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Code-Switching, Code-Mixing, and Stylistic Identity in the Teen Drama *Asmara Gen-Z*

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Abstract: This research investigates Indonesian–English bilingual practices in the teen drama *Asmara Gen Z*, focusing on code-switching, code-mixing, and the use of slang and idiomatic expressions. The study is situated within the broader landscape of multilingual youth communication in digital-era Indonesia, where bilingual speech functions as a marker of identity, emotion, and stylistic preference. The research aims to describe the structural patterns and sociolinguistic functions of bilingual alternation in selected scenes, and to interpret how these linguistic choices construct Gen Z stylistic identity. Using a qualitative descriptive design, purposive sampling was applied to select seven emotionally salient scenes. Data were transcribed and analyzed using Poplack’s code-switching typology, Muysken’s code-mixing model, and Appel and Muysken’s sociolinguistic functions, alongside an examination of slang and idiomatic expressions. The findings show that inter-sentential switching and insertional mixing dominate the characters’ bilingual repertoire, especially during moments of conflict, vulnerability, and romantic tension. Bilingual alternation frequently fulfills expressive, directive, and poetic functions, while Gen Z-oriented slang and idioms intensify emotional stance and index youth identity. Overall, the study demonstrates that teen dramas not only mirror but also stylize contemporary multilingual youth culture, highlighting how Indonesian Gen Z use bilingualism to navigate relational, emotional, and social dynamics.

Keywords: *Code-Switching; Code-Mixing; Bilingual Youth Discourse; Gen Z Linguistics; Teen Drama; Stylistic Identity*

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INTRODUCTION

Bilingual language practices have become an increasingly salient feature of Indonesian Gen Z communication in the digital era (Huszka, Stark, and Aini 2024; Li 2025; Rahman and Said 2025). Exposure to globalized online spaces—such as social media platforms, streaming services, digital fandoms, and gaming communities—has encouraged young Indonesians to blend Indonesian with English in everyday interaction (Asih, Tantri, and Prima 2024; Erwin, Saununu, and Rukmana 2023; Tarihoran et al. 2022). This hybridity does not function merely as a communicative shortcut but also as a symbolic resource for signaling identity, stance, modernity, and group belonging (Ahmed and Nayeem 2023; Li 2025). Consequently, research on Indonesian youth bilingualism must account for both its structural features and the sociocultural meanings embedded within language alternation (Ishak, Arwen, and Mulyanah 2025; Kurniawan, Yuliawati, and Puspasari Suganda 2025; Sari et al. 2020).

Teen dramas provide a unique empirical site for examining these dynamics because they portray sustained interactions across emotionally varied and narratively rich contexts (Bruti 2020; Smith 2022; Guan 2025). *Asmara Gen Z*, one of the most widely consumed Indonesian youth series, exemplifies this trend. The characters frequently alternate between Indonesian and English, employ digital-era slang, and use globally circulating idiomatic expressions. These linguistic practices surface in scenes involving friendship, rivalry, romantic tension, conflict, and vulnerability, highlighting how bilingual youth mobilize linguistic resources to navigate relational demands and perform identity. Because scripted media intentionally simulates believable youth speech, it offers access to stylized but realistic patterns reflective of contemporary Gen Z discourse (Bauman 2012; Coupland 2007).

In contemporary youth communication, bilingual practices are also intertwined with the widespread use of digital slang, hybrid expressions, and idiomatic phrases circulating across social media and online peer cultures (Javed et al. 2025; Sefrianus Rianto and I Made Juliarta 2024; Umurzakova 2024). Studies show that such stylistic features play a crucial role in signaling identity, emotional stance, humor, and group affiliation among Gen Z speakers (Bao 2025; Jayaputri and Aziz 2024; Victor 2025). Despite their prominence in youth discourse, these elements remain underexamined in Indonesian media-based bilingualism research, particularly in long-form narratives such as teen dramas.

Existing Indonesian media-bilingualism studies tend to focus on short or static genres such as films (Amriani, Sahayu, and Faizal 2023; Arrizki, Mutiarsih, and Sopiawati 2020), YouTube interviews (Qutratu'ain et al. 2024; S. 2021), television talk shows (Wulandari 2021; Agbaglo, Ayaawan, and Owusu 2021; Vignozzi 2020), or podcasts (Saragih, Pasaribu, and Sihite 2025). While these studies offer valuable insights using Poplack's (1980) or Muysken's (2000) frameworks, they rarely address two emerging realities: first, the stylistic dimensions of youth bilingualism—including digital slang, micro-expressions, and affective idioms; and second, the longitudinal nature of linguistic variation in long-form serial narratives. As a result, the diachronic development of bilingual practices and their emotional or narrative functions remain insufficiently examined in Indonesian scholarship (De Costa et al. 2021; Tribushinina, Irmawati, and Mak 2022).

Furthermore, prior research often treats code-switching and code-mixing as isolated structural events, detached from their affective, interpersonal, or performative functions (Rayo et al. 2024; Sánchez and Pérez-García 2020; Zhong et al. 2025). However, recent findings in digital linguistics show that bilingual alternation intensifies during heightened emotional moments—jealousy, frustration, romantic confession, confrontation—where English often carries expressive or dramatic weight (Stępkowska 2025; Rathore, Noreen, and Qasim 2022). Preliminary observations of *Asmara Gen Z* similarly reveal that switching and mixing frequently co-occur with slang and idiomatic expressions, forming hybrid utterances that index stance, dramatize interpersonal tension, and reflect transnational linguistic influences. This gap indicates the need for research that integrates structural, emotional, and stylistic dimensions of youth bilingualism within one analytical framework.

The present study addresses these gaps by examining multiple layers of linguistic practice in *Asmara Gen Z*: (1) identifying types of code-switching based on Poplack (1980), (2) identifying forms of code-mixing following Muysken (2000), (3) interpreting sociolinguistic functions using Appel & Muysken (1987), and (4) analyzing slang and idiomatic expressions that shape Gen Z stylistic identity. Rather than testing hypotheses, this descriptive qualitative research seeks to map linguistic patterns and interpret their communicative motivations within emotionally dynamic narrative contexts.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the state of the art by demonstrating how structural alternation, emotional expression, and stylistic performance interact in youth-oriented scripted media—an area underexplored in Indonesia. It shows that bilingual alternation is not merely a structural phenomenon but a discursive resource for indexing identity, intensifying emotion, and constructing believable Gen Z personas. Practically, the study offers insights for linguists, educators, and media practitioners interested in youth communication, authenticity in media dialogue, and the pedagogical significance of hybrid bilingual repertoires. Ultimately, this research highlights how Indonesian Gen Z creatively negotiates meaning through multilingual resources shaped by both local sociolinguistic norms and global digital influences.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive linguistic design, a widely used approach for producing detailed, low-inference descriptions of language phenomena as they naturally occur in context (Hall and Liebenberg 2024; Hatch 2023). The research focused on the naturalistic observation of bilingual practices in the teen drama *Asmara Gen Z*.

Contemporary media linguistics recognizes scripted dialogue as a legitimate and culturally meaningful site for analyzing real-world linguistic practices, particularly those shaped by youth identity and digital communication (Ruth Page, David Barton, Carmen Lee, Johann Wolfgang Unger 2022; Semujju 2017). Drawing on the discourse-as-performance tradition, scripted media is understood not as an artificial construct but as a stylized performance of authentic communicative practices (Bauman 2012; Coupland 2007). Teen dramas rely on highly naturalistic dialogue to maintain emotional realism, and therefore draw heavily on recognizable youth registers, bilingual repertoires, and interactional routines. From this perspective, *Asmara Gen Z* provides a valid representation of linguistic patterns circulating among contemporary Indonesian youth.

No experimental manipulation, intervention, or controlled conditions were applied; instead, participants (i.e., characters) were observed in their narrative environment. The study follows a within-subject observational design, analyzing the same characters across multiple episodes to trace diachronic changes in bilingual behavior. Such longitudinal, discourse-oriented designs are well suited for examining how linguistic forms and communicative functions emerge and evolve across different interactional contexts (Paltridge 2021). This design is therefore appropriate for capturing bilingual patterns as they appear organically within scripted media discourse.

Research Design

The qualitative descriptive design was used to systematically identify and interpret bilingual patterns within naturalistic scripted interaction. The approach is observational, context-sensitive, and focused on documenting linguistic features without altering the environment in which they occur. Scripted media data were analyzed as a stylized representation of Indonesian youth linguistic reality, emphasizing authentic registers, bilingual repertoires, and interactional routines typical of Gen Z communication.

Time and Place of Research

Data were collected from publicly available episodes of *Asmara Gen Z* accessible via official streaming platforms and broadcast archives originating in Indonesia. The research corpus comprises episodes aired and/or distributed in 2020–2025 (accessed in 2025); specific episode references used for analysis are reported throughout the Results (e.g., Ep. 1, 33, 53, 100, 172,

256). All viewing and transcription were conducted in Jakarta (researcher's workspace) using the streaming platform versions available at the time of access.

Research Participants and Sampling Procedures

Because this study analyses public media content, the "participants" are fictional characters in *Asmara Gen Z*. No human subjects or personal data were involved. Purposive sampling was applied to select episodes and scenes richest in bilingual interaction (Paltridge 2021; Nyimbili 2024). Sampling combined three complementary strategies: (1) episode sampling to capture narrative stages (early, middle, late), (2) character sampling focusing on main bilingual agents (Mohan, Fattah, Zara, Raisa, Victoria, Jolina), and (3) scene sampling to select moments with dense code-alternation (conflict, confession, group interaction, parental confrontation). Selection rationale prioritized data richness and maximum variation rather than statistical representativeness, consistent with qualitative purposive sampling logic (Tracy 2020).

Sample size, Power and Precision

The analytic corpus comprises seven purposively selected scenes drawn from the serial episodes noted above. From these scenes, a total of 312 utterances featuring code-switching, code-mixing, slang, or idiomatic expressions were identified and segmented for analysis. Because this is qualitative descriptive research, conventional statistical power calculations are not applicable; instead adequacy is judged by theoretical saturation and variation captured across emotional tones, character roles, and interactional contexts.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection followed a three-stage procedure designed for reproducibility:

1. Episode screening (episode-level selection).
The researcher viewed episode summaries and indices to identify candidate episodes representing varied narrative stages (early, middle, late).
2. Scene extraction (character & scene selection).
Candidate scenes were watched in full; scenes containing substantial bilingual interaction or stylistic markers (slang, idioms) were flagged and time-stamped.
3. Transcription.
Lagged scenes were repeatedly viewed and manually transcribed verbatim into a standardized transcript template. Transcription captured: Indonesian clauses, English insertions, punctuation approximating prosodic features (pauses, elisions), non-verbal cues where relevant (e.g., gasp, scream), and contextual scene notes (setting, participants present). Transcripts preserve orthographic forms as uttered (e.g., slang orthography) to retain pragmatic nuance.

All raw transcripts and viewing logs (timecodes, episode identifiers) were stored in organized folders for traceability.

Instruments and Measures

No questionnaires or human interviews were used. Primary instruments were:

- Transcription template (Excel/Word) with fields for episode number, scene description, speaker, utterance, timecode, preliminary code labels.
- Coding manual developed for this study, specifying operational definitions and coding rules for: Poplack's (1980) code-switching types (tag, inter-, intra-sentential), Muysken's (2000) code-mixing types (insertion, alternation, congruent lexicalization), Appel & Muysken's (1987) sociolinguistic functions (expressive, referential, directive, phatic, metalinguistic, poetic/stylistic), and stylistic indicators (slang, idiom, digital expressions, emotional intensifiers). The coding manual includes examples and decision rules to enhance replicability.

Data Analysis Techniques and Procedures

Analysis proceeded in four systematic stages to ensure traceability and reproducibility:

1. Preliminary segmentation and identification. Each transcript was segmented into utterances/speech turns and annotated for potential switching/mixing occurrences.
2. Structural classification. Using Poplack (1980) and Muysken (2000) as primary frameworks, each occurrence was assigned a structural type (tag/inter/intra for switching; insertion/alternation/congruent lexicalization for mixing).
3. Functional coding. Appel & Muysken's (1987) sociolinguistic functions were applied to determine communicative motivations (expressive, directive, phatic, etc.). Stylistic features (slang/idiom) were coded separately but cross-referenced with structural tags.
4. Thematic and interactional interpretation. Coded data were analyzed thematically to identify patterns across characters, episodes, and interactional contexts (e.g., emotional peaks, institutional critique, identity display). Findings were triangulated across the three theoretical lenses (Poplack/Muysken/Appel & Muysken) to build integrated interpretations.

Coding was carried out manually using the coding manual; files and code sheets were organized to allow other researchers to follow coding decisions step-by-step.

Trustworthiness and Validity

To enhance credibility and dependability, the study implemented multiple trustworthiness strategies:

- Theoretical triangulation: applying three complementary theoretical frameworks (Poplack 1980; Muysken 2000; Appel & Muysken 1987).
- Peer debriefing / code checking: a subset (approx. 15–20%) of transcripts and codes were reviewed by an independent linguist experienced in bilingual discourse analysis; discrepancies were discussed and resolved, and coding rules refined accordingly.
- Thick description: contextual scene notes accompany each excerpt to support interpretive claims.
- Audit trail: the researcher maintained a record of coding iterations, decision memos, and versioned transcripts to enable reproducibility.

No inferential statistics were used; analytic claims rest on documented evidence, theoretical triangulation, and transparent coding procedures.

Ethical Considerations

All data derive from publicly available media content; no human participants, identifiable personal data, or private materials were used. Ethical clearance for non-human-subject media analysis was not required, but the study adhered to academic integrity standards: all media sources are cited, and quotations remain within fair-use norms for scholarly analysis. Where necessary, permissions for use of copyrighted screenshots or extended transcripts should be sought from rights holders prior to publication.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Code Switching Analysis

Bilingual practices in *Asmara Gen Z* reveal three dominant forms of alternation—tag-switching, inter-sentential switching, and intra-sentential switching—each carrying different pragmatic, stylistic, and identity-related functions. Across the 312 bilingual utterances analyzed, English appears not as a random intrusion but as an integrated semiotic resource that shapes emotional expression, narrative pacing, and youth identity performance. This combined results–discussion section presents the empirical patterns with embedded interpretation grounded in sociolinguistic theory and discourse-as-performance perspectives.

Tag-Switching

Tag-switching emerged consistently across informal and emotionally charged scenes. This type involves the insertion of short English discourse markers into Indonesian clauses. Examples include:

- Victoria (Episode 100): “**Everyone... everyone... ada news baru di lobi.**”
- Raisa (Episode 53): “*Kita semua Gen Z yang pusing sama hidup kita, tapi kita akan selalu ceria, right?*”
- Zara (Episode 256): “**I swear, don’t you dare touch him!**”
- Fattah (Episode 256): “**No.** *Aku mau penjelasan yang lebih masuk akal.*”
- Jolina (Episode 53): “*Janji ya jangan simpan rahasia dari kita lagi. Promise.*”

Across these scenes, English tags serve as affective and pragmatic amplifiers. Zara’s *I swear* heightens protective urgency, signaling a moral warning at a narrative climax. Fattah’s abrupt *No* marks emotional distancing and immediate stance-taking. Meanwhile, Jolina’s *Promise* conveys relational reassurance, softening the tension within the friendship dynamic.

These patterns align with Appel and Muysken’s (1987) expressive and phatic functions: English tags boost emotional force or manage conversational alignment. Raisa’s *right?* functions as a solidarity-seeking device, inviting shared stance from peers. Victoria’s repeated *everyone* operates as an attention-directing marker, structuring collective action within the dormitory crowd.

From an identity perspective, expressions such as *right, promise, I swear, no* are prominent in global Gen Z digital vernaculars—TikTok banter, meme discourse, Instagram captions. Their use by characters indexes trendiness, cosmopolitan orientation, and digital nativeness. Such features highlight how Indonesian youth integrate English tags not as borrowings but as emblematic identity markers.

Structurally, these switches minimally disrupt Indonesian syntax. Tags occur at clause peripheries, consistent with Poplack’s (1980) view that tag-switching is the least constrained switching type. Their ease of insertion allows scriptwriters to simulate real-world Indonesian Gen Z speech rhythms.

From a discourse-as-performance perspective (Bauman 2012; Coupland 2007), the strategic placement of English tags enhances narrative authenticity. The dialogue performs recognizable youth speech patterns, crafting linguistic believability for a contemporary teen series. Tag-switching thus reflects a bilingual style that is emotionally expressive, digitally influenced, and narratively functional.

Inter-Sentential Switching

Inter-sentential switching—the alternation of full sentences across languages—was the most dominant pattern, particularly in moments of confrontation, emotional escalation, and institutional critique. Key examples include:

- Victoria (Episode 33): “*Kita udah siap dari tadi, tapi kamu yang telat. Don’t waste our time again.*”
- Mama Raisa (Episode 172): “*Dani... hasilnya apa? Anak kita masuk rumah sakit. Where is the safety protocol? Who’s in charge? This is ridiculous.*”
- Zara & Fattah (Episode 256):
 - Zara: “*Stop, Fattah... I swear, don’t you dare touch him!*”
 - Fattah: “*What am I to you, Zara? What am I? ... Wasn’t I enough for you?*”

Across these episodes, the shift into English marks a clear change in affective intensity or footing. Victoria’s English imperative is sharper and more authoritative than its Indonesian equivalent, indexing power and asserting social dominance within the peer hierarchy. This supports research showing that English is frequently used by bilingual youth for face-threatening acts because it adds rhetorical weight.

Mama Raisa’s cluster of English interrogatives functions as institutional discourse—bureaucratic, procedural, and accusatory. The switch elevates the conversation from personal

distress to formal complaint, reflecting Indonesian sociolinguistic norms in which English is associated with professionalism, authority, and official registers.

In Episode 256, the emotional confrontation between Zara and Fattah demonstrates how English sentences signal psychological rupture. Zara's English warning is a turning point that marks her shift into protective anger. Fattah's extended English self-interrogation articulates jealousy, insecurity, and relational crisis with heightened dramatic clarity. The repeated English forms produce a rhythm of emotional unraveling characteristic of global teen drama dialogue.

From a narrative perspective, inter-sentential switching slows down scene tempo and foregrounds climactic lines. It also mirrors global youth media practices—seen in Korean, Philippine, and Western teen dramas—where English is used to articulate high-stakes emotional expression. In *Asmara Gen Z*, inter-sentential switching thus serves both linguistic and dramaturgical functions: it intensifies affect, structures conflict, and situates Indonesian teen discourse within a transnational media style.

Table 1. Code-Switching Types and Examples in *Asmara Gen Z*

No.	Type of Code-Switching	Example (Raw Transcript)	Character	Episode	Primary Function
1	Tag-Switching	"Everyone... everyone... ada news baru di lobi."	Victoria	100	Attention management / discourse marker
2	Tag-Switching	"Kita semua Gen Z... tapi kita akan selalu ceria, right?"	Raisa	53	Phatic alignment / stance marking
3	Tag-Switching	"I swear, don't you dare touch him!"	Zara	256	Emotional intensification
4	Tag-Switching	"No. Aku mau penjelasan yang lebih masuk akal."	Fattah	256	Abrupt rejection / stance marker
5	Tag-Switching	"Janji ya... Promise."	Jolina	53	Reassurance / softening
6	Inter-Sentential	"Kita udah siap... Don't waste our time again."	Victoria	33	Assertive reprimand / authority assertion
7	Inter-Sentential	"Where is the safety protocol? Who's in charge? This is ridiculous."	Mama Raisa	172	Institutional critique / tension escalation
8	Inter-Sentential	"I swear... don't you dare touch him!"	Zara	256	Emotional climax / protective stance
9	Inter-Sentential	"What am I to you? ... Wasn't I enough for you?"	Fattah	256	Jealousy / emotional breakdown
10	Intra-Sentential	"Aku nggak bisa... it's not that simple."	Zara	256	Relational ambiguity / affective nuance
11	Intra-Sentential	"You think I'm a joke? Aku nggak ngerti."	Fattah	256	Emotional–cognitive contrast

Source: Author (2025)

Code-Mixing Analysis

Three types of code-mixing were identified following Muysken's (2000) typology: insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization. *Insertion* was the most frequent pattern across

all characters, appearing when single English lexical items—typically nouns, adjectives, adverbs, or discourse verbs—were embedded into Indonesian morphosyntactic frames. Examples such as *cool*, *hangout*, *opening-nya*, *launching*, and *streaming-nya* illustrate how English terms slot into Indonesian grammar without requiring structural adjustment. This pattern aligns with Muysken’s view that insertion occurs when bilingual speakers treat English as a lexical reservoir from which specific items can be selectively drawn to add precision, stylistic value, or cultural resonance.

In *Asmara Gen Z*, insertion-based mixing fulfilled several pragmatic functions. First, it provided stylistic modernity, as seen in Mohan’s (Episode 1) *cool* and *hangout*, which index an urban, socially confident youth persona. Second, insertion conveyed technological specificity, visible in Zara’s (Episode 100) *soon as possible*, *launching*, and *streaming-nya*, reflecting the influence of digital project culture and English-dominant tech terminology. These insertions also demonstrate domain-driven bilingualism: certain concepts—particularly digital, managerial, and entertainment-related—are more naturally expressed in English due to entrenched global usage patterns.

Alternation appeared less frequently but emerged in emotionally heightened moments when characters moved between Indonesian and English within a single clause boundary. For example, Zara’s (Episode 256) “*Aku nggak bisa kalau kita lebih dari ini, it’s not that simple*” and Fattah’s “*You think I’m a joke? Aku nggak ngerti*” show a back-and-forth movement between languages within one utterance. Alternation provided affective contrast, enabling characters to articulate emotional turbulence in English while grounding cognitive reflection in Indonesian. This pattern reflects Muysken’s notion that alternation involves switching between larger units, producing a dialogic texture as characters shift “footing” mid-utterance to express competing cognitive and emotional states.

Congruent lexicalization emerged in scenes where Indonesian and English elements intermingled fluidly, particularly in fast-paced peer interactions. Victoria’s line (Episode 100), “*Ayo let’s go ke sana cepat now*,” demonstrates a hybrid clause in which both languages contribute to the syntactic frame. The utterance shows a high degree of structural compatibility, aligning with Muysken’s concept that congruent lexicalization occurs when both languages share a grammatical template that accommodates mixed lexical material. This pattern reflects the hybridized youth register increasingly prevalent in Indonesian digital culture, where English adverbs, imperatives, and connectors naturally blend with Indonesian verbs and noun phrases.

Together, these three code-mixing types reveal a bilingual system that is flexible, fluid, and pragmatically motivated. Insertion dominates because it provides efficient lexical access and stylistic nuance without disrupting Indonesian syntax. Alternation emerges as an emotional strategy for expressing tension, conflict, or vulnerability. Congruent lexicalization appears in highly dynamic social interactions, mirroring speech patterns common among globally connected Gen Z speakers. From a discourse-as-performance perspective, these patterns demonstrate how scriptwriters construct naturalistic youth dialogue by strategically mobilizing multiple forms of code-mixing to reflect the linguistic hybridity of contemporary Indonesian adolescents.

Table 2. Examples of Code-Mixing in *Asmara Gen Z*

No.	Type of Code-Mixing	Example (Raw Transcript)	Character	Episode	Structural Pattern	Primary Function
1	Insertion	“Welcome ke jungle kita... selama lo cukup cool buat hangout sama gua.”	Mohan	1	English noun/adjective inserted into Indonesian frame	Youth identity / peer-group indexing

2	Insertion	“Opening-nya soon as possible... kita launching website sambil nunggu platform streaming-nya jadi.”	Zara	100	English technical terms inserted	Digital/tech discourse precision
3	Insertion	“Ada news baru di lobi.”	Victoria	100	English noun inserted	Trendiness / modern tone
4	Alternation	“Aku nggak bisa kalau kita lebih dari ini, it’s not that simple.”	Zara	256	Switch between Indonesian clause + English clause	Emotional nuance / hesitation
5	Alternation	“You think I’m a joke? Aku nggak ngerti.”	Fattah	256	English emotional outburst + Indonesian processing	Affective–cognitive contrast
6	Congruent Lexicalization	“Ayo let’s go ke sana cepat now.”	Victoria	100	Interwoven English–Indonesian syntactic template	Fast-paced action cue / hybrid Gen Z register

Source: Author (2025)

Slang and Idiomatic Expressions

The linguistic landscape of *Asmara Gen Z* extends beyond code-switching and code-mixing, revealing a distinct layer of slang and idiomatic expressions that serve as stylistic markers of Indonesian Gen Z identity. These expressions—drawn from global English, Indonesian youth culture, and social-media registers—play a central role in shaping character identity, expressing emotions, and reflecting broader sociolinguistic trends. The analysis shows that slang and idioms are not randomly inserted but systematically employed across different characters and narrative moments to index stance, create social alignment, and dramatize interpersonal relationships.

A prominent cluster of slang expressions appears through the naming of social groups within the school setting. Labels such as “Slay Queen,” “Chaos Crew,” “Pop Divas,” and “Gasspoll Squad” function as shorthand identity markers. For instance, the narrator introduces one group by saying, “*Ini geng gua ‘Chaos Crew’. Gua lead, dan kita yang nentuin hukum gravitasi di sini.*” (Episode 1). The label “Slay Queen” similarly operates as a TikTok-influenced feminine slang term signaling glamour and confidence. Such stylized group naming parallels global teen media (e.g., *Gossip Girl*, *Euphoria*), where highly indexical labels construct social hierarchy and character persona. In sociolinguistic terms, these names function as indexical markers (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), anchoring each clique within recognizable social categories while demonstrating the characters’ orientation toward globalized youth culture.

English-based youth slang also surfaces in interpersonal exchanges. Mohan greets Fattah with, “*Selamat datang, City Boy.*” (Episode 1), using City Boy as a playful but pointed identity label that positions Fattah as an outsider presumed to possess urban sophistication. This reflects a process of stancetaking, where slang is used to negotiate belonging and social distance. Within

the Pop Divas, expressions such as “girly pink” and “girly pop” (Episode 53) serve as affectionate address terms typical of online feminine discourse communities. These items reinforce in-group solidarity while signaling the characters’ participation in transnational digital femininity.

Emotional slang expressions appear frequently in conflict-heavy or romantic scenes. Short, high-impact interjections such as “Wow!”, “No, no...”, and “Seriously?” (Episode 256) capture the emotional volatility of adolescent interactions. During a confrontation, Fattah exclaims, “*Lemah? Wow! For the first time kamu bela seseorang sampai kayak gini...*” (Episode 256). The interjection Wow! functions as an emphatic discourse marker, heightening his shock and frustration. Similarly, No, no... emphasizes rejection and disbelief. These items reflect what scholars describe as micro-slang—intonation-based stance markers that convey affective force in compressed linguistic forms.

Another significant category consists of slang-like stance markers, especially “I swear.” Although structurally English, the expression functions pragmatically as a fixed Gen Z formula for strong emotion or sincerity. Zara shouts, “*I swear, don’t you dare touch him!*” (Episode 256), while Fattah uses the same marker in “*I swear I can’t stand this.*” (Episode 256). In both cases, I swear indexes emotional intensity aligned with contemporary digital vernaculars, where sincerity and dramatization are often expressed through fixed English templates (e.g., *fr*, *deadass*). In Indonesian youth contexts, such forms represent aspirational bilingualism and global identity performance.

Beyond slang, the series incorporates a notable range of idiomatic expressions, particularly during scenes of psychological conflict or romantic tension. When confronting the school after an injury, Mama Raisa asks, “*Where is the safety protocol? Who’s in charge? This is ridiculous.*” (Episode 172). The idiom This is ridiculous conveys evaluative criticism, functioning as a formulaic emotional response. Similarly, Zara’s “Don’t you dare...” (Episode 256) uses a globally recognizable dramatic formula to express threat and moral warning. These idioms parallel discourse conventions in English-language teen dramas, suggesting deliberate stylistic borrowing by scriptwriters.

Romantic idioms appear most prominently in scenes involving Zara and Fattah. In a climactic emotional exchange, Fattah demands, “*What am I to you? What am I?*” (Episode 256), drawing on a formula common in English melodramatic narratives. In his confession, he states, “*I’m dying for the day I can finally call you mine... be mine.*” These expressions reflect hyperbolic English romance discourse, commonly found in fanfiction and online relationship talk, embedding the characters within a globalized emotional script. Idioms such as “I can’t stand this” and “I’m dying for the day...” contribute further to this stylized emotional register.

Taken together, the use of slang and idiomatic expressions in *Asmara Gen Z* demonstrates a multilayered sociolinguistic phenomenon. Slang functions as a marker of youth identity, digital nativeness, and in-group belonging, while idioms function as dramatic devices that heighten emotional storytelling. Both categories represent stylized bilingualism: a deliberate, performative blending of Indonesian and English to project modernity, cosmopolitanism, and emotional expressiveness. These features distinguish the series from earlier Indonesian teen media and align closely with linguistic trends in TikTok and other youth digital spaces.

In summary, slang and idiomatic expressions enrich the linguistic texture of *Asmara Gen Z*, complementing its code-switching and code-mixing patterns. They reveal the characters’ alignment with global Gen Z linguistic practices, reinforce group identity, and intensify the emotional dynamics of the narrative. Their presence illustrates how Indonesian youth media increasingly reflects transnational linguistic flows, making the series an important site for examining contemporary bilingual creativity.

Tabel 3. Slang and Idiomatic Expressions in *Asmara Gen Z*

No.	Type	Slang/Idiom Example	Speaker	Dialogue Context	Sociolinguistic Function
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1	Group Slang (Label)	<i>Slay Queen</i>	Narrator	“Slay Queen, yang selalu siap untuk drama.”	Feminine identity, pop-culture alignment, group branding
2	Group Slang (Label)	<i>Chaos Crew</i>	Mohan	“Ini geng gua ‘Chaos Crew’...”	Masculine identity, rebellious persona
3	Hybrid Slang	<i>Gasspoll Squad</i>	Narrator	“Mereka adalah Gasspoll Squad...”	Energetic youth identity, hybrid Indonesian–English style
4	Group Slang	<i>Pop Divas</i>	Narrator	“Dan ini si cantik Pop Divas...”	Feminine prestige identity, social hierarchy
5	Labeling Slang	<i>City Boy</i>	Mohan	“Selamat datang, City Boy.”	Social teasing, outsider identity marking
6	Affectionate Slang	<i>Girly pink</i>	Victoria	“Thank you, girly pink.”	Solidarity, female bonding
7	Affectionate Slang	<i>Girly pop</i>	Raisa	“You’re welcome, girly pop.”	Affiliation, emotional closeness
8	Emotional Slang	<i>Wow!</i>	Fattah	“Lemah? Wow! For the first time...”	Shock, disbelief, stance marking
9	Emotional Tag Slang	<i>No, no...</i>	Fattah	“No, no. Aku mau penjelasan...”	Emotional rejection, discourse control
10	Stance Marker (Slang-like)	<i>I swear</i>	Zara / Fattah	“I swear, don’t you dare touch him!”	Emotional intensifier, sincerity marker
11	Idiom	<i>This is ridiculous</i>	Ibu Raisa	“This is ridiculous.”	Criticism, emotional evaluation
12	Idiomatic Command	<i>Don’t you dare...</i>	Zara	“Don’t you dare touch him!”	Warning, protective anger
13	Romantic Idiom	<i>What am I to you?</i>	Fattah	“What am I to you, Zara?”	Romantic insecurity, dramatic emphasis
14	Romance Idiom	<i>Be mine</i>	Fattah	“Be mine, Sy...”	Desire for commitment, emotional confession
15	Hyperbolic Idiom	<i>I’m dying for the day...</i>	Fattah	“I’m dying for the day I can finally call you mine.”	Hyperbolic longing, romantic dramatization
16	Emotional Idiom	<i>I can’t stand this</i>	Fattah	“I swear I can’t stand this.”	Expression of emotional overload
17	Hyperbolic Idiom	<i>I love you more than I should</i>	Zara	“I love you more than I should...”	Emotional intensification, heightened romantic discourse
18	Solidarity Slang	<i>Sissy / Sy</i> (nickname tag)	Fattah	“Sy, I love you.”	Vocative tag, relational closeness

Source: Author (2025)

CONCLUSION

This study examined how Indonesian Gen Z characters in *Asmara Gen Z* deploy code-switching, code-mixing, slang, and idiomatic expressions as interconnected linguistic resources that construct identity, manage emotion, and shape narrative meaning. The findings demonstrate that bilingual alternation in the series is not a random or decorative stylistic choice, but a patterned, purposeful practice that reflects the linguistic realities of contemporary Indonesian youth. By integrating structural typologies with sociolinguistic functions and discourse-as-performance perspectives, the study provides a more holistic account of bilingual creativity in youth media than previous research, which has typically treated switching as isolated structural phenomena.

The analysis shows that English serves multiple functions beyond lexical borrowing: it amplifies affective intensity, indexes digital nativeness, and performs identity positions aligned with global youth culture. Indonesian, meanwhile, anchors the discourse in local belonging and relational familiarity. This interplay between languages reveals a hybridized repertoire in which emotional nuance, social stance, and group affiliation are negotiated through multilingual resources. The study therefore contributes theoretically by demonstrating how structural and stylistic dimensions of bilingualism operate simultaneously within long-form narrative media—an area underexplored in Indonesian linguistics.

Beyond the Indonesian context, this case illustrates how youth-oriented scripted media can function as a valuable site for observing emerging bilingual norms shaped by globalization and digital culture. Similar hybrid registers may be found in other multilingual societies where English circulates widely through social media, gaming, and streaming platforms. Future research could compare youth speech in scripted media with real-life digital interactions or explore audience interpretations of bilingual dialogue. Such work would deepen understanding of how young speakers across diverse contexts creatively mobilize multilingual repertoires to navigate identity, intimacy, and emotional expression in an increasingly transnational communicative landscape.

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