

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

In “Language : An Introduction to the Study of Speech”, Edward Sapir, one of the forefathers of American linguists, defines language as an entirely “human and non-instinctive way to communicate ideas, emotions, and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols” (Sapir, 1921, p. 7). Therefore, language is simply a tool to communicate ideas and to express emotions as well as desires. Aside from that, in terms of culture and identity, language is a system of arbitrary spoken symbols utilized by individuals of a certain community to communicate based on their respective values and culture, which is derived from Harimurti’s (1993) definition of language as a “system of symbols that comes from arbitrary sound” put to use by individuals as a social group member to interact and introduce their identity. (Soeharto et al., 2021).

Language has surely experienced significant development. It is seen in the way that language has reached even global dimensions, influencing the phenomenon of globalisation and having an impact in many fields starting from economics, politics, religion, ideologies, to the most perceived of them all: culture. In terms of the cultural aspect, according to Sapir (1956) in Putri (2020), “every cultural pattern and every single act of social behaviour involves communication in either an explicit or implicit sense”. Which also suggests that

the medium for said explicit or implicit communication is language.

When examining language in the context of a society, its connection to culture becomes inseparable, serving as a unifying force and common ground for effective communication among people in that society, as emphasized by Harya (2018). Moreover, Kramsch (1995), cited in Kavakli (2020), underscores the significance of language as the tool that represents culture, acting as the means through which culture is interpreted, mediated, and recorded.

This inseparable relationship between language and culture is also evident in Indonesia, which is recognized globally as the second most linguistically diverse country (Zein, 2018). The nation's rich cultural tapestry is woven through hundreds of ethnic groups scattered across the archipelago, each with its unique culture, even if some share common languages. With around 500 local languages, Indonesia leads the world in bilingualism, where a majority of its population becomes proficient in multiple languages from a young age (Mufidah, 2023). This linguistic diversity reflects the intricate interplay between language and culture, shaping the communication dynamics within Indonesian society.

Adding to this complexity, Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia, stands out as one of the country's multilingual cores. In Jakarta, a metropolis that reflects the nation's diversity, various languages are spoken, showcasing the linguistic richness that characterizes Indonesia. Kushartanti et al (2020) affirms that within urban areas like Jakarta and its surroundings, a multitude of languages coexist, including Indonesian, local and regional dialects, as well as foreign languages.

This linguistic tapestry in Jakarta opens a window to explore the concept

of translanguaging, a phenomenon where individuals fluidly use and blend different languages in their communication. Translanguaging challenges traditional language boundaries and aligns with the diverse linguistic landscape observed in Jakarta. Understanding translanguaging in this vibrant urban setting provides valuable insights into the evolving language practices and cultural dynamics that shape communication patterns in the capital and, by extension, throughout Indonesia.

Moreover, delving into the linguistic complexities of Jakarta's youth reveals a fascinating aspect of their behavior in terms of languaging. The Jakartan youth exhibit a unique linguistic phenomenon known as the "*Jaksel Language*," a distinctive blend of English and Indonesian. This linguistic hybridization reflects the dynamic and innovative nature of youth communication, showcasing how language evolves as a social tool.

The "*Jaksel Language*", characterized by its creative use of vocabulary and expressions, serves as an epitome of the broader translanguaging trend in Jakarta. It not only exemplifies the fluidity with which the youth navigate various linguistic elements but also highlights their role in pushing the boundaries of conventional language norms. Exploring the "*Jaksel Language*" phenomenon within the context of translanguaging provides a deeper understanding of the nuanced ways in which language and culture intersect in the lives of Jakarta's youth.

Furthermore, the linguistic landscape of Jakarta's youth extends beyond the confines of the "*Jaksel Language*," providing a compelling lens through

which to explore the concept of translanguaging. Translanguaging, in the context of Jakarta's diverse linguistic tapestry, refers to the seamless and fluid integration of multiple languages in communication. It encapsulates the natural and dynamic way in which the Jakarta's youth navigate between English and Indonesian, effortlessly blending linguistic elements to express themselves. The "*Jaksel Language*", as a manifestation of translanguaging, exemplifies the youth's adaptability and creativity in employing various linguistic resources to convey meaning. This phenomenon challenges traditional language boundaries, emphasizing the interconnectedness of languages and reflecting the complex interplay between culture, identity, and communication practices.

Moreover, the exploration of linguistic dynamics among Jakarta's youth not only unveils the intricacies of the "*Jaksel Language*" and its connection to translanguaging but also inherently delves into the realm of sociolinguistics. Spolsky (1998, p.3) defines sociolinguistics as "the field that studies the relation between language and society, between the uses of language and the social structures in which the language live". While Wardaugh (2006) asserts, sociolinguistics concerns with investigating the relationships and connections between language and society. It aims for a better comprehension of the functions of language in communication and the effects of language used in society. Therefore, sociolinguistics deals with all aspects of language viewed through the connection between language and society, and how we use language in different situations.

It is a well-known fact that most Indonesian people are bilingual due to

the many local languages in Indonesian culture. Astuti (2022) stated that Indonesians who are bilinguals in general “speak one local language and Indonesian, or Indonesian and one foreign language, such as English, Mandarin, or Japanese.” Thus, Astuti (2022) added that Indonesia “is a multilingual community where at least two languages are used in communication in speech communities.” With the English language as the most learned foreign-language, it has become the second language that is used most in the cultural phenomenon of translanguaging, especially by young people who are living in the cities.

According to Ellis (2003) as cited in Astuti (2022), young people are typically very motivated to learn English because it has practical benefits like "passing an exam, getting a better job, or getting into a university." Young people also see the people with good English as having broader knowledge of the world and therefore having a more interesting personality that they can look up to. Learning English, actually understanding it, and participating in the act of code-mixing between Indonesian language with English then become one of the representations of youth culture in Indonesia. The phenomenon of code-mixing between Indonesian with English is very widely known in Indonesia as “The *Jaksel Language*” or *Bahasa Jaksel*.

The “*Jaksel Language*” is a sociocultural as well as sociolinguistic phenomenon that first became popular in late 2018. The name is referred to the South Jakarta’s youth in Indonesia which is known to be characterised by their distinctive personas, such as the manner in which they speak, behave, interact, and socialize, as well as the language they employ and the way of life they lead.

Although they may not be that different from youth elsewhere, the name of the phenomenon initially appears as a mockery for the youth from South Jakarta due to their hedonistic way of living and their unique way of mixing Indonesian language with English.

Other research similar to this topic has been conducted. Rusydah (2020) found that in Bahasa Anak *Jaksel* or the “*Jaksel* Language”, the most frequently used terms in English are broken down into several subgroups, including pronouns, adverbs, adjectives, verbs, acronyms, redundant words and phrases, and untranslatable words. Rusydah (2020) also researched the reasons behind the utterance of the “*Jaksel* Language” and the result of it was due to language pride, a requirement of society, an untranslatable term in Bahasa Indonesia, and enhancing the vocabulary of English

Additionally, the study conducted by Dzakiyyah Rusydah titled "Bahasa Anak *Jaksel*: A Sociolinguistic Phenomena," the emergence of the Bahasa Anak *Jaksel*, a sociolinguistic phenomenon blending English and Indonesian, is explored. Initiated in September 2018, this linguistic phenomenon is distinguished not only by the fusion of languages but also by the specific and repetitive use of certain English words alongside Indonesian. The research, situated within the framework of sociolinguistics, focuses on two main aspects: the frequent usage of English words, determined through informant data, and the underlying reasons behind this linguistic phenomenon. Employing qualitative methods, the study distributed questionnaires via Google Form on various online platforms, involving informants with ties to Jakarta, where Bahasa Anak *Jaksel*

originated. The research concludes by categorizing frequently used English words into subgroups, including pronouns, adverbs, adjectives, verbs, acronyms, word and phrase repetitions, and untranslatable words.

While, Munirah et al (2021) conducted a study which focuses on examining translanguaging practices in a Palopo traditional market, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Rooted in contemporary linguistics and utilizing qualitative methods, the research offers an alternative perspective on the existence of discrete languages and multilingualism, critically assessing the theory of bilingualism proposed by Waring (2013) and Garcia and Otheguy (2014) through empirical data. The findings reveal insightful characteristics of translanguaging practices among buyers and sellers, covering types, forms, functions, and influencing factors, such as internal, foreign words, and hybrid aspects. Categorizing translanguage practices, the study illuminates linguistic complexities, introducing features like basic word insertions, invented word insertions, loan word insertions, phrase insertions, reduplications, and regional language particle insertions in buyers' and sellers' interactions.

Therefore, while the linguistic landscape of Jakarta's youth, particularly the emergence of the "Jaksel Language," has been explored, there is a dearth of research that explicitly connects this phenomenon to the broader sociolinguistic context. The studies have primarily adopted Hoffman's theory of code switching and code mixing as their theoretical framework. Therefore, this study could bridge this gap by grounding its research in the framework of translanguaging, offering a novel perspective to understanding the linguistic

dynamics of the “*Jaksel Language*”.’

Furthermore, the decision to focus on the “*Jaksel Language*” within the framework of translanguaging stems from its unique relevance in Jakarta's sociolinguistic phenomenon. Moreover, the study of language always has a significant part in our society, because language and society are inseparable. Despite existing research exploring various aspects of language use among Indonesian youth, there is a distinct gap in studies that directly connect the phenomenon of the “*Jaksel Language*” to the broader context of sociolinguistics and translanguaging. Several studies such as Fang (2021), Umam (2023), Lasmin (2023), and Triastuti (2023) have also overlooked the sociolinguistics contexts of the translanguaging phenomenon and rather focused on the educational or pedagogical contexts. Therefore, there is a notable gap in understanding the use of “*Jaksel Language*” and broader social settings. This study intends to fill this void by shifting the focus from purely educational contexts to diverse social environments where youth actively engage in communication through the lens of sociolinguistics.

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## **1.2 Research Question**

- a. Under which circumstances does the youth in Jakarta uses the “*Jaksel Language*”
- b. What are the reasons for young people (youth) to be interested in participating in the sociocultural phenomenon of the “*Jaksel Language*”

which entails translanguaging between Indonesian and English?

- c. What are the communicative strategies of using “*Jaksel Language*” as seen from the Indonesian youth's perspective?

### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

- d. To identify and analyze the specific circumstances and contexts in which the youth in Jakarta employ the “*Jaksel Language*”.
- e. To identify and analyse the motivations and reasons that drive young people (youth) to actively engage in the sociocultural phenomenon of the “*Jaksel Language*”, which involves translanguaging between Indonesian and English.
- f. To identify and analyse the communicative strategies of using “*Jaksel Language*” as seen from Indonesian youth's perspective

### 1.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This research, grounded in Garcia’s and Li Wei’s (2014) theory of translanguaging, centered on understanding the “*Jaksel Language*” and its associated translanguaging. This study explores the use of the “*Jaksel Language*” among Indonesian youth aged 18 to 25 residing in Jakarta, with a focus on their experiences, motivations, and perceptions. Data were collected through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and observations in various social and educational settings. While the study provides valuable insights into this

linguistic phenomenon, it is limited by the relatively small sample size of interview participants and the recruitment of participants primarily from the researcher's social media followers. Additionally, the focus on self-reported data and the geographic concentration in Jakarta may restrict the generalizability of the findings. However, despite these limitations, this study provides a good starting point for understanding the "*Jaksel* Language" and points out the need for future research with a larger, more diverse group of participants, as well as more varied research methods.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

From the theoretical aspect, this study is expected to provide benefits in terms of understanding youth culture and the "*Jaksel* Language" which is the phenomenon of translanguaging between English and Indonesian, as well as the communicative strategies used amongst youth in a multilingual discourse. While practically, this study is hoped to be beneficial in the academic aspects and can help future research, particularly research on culture that is also related to language use phenomenon: translanguaging.

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