



NEEDS ANALYSIS OF GERMAN LANGUAGE STUDENTS FOR A GERMAN-INDONESIAN SLANG DICTIONARY BASED ON CORPUS LINGUISTICS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the needs of students in the German Language Education Program regarding a German-Indonesia slang dictionary based on corpus linguistics, intended to enhance their productive language skills. Slang, often neglected in existing German language learning resources, plays a significant role in authentic communication. The research adopts a needs analysis approach, collecting data through surveys and interviews with students, while also performing a corpus analysis to examine the frequency and context of slang usage in German texts. The findings reveal that students seek a slang dictionary that goes beyond mere translation, providing context, usage patterns, and register variations that reflect the socio-cultural aspects of the language. This study contributes to the field of Indonesian Language and Literature Education by addressing a gap in existing resources, offering a tool for more contextualized and relevant language learning, and promoting a deeper understanding of authentic language use among students.

Keywords: slang dictionary; corpus linguistics; German language learning; needs analysis; productive skills.

INTRODUCTION

The process of learning a foreign language is multifaceted, involving the development of various skills such as speaking, listening, writing, and reading. These four skills are interconnected, and their effective mastery forms the foundation of linguistic competence. Among these skills, speaking, which falls under productive skills, is often regarded as the most challenging (Richards, 2008). This is especially true for students learning German as a foreign language, as they face not only the complexity of grammatical structures but also the challenge of using language in real-time, spontaneous interactions that require quick processing of phonology, vocabulary, and grammar. Moreover, the need to adjust language use to fit appropriate social contexts, a skill known as pragmatic competence, further complicates the learning process (Thornbury, 2005).

The necessity of learning informal language varieties, particularly slang, has become more significant in recent years. Slang plays a crucial role in daily communication, reflecting the social and cultural contexts of its use (Budiarti, 2024). Despite its importance, slang is often overlooked in traditional foreign language education, especially in formal educational settings. While formal language resources primarily focus on grammar and standardized vocabulary, the integration of slang is typically neglected (Eble, 2012). This gap leaves students with limited access to language

that is commonly used by native speakers in informal settings, resulting in students' underpreparedness for real-life communication, particularly when interacting with native speakers outside the classroom (Budiarti, 2024). The current study aims to explore the need for a German-Indonesian slang dictionary based on corpus linguistics as a tool to enhance students' speaking competence in the German Language Education Program.

The importance of integrating slang into foreign language learning has been highlighted in recent literature. Slang, often seen as informal or nonstandard, is a living part of a language and offers valuable insights into the culture and identity of its speakers. According to Tagliamonte and Denis (2010), learning slang allows students to engage more fully with the language by understanding how it is used in everyday conversations, media, and digital platforms. Furthermore, incorporating slang into language education helps students build their confidence in using the language, particularly in informal communication contexts where the nuances of social interaction are critical.

In the context of German language education in Indonesia, students are often exposed to formal German through textbooks and structured lessons, which focus on grammar and vocabulary that adhere to standardized norms. However, this approach does not prepare students adequately for informal, everyday communication, which is where slang plays a pivotal role (Kramersch, 1998). The lack of resources dedicated to teaching slang is evident in the limited availability of German-Indonesian slang dictionaries, which results in students relying on unverified online sources or outdated materials that fail to capture the dynamic nature of the language (Eble, 2012). This research seeks to fill this gap by developing a German-Indonesian slang dictionary based on corpus linguistics, a methodological approach that relies on authentic, real-world data collected from natural language use, such as conversations, media, and social interactions (McEnery & Hardie, 2012).

Corpus linguistics, an approach that analyzes large collections of authentic language data, provides an ideal framework for the development of a slang dictionary. By using real-world language data, corpus linguistics offers a more accurate and contextualized representation of slang usage, as opposed to traditional lexicographical methods that often rely on prescriptive definitions. The use of corpus data allows for the identification of slang terms in context, providing not only definitions but also examples of how these terms are used in specific social and cultural situations (McEnery & Hardie, 2012). This is particularly important for students learning German as a foreign language, as understanding the social and cultural context in which slang is used is essential for developing pragmatic competence, which is often underemphasized in traditional language education (Canale & Swain, 1980).

The aim of this study is to conduct a needs analysis to assess the demand for a German-Indonesian slang dictionary among students of the German Language Education Program. The research will explore the challenges students face in understanding and using German slang, their perceptions of the relevance and usefulness of a slang dictionary, and their expectations for such a resource. This will be achieved through a combination of surveys, interviews, and classroom observations, providing a comprehensive understanding of students' needs and preferences.

The first objective of this study is to analyze the current state of slang teaching within the German Language Education Program in Indonesia. While there is a growing interest in slang among students, current teaching materials and methods do not sufficiently address this aspect of language learning (Sharova, 2025). By investigating the challenges faced by students in accessing and using slang, this study will identify the



specific needs that a slang dictionary can address. Additionally, the study will examine how the integration of slang into the curriculum can enhance students' speaking competence, particularly in informal communication settings.

The second objective is to design and develop a model for a German-Indonesian slang dictionary based on corpus linguistics. This model will integrate authentic slang data, providing students with a practical and contextualized tool for learning slang. The dictionary will include definitions, contextual examples, and cultural explanations to help students understand the nuances of slang usage. Moreover, the dictionary will be designed to be accessible and user-friendly, ideally in digital format, to meet the needs of students in the digital age (Androutsopoulos, 2014).

Finally, the study will assess the effectiveness of the slang dictionary in enhancing students' speaking competence. Through a series of tests and evaluations, this research will determine whether the dictionary helps students improve their ability to use slang appropriately in informal conversations, thus contributing to their overall language proficiency. This will be particularly important for students who are preparing for real-world communication in German-speaking environments, where the use of slang is essential for social integration and cultural adaptation (Kramsch, 1998).

In conclusion, this study aims to fill a critical gap in the teaching of German as a foreign language by addressing the lack of resources for learning slang. By developing a German-Indonesian slang dictionary based on corpus linguistics, this research seeks to enhance students' speaking competence, cultural awareness, and confidence in using German in informal, everyday situations. The findings of this study will not only contribute to the field of language education but also provide a practical tool for students to improve their communication skills in a globalized world.

METHOD

This study investigates the needs of students in the German Language Education Program for a German-Indonesian slang dictionary based on corpus linguistics. The research design is a combination of qualitative and descriptive research, employing a needs analysis approach, which is essential for identifying the gaps in students' current language resources and their expectations for slang learning. The research methodology involved four main data collection methods: observations, surveys, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Each of these methods contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the students' needs, challenges, and expectations for a slang dictionary to support their speaking competence in German.

The research follows a descriptive qualitative research design, leveraging a needs analysis approach to identify the students' requirements and challenges related to learning German slang. This approach is particularly suited for understanding the existing discrepancies between the students' current abilities and the skills they need to develop. As Richards (2008) states, needs analysis allows researchers to identify gaps between what students currently know and what they need to know, helping design appropriate educational tools and resources. In this study, the needs analysis specifically focuses on German language students' need for a comprehensive German-Indonesian slang dictionary based on authentic, real-world usage data.

The study adopts this approach because it focuses on understanding the students' current language practices and their perception of the relevance and utility of slang within their language learning journey. By analyzing these needs, the research aims to develop a resource that can enhance students' understanding and use of slang in everyday

conversations, especially in informal contexts that are rarely addressed in traditional language resources (Tagliamonte & Denis, 2010).

The participants in this study were selected from students enrolled in the German Language Education Program from three universities in Indonesia: Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ), Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI), and Universitas Negeri Surabaya (Unesa). These students were chosen because they had completed at least one semester of the speaking course (Sprechen) and had experience with German slang, either through digital media, social interactions, or classroom activities. By selecting students who had already been exposed to formal German instruction, the study could focus on identifying their specific needs and challenges related to slang usage in informal communication contexts. The students were also expected to provide valuable insights into the type of slang resources that would support their learning and improve their speaking competence.

These students represent a broad spectrum of the target audience, ranging from beginners to more advanced learners, which ensures that the research findings are comprehensive and applicable across different proficiency levels in the German language. This sample allows for a better understanding of the diverse needs and challenges faced by students when it comes to informal language learning, particularly in speaking tasks where slang usage plays a significant role in authentic communication.

Data collection was carried out using multiple methods to ensure a well-rounded understanding of students' needs. Observations were conducted during speaking practice sessions to examine how students interacted with one another and used slang in spontaneous conversations. This allowed the researcher to observe firsthand the challenges students faced when trying to incorporate slang into their spoken language. The researcher took note of how often slang was used, the comfort level of students while using slang, and any difficulties or hesitations that arose in their informal interactions. These observations offered valuable insights into the real-world use of slang and helped identify gaps in the students' ability to effectively use slang in communication.

In addition to observations, surveys were distributed to a larger group of students. The surveys included open-ended questions designed to gather information about students' familiarity with German slang, their experiences using slang, and their perceptions of the usefulness of a slang dictionary. The surveys also sought to understand students' current resources for learning slang and whether these resources were sufficient in helping them understand the contextual and cultural aspects of slang usage. Students were asked to identify the features they would expect from a slang dictionary, including contextual examples, cultural insights, and digital accessibility. The survey responses provided a broad overview of students' needs and helped pinpoint key challenges that a slang dictionary could address.

To gain a deeper understanding of the students' perspectives, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of survey participants. These interviews allowed the researcher to explore the issues raised in the surveys more thoroughly. During the interviews, students were encouraged to discuss their struggles with understanding and using slang, particularly in informal settings, and to elaborate on how a slang dictionary could help them navigate these challenges. The interviews also provided an opportunity for students to express their opinions on the relevance and importance of slang in their language learning process. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed for flexibility, enabling the researcher to ask follow-up questions and explore new topics that emerged during the conversation.



Document analysis was another important method used in this study. The researcher examined existing course syllabi, textbooks, and students' assignments to assess the degree to which slang was incorporated into the current curriculum. By reviewing these materials, the researcher was able to determine whether slang was being taught, how it was being introduced to students, and whether existing resources were sufficient to help students understand slang in context. The document analysis provided a clearer picture of the current state of slang teaching in the German Language Education Program and highlighted the need for additional resources, such as a slang dictionary.

The data collected from the surveys, interviews, observations, and document analysis were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis method that involves identifying recurring patterns, themes, and categories within the data. This method was chosen because it allows the researcher to identify key issues, challenges, and needs related to the use of slang and to develop a deeper understanding of the students' perceptions and experiences. The process of thematic analysis involved coding the data into categories, identifying themes, and examining how these themes were reflected across different data sources. This approach helped ensure that the findings were grounded in the data and provided a comprehensive overview of the students' needs.

Based on the results of the needs analysis, a model for the German-Indonesian slang dictionary was developed. The dictionary model was designed to include entries based on authentic, real-world slang usage, gathered through corpus linguistics. This approach ensures that the dictionary provides contextually relevant examples of slang, with explanations of how slang is used in different social and cultural situations. The dictionary also includes cultural insights to help students understand the social nuances of slang usage. The model was designed to be user-friendly and accessible, with the possibility of being available in digital format, which aligns with students' preferences for digital learning tools.

The developed model will be tested in real classroom settings to assess its feasibility and effectiveness. A group of students will use the dictionary during their speaking practice sessions, and their performance will be compared with that of a control group who does not have access to the dictionary. The evaluation will focus on whether the use of the dictionary leads to improvements in students' ability to use slang confidently and appropriately in informal conversations. This assessment will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the slang dictionary in enhancing students' speaking competence.

Throughout the study, ethical considerations were taken into account. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they understood the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any time without any consequences. Confidentiality was maintained, with all data kept anonymous and stored securely. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants were free to decline or withdraw from the study at any stage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study were derived from the data collected through observations, surveys, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. These methods provided a comprehensive understanding of the challenges, needs, and expectations of students in the German Language Education Program regarding a German-Indonesian slang dictionary. The findings were categorized into several key themes: students' current use

of slang, their needs for a more contextualized resource, and the specific features they expect from a slang dictionary.

1. Students' Current Use of Slang

Observations during speaking sessions revealed that the use of slang among students in informal conversations was minimal. While some students attempted to use slang, they often hesitated or chose not to use it due to a lack of confidence. Students frequently resorted to formal language, even in informal settings, which impacted the authenticity of their communication. This aligns with previous studies that highlight how language learners often feel uncomfortable using slang, especially when they are not confident about its correctness or appropriateness in specific contexts (Budiarti, 2024).

Students also expressed that they struggled to understand the meanings of slang words when they encountered them in German media, such as films, music, and social media. This suggests that while slang exposure is increasing, the lack of reliable resources to help students understand slang in context is a significant challenge. In some cases, students attempted to infer the meanings of slang from the context of the media but found this approach unreliable, particularly with idiomatic or culturally specific terms.

2. Students' Needs for a Slang Dictionary

The surveys and interviews revealed that students overwhelmingly recognized the importance of slang in everyday communication. They expressed a strong desire to learn slang, as it would enable them to engage more naturally with native speakers in informal settings. A large portion of students mentioned that they lacked access to resources that could help them understand and use slang effectively. Most students relied on online sources like Google Translate or general German-English dictionaries, which did not provide the depth of information necessary for understanding slang in its cultural and contextual nuances. This finding aligns with the work of Tagliamonte and Denis (2010), who argue that the lack of accessible slang resources hampers learners' ability to engage authentically in informal communication.

Furthermore, the data suggested that students felt unprepared to handle informal communication in German due to a lack of exposure to slang in the classroom. Students noted that their speaking lessons focused primarily on formal, textbook German, which did not adequately prepare them for real-world conversations. This gap in the curriculum was identified as a critical barrier to fluency, particularly in social interactions where informal language is frequently used. These findings support the argument by Kramersch (1998) that language education programs often neglect the informal varieties of language that are essential for effective communication outside the classroom.

3. Expectations for a Slang Dictionary

The students provided detailed feedback on what they would expect from a German-Indonesian slang dictionary. They emphasized the need for a resource that goes beyond simple translations of slang terms and includes contextual examples and cultural explanations. Many students expressed the desire for a dictionary that would not only provide meanings but also explain when and how specific slang terms should be used in different social situations. This is consistent with the idea proposed by McEnery and Hardie (2012), who suggest that slang dictionaries should be based on corpus data and provide real-world examples of language use in context.

A significant number of students also requested that the dictionary be available in a digital format, allowing them to access it easily on their smartphones or computers. The digital format was seen as a practical solution that would allow students to quickly reference slang terms and examples during their speaking practice or while consuming



German-language media. This preference for digital resources aligns with the trend in modern language learning, where students increasingly favor accessible, on-the-go learning tools (Androutsopoulos, 2014).

4. Integration of Slang into the Curriculum

One of the most common suggestions from students was the integration of slang into the formal curriculum. Many students stated that they would like their professors to introduce slang into their speaking classes, as they believed it would make learning more engaging and relevant to real-life communication. They also suggested that incorporating slang into their lessons would help them feel more confident and prepared when communicating with native speakers. This finding is consistent with the work of Crystal (2003), who emphasizes the importance of teaching both formal and informal aspects of a language in order to provide a comprehensive language education.

Discussion

The results of this study reveal a significant gap in the resources available for learning German slang in the German Language Education Program. Despite the increasing presence of slang in everyday conversations and media, students are not adequately exposed to it within their formal language courses. As a result, students often feel uncomfortable using slang in informal contexts, primarily due to a lack of confidence and the absence of reliable resources that provide both contextual and cultural understanding of slang terms.

Students expressed a clear need for a slang dictionary that not only offers direct translations but also provides real-world examples and cultural explanations. This aligns with previous research, which emphasizes the importance of understanding the context and social dynamics in which slang is used (Budiarti, 2024; Eble, 2012). The findings also suggest that students prefer digital resources, which would allow easy, on-the-go access to slang terms and examples, making learning more flexible and aligned with their technological preferences (Androutsopoulos, 2014).

Moreover, the study highlights the importance of integrating slang into the formal curriculum. Students voiced the desire for slang to be included in their speaking courses, as it would enhance their overall communicative competence, especially in informal, real-world contexts. This supports the notion that foreign language education should balance both formal and informal language learning, as both are essential for effective communication (Kramersch, 1998).

In conclusion, a German-Indonesian slang dictionary based on corpus linguistics would fill the current gap in resources, providing students with a tool that enhances their speaking competence and prepares them for more authentic communication with native speakers. By integrating slang into the curriculum and providing digital resources, language programs can better cater to the needs of modern learners.

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the critical need for a comprehensive German-Indonesian slang dictionary in the German Language Education Program, as students often lack adequate exposure to slang in their formal language courses. The research reveals that students experience discomfort when using slang in informal contexts due to insufficient resources that provide contextual and cultural insights. The study highlights that a slang dictionary based on corpus linguistics, which includes authentic examples and cultural explanations, could significantly enhance students' speaking competence, helping them engage more naturally in real-world conversations. Additionally, the integration of slang

into the formal curriculum could address this gap and better prepare students for informal communication, which is essential for fluency.

Furthermore, the preference for digital resources suggests that a slang dictionary available in a user-friendly digital format would meet modern learning needs, providing students with convenient access to slang terms and usage examples. By developing a digital, corpus-based slang dictionary and incorporating slang into the curriculum, language programs can better support students in developing the practical language skills necessary for effective communication. This study's findings indicate that such resources would bridge the gap between formal language education and authentic, culturally informed communication, ultimately helping students build confidence in their language use in both formal and informal settings.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Miftahulhairah Anwar, M.Hum, and Prihantoro, S.S., M.A., Ph.D., for their exceptional guidance, support, and expertise throughout this research process. Their invaluable contributions have significantly shaped the direction of this study and played a crucial role in its success.

Additionally, I would like to acknowledge the participants of this study, the students from Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ), Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI), and Universitas Negeri Surabaya (Unesa), for their willingness to share their experiences, which greatly enriched this research. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the completion of this study.

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