a *bahasa gaul* style. It

would be highly marked (if not comical) for a gamer to address others with formal pronouns like *saya/Anda* in the middle of a game; this would violate the informal norm of the domain. Instead, gamers adopt the familiar register that Indonesian youth use among friends. In practice, this means using pronouns like *gue* and *lo* and other Jakarta-origin slang, much as they would in a casual conversation at a café or school cafeteria. The digital space thus mirrors the linguistic norms of offline hangout domains, despite participants being physically dispersed.

Several sociolinguistic motivations underlie why the Jakarta dialect, in particular, is preferred in gaming contexts among Indonesian youths. One reason is mutual intelligibility and national reach: thanks to media and popular culture, Jakarta slang is understood by young people across the archipelago. Unlike a region-specific dialect (Javanese, Sundanese, etc.), Jakartan colloquial Indonesian has become a shared informal code that transcends ethnic languages. Using *gue-lo* and Jakarta slang words ensures that one's speech comes across as generically "informal Indonesian" rather than tied to a local ethnic language that some participants might not know. In a multilingual team of gamers, defaulting to Indonesian is expected, and doing so in a hip, youthful way (with *gue-lo*) creates an immediate common ground. This choice reinforces group solidarity: all players signal that they are part of the same modern youth culture, regardless of hometown. Sociolinguistic research supports this interpretation. Indexicality studies show that *gue-lo* carry social meanings of informality, toughness, and youth alignment. Using *gue* instantly indexes the speaker as a peer rather than an authority; it asserts a stance of equality and solidarity. Manns (2011) notes that young Indonesians consciously feel *gue* to be a marker of closeness, one student remarked that *gue* feels "lebih dekat, akrab" (more close, familiar). In online gaming, where quick trust and teamwork are needed, adopting *gue-lo* may help players bond faster, effectively saying "we're all friends here." This pronoun usage thereby coconstructs an in-group identity among the team. In contrast, using more formal or distant language might introduce social distance and impede the informal team synergy.

Another factor is the association of Jakarta slang with desirable youth attributes. As noted earlier, *gue* and other Jakartan elements have connotations of assertiveness and "cool" urban style. Gaming culture, particularly in competitive games, often prizes a display of confidence, bravado, or playful machismo. The linguistic style of many Indonesian gamers reflects this: trash-talk, quick banter, and sarcastic jibes are typically delivered in the edgy Jakarta-inflected slang, which feels more apt for joking or competitive teasing than formal language would. A formal register might be seen as too serious or "cold" for such banter. In sociolinguistic terms, *gue-lo* indirectly indexes a *stance* of toughness or street-smart coolness, because it links to stereotypes of Jakarta urban youth who are seen as *gaul* (socially savvy and trendy). Thus, by using the Jakarta dialect forms, gamers may subconsciously tap into those associations, enhancing the expressive effect of their in-game communication. A teammate shouting "*Awas lo!*" ("Watch out, you!" in colloquial form) to warn a friend, or joking "*Ampun, gue noob!*" ("Sorry,

I'm a noob!"), comes across as light-hearted and appropriately self-effacing in slang; the same content in formal Indonesian might sound either overly polite or simply odd in context. The pragmatic efficacy of slang in the gaming domain is higher, it conveys emotional tone, urgency, or humor in a way that feels natural to the participants.

In summary, Fishman's domain theory provides a robust explanatory framework for understanding why Jakarta dialect features like *lo* and *gue* dominate the language of Indonesian online gamers. The domain of informal digital interaction calls for an informal linguistic register; Indonesian youth supply this by drawing on the nationally intelligible colloquial Indonesian repertoire, itself deeply colored by Jakarta's dialect due to historical and media influences. Different domains impose different expectations: the same Indonesian teenager who uses polite language in the family domain or standard Indonesian in a classroom will instinctively shift to *gue-lo* slang in the gaming domain, because that domain's norms demand a stance of informality, solidarity, and youthful modern identity. The preference for the Jakarta dialect in gaming contexts is thus not arbitrary, but a sociolinguistic adaptation, an interplay of audience design, identity projection, and normative appropriateness for the domain. By using the language of Jakarta informal circles, gamers forge a shared in-group atmosphere, aligning with their peers and enhancing communication efficiency in the fast-paced, camaraderie-driven environment of online games. This interplay between domain and dialect choice among Indonesian gamers exemplifies Fishman's insight that "*language choice and topic are related to widespread socio-cultural norms and expectations*". In the virtual battlefields and arenas where Indonesian youth meet, the socio-cultural norm is youthful informality and the expected language choice is accordingly the Jakarta-flavored slang that best fits that domain.

METHOD

1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative sociolinguistic research design to explore how Jakarta dialect features are used as a lingua franca among online gamers from across Indonesia. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows an in-depth investigation of language use in context, focusing on meanings and social nuances rather than numerical frequency counts. The research is exploratory and descriptive, operating within an interpretive paradigm: instead of testing hypotheses, it seeks to understand how and why gamers adopt Jakarta dialect pronouns (such as *lo* for "you" and *gue* for "I") in cross-regional communication. The study integrates elements of ethnography (through observation of natural interactions) and discourse analysis, appropriate for capturing the authentic linguistic practices and cultural norms

in the gaming community. This design enabled the researcher to gather rich, contextualized data on speech patterns, participant perceptions, and the social functions of dialect usage in online settings.

2. Participants and Sampling

Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure a diverse range of regional backgrounds and linguistic influences. A total of 5 Indonesian online gamers took part in the study. They ranged in age from approximately 20-22 years old, reflecting the young adult demographic prevalent in gaming communities. Crucially, they were from various parts of Indonesia – including Java, Sumatra (Aceh, Medan, Riau), and Kalimantan (Central Kalimantan) and spoke different mother tongues or local dialects in their daily lives. All participants were fluent in Indonesian, many had exposure to the informal Jakarta style through media or peers. This diversity was sought to observe how a common colloquial Indonesian (Jakarta dialect) emerges as a bridge among gamers who do not share the same first language. Each participant was an active player of multiplayer online games (e.g., MOBAs) and regularly interacted with other Indonesian gamers nationwide. Recruitment was conducted online: announcements were posted in Indonesian gaming forums and Discord communities, inviting gamers from outside the Jakarta area to participate in a study about language in gaming. Interested individuals completed a short screening survey to gather their regional origin and gaming communication habits. Those meeting the criteria were then contacted for formal inclusion. To protect privacy, each participant was assigned a pseudonym; any identifying details (such as specific hometowns or in-game usernames) were removed or generalized in the data.

Before data collection began, all participants gave informed consent. They consented to the use of anonymized quotes and chat excerpts in research publications. The online context of the study meant that all interactions took place virtually; nevertheless, care was taken to create a comfortable environment for participants to speak freely about their experiences.

3. Data Collection Procedures

Data for the study were collected from three primary sources, allowing for method triangulation to strengthen the findings. The data collection took place over a period of three days. An overview of each data source and procedure is as follows:

- **Discord Text Chat Observations:** Naturalistic data were gathered by observing actual text communications during gameplay. A subset of 5 participants volunteered to let the researcher observe and record the audio from their Discord voice channels while they played in their usual gaming groups. Typically, each recorded session involved the participant and several fellow gamers from mixed regions, communicating in real-time as they coordinated gameplay. The screenshots captured spontaneous speech, including instances of *lo* and *gue* usage, code-switching (if any) between Indonesian and local languages, choice of

slang, and any negotiation of meaning among players. All participants chats were anonymized in transcripts (censored). The Discord text chat data provided authentic examples of how the Jakarta dialect features function in live interactions for instance, how gamers address each other as *lo*, how *gue* is used in negotiating strategy, or how dialect usage might ease communication among those with different accents or mother tongues.

- In-Game Chat Logs: The third data source comprised textual interaction records from the games themselves. Participants were asked to share screenshots or chat log exports of text-based conversations with other players that they felt were illustrative of their typical communication. An online game popular in Indonesia (such as Mobile Legends) include team chat. Participants provided chat logs from both private team chats (e.g., coordinating with teammates during a match or chat discussions). The submitted chats often naturally contained Jakarta dialect vocabulary (*lo*, *gue*, and other informal lexicon), as well as emoji, acronyms, and code-mixed phrases. The researcher ensured that any personally identifying information in these screenshots/logs (such as usernames or player IDs) was redacted before analysis. Each chat excerpt was treated as a text data point and transcribed into a textual dataset for coding (retaining original language, spelling, and any slang to the extent possible). The chat logs served to illustrate written usage of the dialect. They also allowed observation of whether regional slang or different pronouns appeared in text, and how participants responded, thereby indicating the role of Jakarta dialect in *textual* communication among gamers.

4. Data Analysis

All collected data (interview transcripts, Discord chat transcripts, and chat log texts) were analyzed using qualitative thematic analysis, following the iterative procedure outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis aimed to identify recurring patterns and themes related to the use of the Jakarta dialect in communication, as well as the social meaning attached to that usage. The process began with data familiarization: the researcher thoroughly read and re-read the chat texts. During this phase, initial impressions were noted, and the researcher started to become immersed in the nuances of how *lo* and *gue* were used, how players from different regions interacted, and what attitudes participants expressed about language.

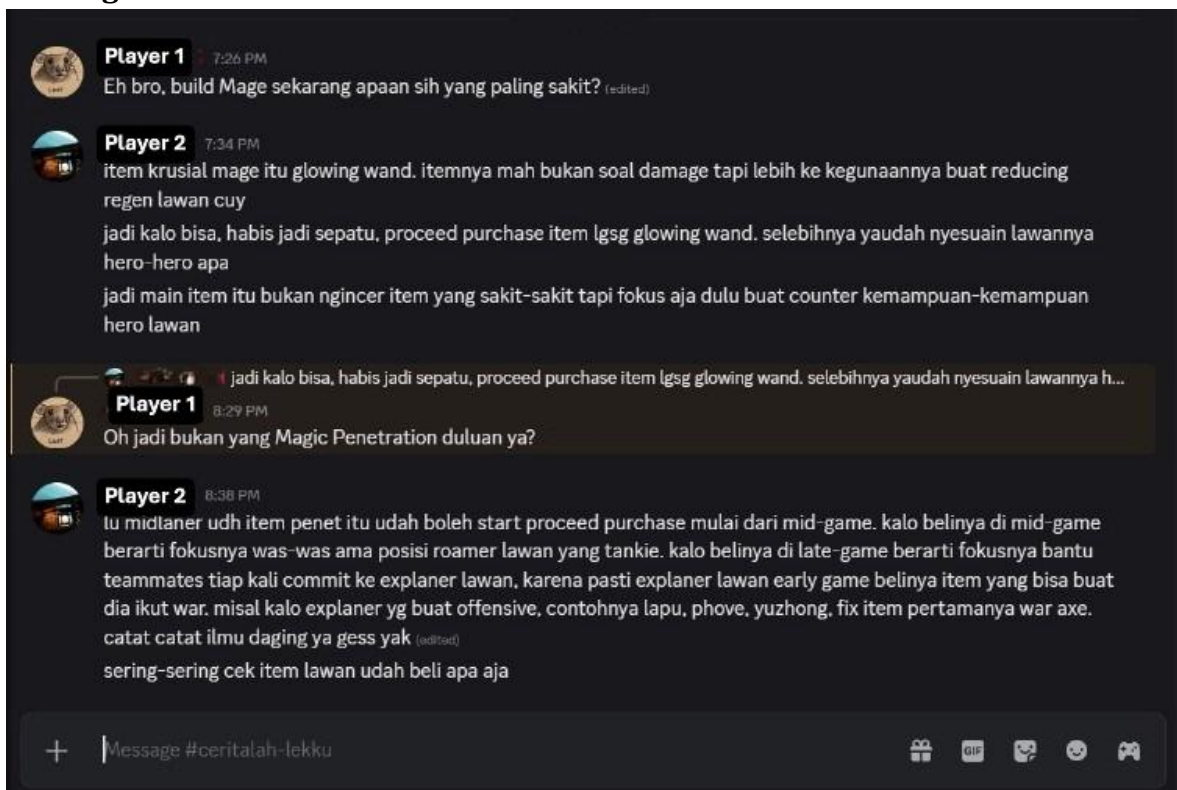
Next, a coding phase was conducted. Using a qualitative data analysis, the researcher systematically coded the data in Indonesian to stay true to participants' original words. Codes were assigned to segments of text (or excerpts of conversation) that contained meaningful information related to the research questions. Some codes were deductive, informed by the study's focus (for example, instances of using "*lo-gue*" pronouns, or explicit mentions of language choice, code-switching, and identity). Other codes were inductive,

allowing unexpected themes to emerge from the data itself (for example, a theme like “*building rapport through slang*” might emerge from participants’ anecdotes, or “*perception of Jakarta dialect as modern/cool*” emerging from chat texts data). In practice, a single interview comment like “*I say gue so they know I’m just like them, not sombong (arrogant)*” might be coded under both “*use of gue to signal camaraderie*” and “*attitude towards standard vs slang*”. Similarly, a snippet from a Discord conversation like “*Atas di push aja. Kosong itu MM nya lagi ngegank bawah*” (“Just push the top lane. The MM is ganking bottom lane.”) would be coded for the presence of Jakarta dialect pronouns in a directive context, and perhaps also under a code about cooperative strategies in language.

Finally and throughout the analysis, the researcher paid attention to both semantic content (what was explicitly said or done, such as the frequency and context of *lo/gue* usage) and latent content (underlying assumptions or social meanings, such as what using *lo/gue* implies about a gamer’s identity or group relationship). The interview narratives were particularly useful for uncovering latent themes (e.g., feelings of unity or modernity associated with the Jakarta dialect), while the observational data highlighted manifest practices (e.g., nearly all players defaulting to *lo/gue* regardless of their mother tongue, indicating a norm in that community).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings



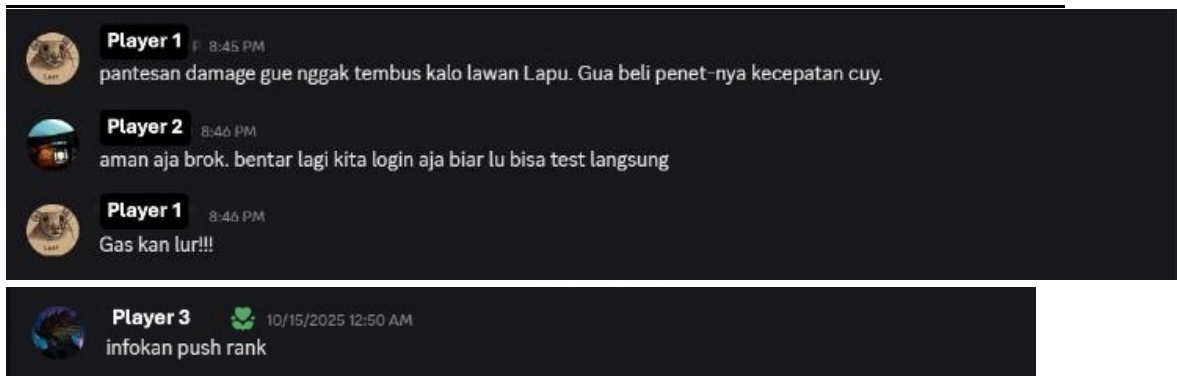


Figure 1: Discord Conversation

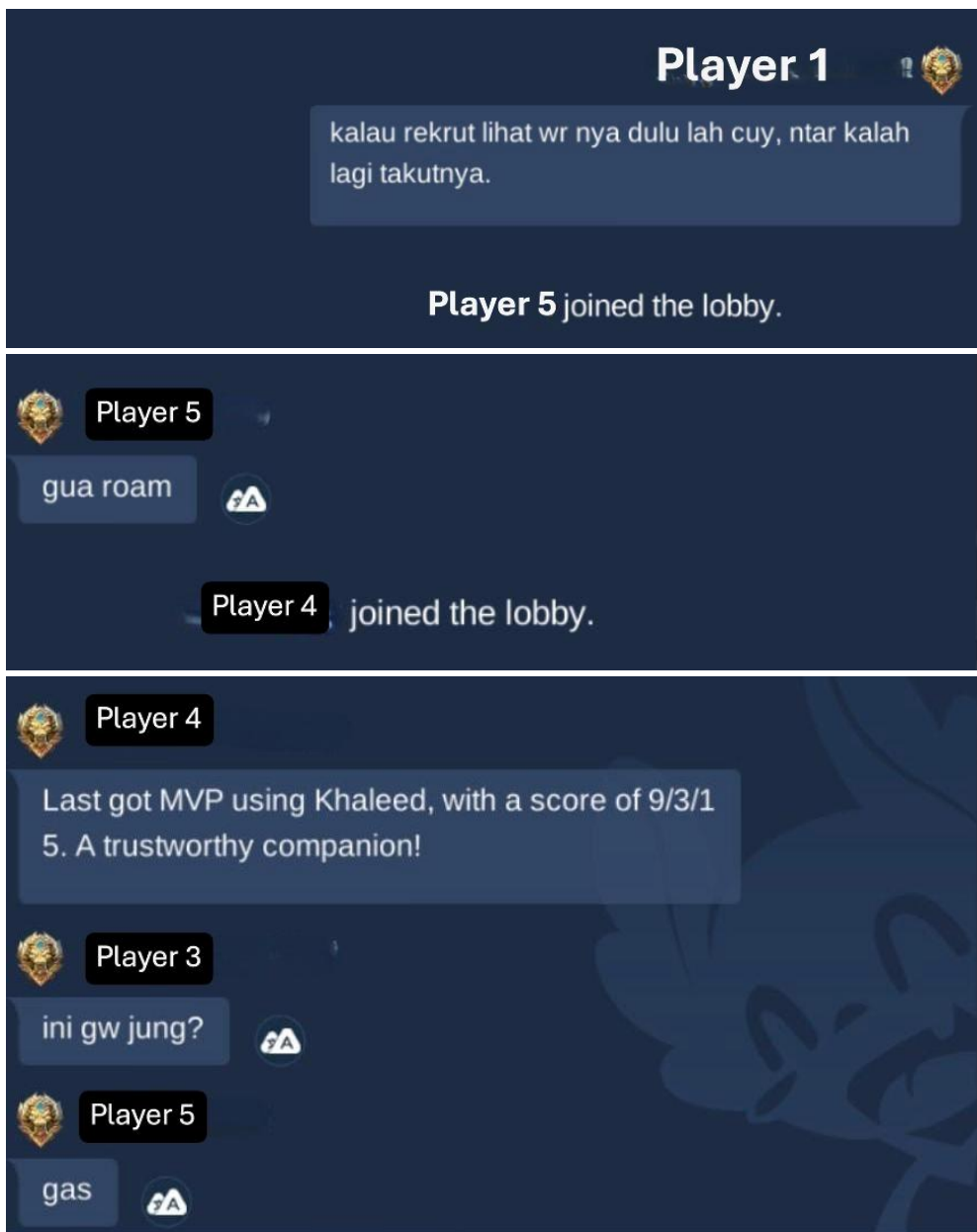


Figure 2: In-Game Lobby Conversation

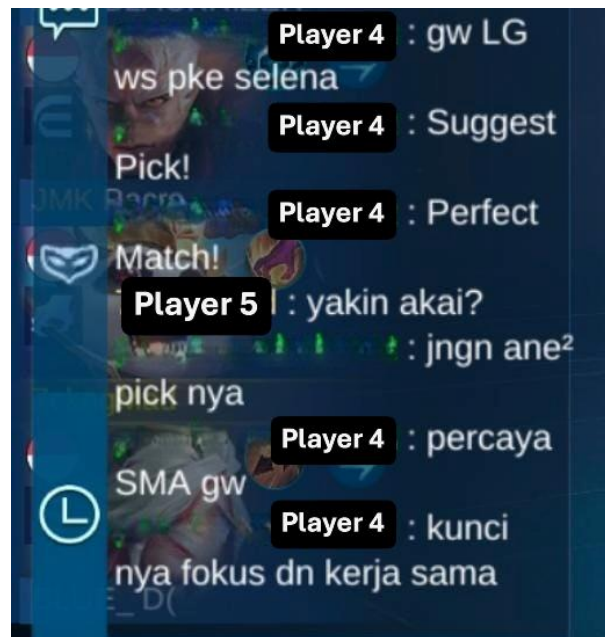


Figure 3: In-Game Draft Pick Conversation

2. Discussion

The use of Jakarta dialect features, particularly the first-person pronoun *gue* and the second-person pronoun *lo*, in Indonesian online gaming contexts reveals a patterned linguistic behavior shaped by social context, covert prestige, and identity alignment. Drawing on the theories of Joshua Fishman (domain of language use), William Labov (covert prestige), and Janet Holmes (language and solidarity), this section discusses how and why these forms emerge in text-based communication within multiplayer gaming environments such as in-game chat and Discord.

Jakarta Dialect and the Informal Gaming Domain

Fishman's theory of language domains provides a useful lens for understanding the linguistic environment of online gaming. As an informal, peer-oriented space, the gaming context aligns with Fishman's "friendship" domain, characterized by horizontal social relations and relaxed communication norms. Across the collected chat data, participants consistently defaulted to informal Indonesian, exemplified by the frequent use of *gue*, *lo*, *cuy*, and imperative phrases like *gas*, used to signal agreement or action.

In Figure 2, for example, participant Player 1 writes:

"*kalau rekrut lihat wr nya dulu lah cuy, ntar kalah lagi takutnya.*"

Here, *cuy* is a colloquial vocative derived from Jakartan slang. It functions to establish camaraderie among peers. The clause structure is casual and topic-prominent, aligning with the informal nature of the game lobby as a digital hangout space. Notably, despite the mixed regional background of participants, no local dialects appear in the excerpt. Instead, Jakarta dialect becomes the normative code for interaction. This supports Fishman's

proposition that domain-specific communicative contexts constrain linguistic choices and favor varieties appropriate to the social setting.

Covert Prestige and the Popularity of *Lo-Gue*

Labov's theory of covert prestige helps explain why Jakarta dialect, though non-standard, carries strong social value in these contexts. The use of *gue* and *lo* does not reflect ignorance of standard Indonesian forms such as *saya* and *Anda*, but rather a strategic identity choice that signals inclusion in a modern, youth-centric community. In chat exchanges, these forms are employed not only for clarity but to evoke a sense of shared cultural familiarity.

For instance, in Figure 3 where player Player 3 asks:

"ini gw jung?"

and later responds to a teammate's role confirmation with:

"gas"

we observe the seamless use of Jakartan pronouns and slang. The term *gua* projects informality, but in this setting it also marks the speaker as a peer aligned with youth gaming discourse. This interaction reflects a wider trend in which Jakarta dialect terms have acquired covert prestige within Indonesia's digital youth culture. As previous scholars have observed, these linguistic features are widely perceived as indexing urban modernity and social confidence, qualities that are aspirational in many parts of Indonesia.

A comparable case emerges in Figure 1 discussion between Player 1 and Player 2: *"aman aja brok. bentar lagi kita login aja biar lo bisa test langsung."*

The code choice here is intentional. Although both participants possess the linguistic resources to write in standard Indonesian, the use of *lo* instead of *Anda* or *kamu*, and phrases like *brok* and *gas kan lur!*, frame the exchange as casual, cooperative, and expressive of in-group norms. The preference for *lo* and *gue* over neutral or formal equivalents supports Labov's view that non-standard forms may carry high symbolic capital within certain subcultures.

Language as Solidarity and Identity

Holmes' work on language, identity, and solidarity further explains why *lo* and *gue* have become normalized in online gaming communication. According to Holmes, speakers often choose language forms that index group membership, particularly in interactions where peer alignment and social bonding are key. In youth communities, linguistic forms that indicate closeness or familiarity are more likely to be used, even when they are non-standard.

This is evident in the exchange between Player 4 and Player 5 in Figure 3:

"percaya SMA gw"

"kuncinya fokus dn kerja sama"

Here, *gw* operates within a larger frame of mutual encouragement. The speaker not only asserts role responsibility (*"gw LG ws pke selena"*), but also appeals to group trust and cooperation, all while maintaining an informal register. The reduction of words (*dn* for *dan*, *ane*² for *yang aneh-aneh*) shows

a relaxed tone typical of intra-peer talk. Even in competitive environments like ranked gameplay, the dialect choice reinforces solidarity, suggesting a sense of being on the same side in both task and social terms.

Figure 1 reinforces this trend. In a coaching dialogue, Player B provides gameplay analysis to Player 2 using informal constructions and direct address: “*lu midlaner udh item penet itu udah boleh start proceed purchase mulai dari mid-game...*”

“*sering-sering cek item lawan udah beli apa aja.*”

The repeated use of *lu* rather than *kamu* or *Anda* shows a deliberate effort to keep the tone egalitarian and accessible. Moreover, this choice helps flatten any implicit hierarchy between the advisor and recipient, maintaining a sense of equal footing. This is crucial in peer mentoring within communities of practice.

This style of address is especially important in online spaces where regional diversity is high. The use of Jakarta dialect functions as a neutral in-group code. It avoids the formality of national standard Indonesian and sidesteps potential exclusivity of local languages. As a result, it fosters interactional cohesion among players of varying backgrounds.

Jakarta Dialect as Default Lingua Franca

Across all transcript excerpts, there is consistent evidence that Jakarta dialect, particularly its pronouns and slang particles, serves as the unmarked choice in informal gaming contexts. No participant uses their own regional dialect, even when communicating with teammates known to share their background. This reinforces the finding that *gue* and *lo* have transcended their geographic origin and become part of a national youth register.

The adoption of this dialect does not appear to stem from formal instruction or institutional standardization. Rather, as Wenger suggests in his communities of practice model, it emerges through mutual engagement and practice. Gamers join teams, read and emulate chat behavior, and gradually align their speech with community norms. The dominance of *gue* and *lo* is thus both a cause and a consequence of participation in the Indonesian gaming community. Speakers learn and reproduce the dialect as they become full participants in the group.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Indonesian online gamers from diverse regional backgrounds converge on the Jakarta dialect (notably the pronouns *gue* and *lo*) as an informal lingua franca, effectively bridging regional linguistic differences and fostering a shared gamer identity. Such cross-regional linguistic convergence exemplifies Fishman’s notion of domain-driven code choice, as players select a colloquial code suited to the informal online gaming context. The findings also resonate with Labov’s concept of covert prestige, whereby a nonstandard dialect is embraced to signal in-group identity in

casual communication. Likewise, the prevalence of gue/lo aligns with Holmes's observation that reduced formality in language use indexes solidarity, reinforcing peer camaraderie in this community. Overall, the study underlines the sociolinguistic significance of Jakarta dialect usage in informal digital interaction, illustrating how a once-local vernacular can serve as a unifying lingua franca and marker of youth identity across regional divides.

Prospects for Application and Research:

The findings of this study offer opportunities for further research into digital language convergence across other online communities in Indonesia, such as K-pop fandoms, esports teams, or streaming audiences. Educators and linguists may also explore how informal dialects like the Jakarta variety shape youth language ideologies and affect the vitality of regional languages in digital settings.

Alignment with Introduction:

This study set out to explore how Indonesian gamers from various linguistic backgrounds use the Jakarta dialect as a shared informal code in online interactions. The data confirm that digital gaming spaces function as informal linguistic domains that promote colloquial convergence, affirming the theoretical expectations introduced in the opening section.

Final Statement:

By illustrating how informal digital environments facilitate dialect unification and identity expression, this study underscores the sociolinguistic relevance of Jakarta dialect beyond its geographic origin, positioning it as a key linguistic marker of Indonesia's digitally connected youth culture.

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