

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

Digital media has become an essential part of everyday life and has significantly transformed the way people communicate, consume culture, and construct social identities (Li et al., 2022). Through platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, X/Twitter, YouTube, and streaming services, young people are continuously exposed to global cultural content. Since much of this content originates from the United States and other English-speaking countries, English has become one of the dominant languages in digital communication. Young people in various countries, including Indonesia, are increasingly exposed to a wide range of American English expressions used in online interaction. These expressions are not limited to slang, but also include colloquial phrases, idiomatic expressions, internet-based expressions, and popular cultural references. Language development is closely influenced by social interaction, lifestyle, and technological advancement, which often result in language variation and borrowing (Melissa et al., 2024).

The rapid growth of digital communication has also contributed to the globalization of language. According to Valkenburg, Peter, and Walther (2016), media consumption has shifted from collective experiences to more individualized forms with the emergence of the internet. Similarly, Miller et al. (2016) argue that social media functions as a form of “scalable sociality,” where users actively create, share, and modify language according to their social contexts and identities. In this

environment, English, particularly American English expressions, circulates widely through global media and digital communication.

Indonesia has many active social media users. According to the Digital Report (2025), approximately 143 million Indonesians actively use social media. This massive exposure facilitates the circulation of global cultural content, including various forms of American English expressions. In this context, language not only serves as a means of communication but also functions as a marker of identity, social affiliation, and cultural orientation.

The circulation of American English expressions cannot be separated from the global influence of American popular culture. American popular culture has become one of the most influential cultural forces in the contemporary world through films, television series, music, social media, streaming platforms, and digital entertainment. According to Campbell and Kean (2016), American culture is constructed through various forms of representation, media, and everyday cultural practices that circulate both within and beyond the United States. As a result, aspects of American culture, including language, are increasingly recognized and adopted by audiences worldwide. In the contemporary digital era, language functions not only as a communicative tool but also as a cultural representation through which values, identities, and cultural meanings are transmitted across national boundaries.

The spread of American English expressions can also be understood through the concept of popular culture. Storey (2021) defines popular culture as cultural practices and meanings that are widely produced, distributed, and consumed through

mass media. In the digital era, popular culture circulates rapidly across national boundaries through social media and online platforms, influencing the language practices of young people (Fraculj, 2021). Through exposure to American films, television series, music, online content creators, and social media trends, young people frequently encounter American English expressions in their daily media consumption. Expressions such as *OMG*, *bro*, *what's up*, *literally*, *lowkey*, *slay*, and *ghosting* have become increasingly familiar among young audiences worldwide, even outside the United States.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, language variation reflects the relationship between language and social factors such as identity, community, and interaction (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). Individuals often adapt their language according to social situations and communicative purposes (Crystal, 2006). The use of American English expressions in informal communication may reflect not only linguistic preferences but also cultural influences and identity construction. According to Allan and Burridge (2006), informal expressions and slang often function as markers of group solidarity and shared social experiences. In contemporary digital communication, many American English expressions are adopted and adapted by young people through their engagement with global popular culture.

Indonesia provides a relevant context for examining this phenomenon. English has long been associated with modernity, education, and prestige in Indonesian society (Lauder, 2008). However, English is now frequently used not only in formal settings but also in casual communication among young people. Research has shown that

Indonesian youths commonly use English expressions, internet slang, acronyms, and code-mixing practices in social media interactions (Esteron, 2021). Furthermore, studies have found that English expressions are often used to create familiarity, express emotions, and strengthen group identity among young people (Alyssa et al., 2023; Septiana & Pratama, 2023). These findings indicate that language use among young people is increasingly influenced by global cultural flows and digital communication practices.

Despite the growing body of research on slang and digital communication, several gaps remain. Previous studies have primarily focused on online slang, code-mixing practices, or language variation in social media interactions (Esteron, 2021; Alyssa et al., 2023; Septiana & Pratama, 2023). Limited attention has been given to the use of American English expressions among female university students in everyday conversations. Furthermore, previous studies have rarely examined how exposure to American popular culture contributes to the recognition and use of American English expressions in daily communication. Hence, there remains a need for a more focused investigation that examines this phenomenon from both sociolinguistic and American Studies perspectives.

This study focuses on female students at Diponegoro University. Gender is considered an important factor in sociolinguistic variation because language use is often influenced by social roles, identities, and communicative purposes (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). As active users of social media and digital platforms, female students are frequently exposed to American popular culture through films, television series,

music, online communities, social media content, and streaming services. Therefore, female students constitute a relevant group for examining how American English expressions are recognized, acquired, and used in everyday communication.

Diponegoro University was selected as the setting of this study because it attracts students from diverse geographical and sociocultural backgrounds. This diversity creates opportunities for intensive social interaction and exposure to various linguistic practices, including American English expressions. Furthermore, students are actively engaged with digital media and popular culture, making the university a relevant setting for investigating the relationship between language use and cultural influence in contemporary society.

Based on these considerations, this study investigates the use of American English expressions in daily conversations among female students at Diponegoro University. Specifically, the study aims to identify the forms of American English expressions recognized and used by female students, examine how these expressions are acquired through exposure to digital media and American popular culture, and analyze the reasons behind their use in everyday communication. This study applies the sociolinguistic framework proposed by Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015), the concept of popular culture developed by Storey (2021), and perspectives from American Cultural Studies proposed by Campbell and Kean (2026). It is expected to contribute to both Sociolinguistics and American Studies discussions concerning the influence of American popular culture on language practices among Indonesian university students.

1.2. Research Question

- 1.2.1. What types of American English expressions are recognized and used by female students at Diponegoro University?
- 1.2.2. How do Diponegoro University female students acquire American English expressions through digital media and exposure to American popular culture?
- 1.2.3. What are the reasons behind the use of American English expressions in the daily conversations of female students at Diponegoro University?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

- 1.3.1. To identify the types of American English expressions recognized and used by female students at Diponegoro University.
- 1.3.2. To examine how female students acquire American English expressions through digital media and exposure to American popular culture.
- 1.3.3. To analyze the reasons behind the use of American English expressions in the daily conversations of female students at Diponegoro University.

1.4. Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the use of American English expressions in daily conversations among female students at Diponegoro University. Specifically, the study examines how American English expressions are recognized, acquired, and used within the participants' everyday communication practices. The term American English expressions in this study refers to various informal linguistic expressions commonly found in contemporary American communication, including slang, colloquial phrases, internet-based

expressions, idiomatic expressions, and popular cultural references. Rather than examining the historical development or linguistic evolution of these expressions, this study focuses on how female students encounter and use them in their daily lives through social interaction, digital media exposure, and engagement with American popular culture.

The scope of this study is limited to American English expressions that participants recognize, encounter, or occasionally use in informal communication settings. These expressions may be acquired through social media platforms, online entertainment, streaming services, films, television series, music, digital communication, friendship networks, and everyday social interactions. Accordingly, the study emphasizes participants' familiarity with and exposure to American English expressions rather than investigating broader linguistic developments or historical origins of the expressions.

The participants of this study consist of female undergraduate students from various faculties at Diponegoro University. The selection of participants is intended to provide diverse perspectives regarding the recognition and use of American English expressions among university students from different academic backgrounds. The findings are intended to provide an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences and are not intended to be statistically generalized to all university students.

To ensure the relevance of the data, several criteria are applied in selecting participants. First, participants must be active female undergraduate students at

Diponegoro University who are currently in their eighth semester or are working on their undergraduate thesis. Second, they are expected to have regular exposure to English-language digital content, such as social media platforms, online videos, music, films, streaming services, podcasts, or other forms of internet-based communication. Third, participants should be familiar with at least some American English expressions encountered in either online or offline interactions. Finally, participants must be willing to participate voluntarily in in-depth interviews and provide information regarding their language use experiences and communication practices.

The data collected in this study include both linguistic and social information related to participants' use of American English expressions. This study does not aim to investigate participants' private lives or personal socioeconomic backgrounds in detail. Instead, it focuses on aspects directly related to language use, including familiarity with American English expressions, patterns of usage, sources of acquisition, social interaction, and exposure to digital media and American popular culture. These aspects are examined to understand how cultural and communicative environments contribute to participants' use of American English expressions.

Data collection is conducted through two methods: in-depth interviews and an American English Expression Recognition Checklist developed by the researcher. The interviews are used to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and motivations regarding their use of American English

expressions in daily communication. Meanwhile, participants are asked to identify expressions that they recognize, frequently encounter, or occasionally use from a checklist containing selected American English expressions. The checklist serves as supporting data to identify participants' familiarity with and usage of these expressions.

The findings of this study are based solely on the participants' responses and self-reported experiences during the data collection process. Hence, the study does not aim to make broad generalizations about the language practices of all Indonesian university students. Instead, it seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of how female students at Diponegoro University recognize, acquire, and use American English expressions in their daily communication and how such practices may reflect their exposure to American popular culture.

This study was conducted among female students at Diponegoro University over a three-month period from January to March 2026, including data collection, transcription, and analysis. The study is limited to a specific university context and does not seek to represent all Indonesian university students. Rather, it aims to provide a focused sociolinguistic and American Studies perspective on the relationship between American popular culture and the use of American English expressions among female university students.

1.5. Previous Study

To establish the research gap and position the present study within existing scholarship, the researcher reviewed several previous studies related to

social media use, slang, language variation, digital communication, and American popular culture. These studies provide theoretical and methodological references for present research while also highlighting areas that have received limited scholarly attention. By reviewing previous studies, the researcher aims to identify gaps in the existing literature and demonstrate the significance of investigating the use of American English expressions among female students at Diponegoro University. First previous study that the writer found is an article written by Dumford et al. (2023) in their study entitled *“Social Media Use in Relation to Peers: A Comparison Between Males and Females.”* This study mainly discusses how different male and female users in using social media, especially in peer interaction within online social engagement. The findings indicate that male and female users show different patterns purpose in communicating with peers and using social media. Although the study explains gender differences in social media use, it does not specifically discuss how social media affects language use in daily conversation. As a result, there is still limited discussion about the influence of social media on linguistic behavior, particularly the use of American English Expressions in everyday conversations among female university students. This issue becomes the focus of the present study, which examines how female students’ social media use contributes to the use of American English Expressions in their daily communication.

The second study reviewed in this study was conducted by Situmorang et al. (2024) with the title “*The Effect of Slang Use on Teenagers' Communication Patterns on Social Media.*” This study focuses on how teenagers use slang in online communication, particularly on TikTok. The results showed that teenagers often use slang to express feelings, interact more comfortably with others, and strengthen their sense of belonging within online social groups. However, Situmorang et al (2024) also notes that the use of slang can sometimes lead to misunderstandings and make people confused, especially for people outside the teen social media circle. Although this study explains the role of slang in teen online communication, it only looks at teen users and online interactions. It does not discuss how slang is used in everyday offline conversations or how American English Expressions is adopted by university students, this study leaves a gap in our understanding of the use of American English Expressions in everyday conversations among female university students, which is the focus of this study.

The third related study the writer reviewed is written by Azis Pradana in her study with the title *Memes, Slang, and Subcultures: Urban Dictionary as a Reflection of Digital Culture*. The article mainly focused on investigating the platform's role in documenting the rapid evolution of slang and memes, and their function in shaping and representing digital subcultures. Based on his finding, Azis highlights how informal language serves as a powerful marker of “insider” identity, how collective humor and satire facilitate social critique, and

how the platforms themselves act as living archives that record rapid linguistic and cultural shifts. Although the study focuses on Urban Dictionary as a digital platform, it demonstrates how language, memes, and digital subcultures are interconnected within contemporary popular culture. This perspective is relevant to the present study because it illustrates how informal linguistic expressions circulate through digital culture and become part of everyday communication practices.

The fourth related study is an article with the title *Analysis Word of Abbreviations Used by Gen Z on Twitter (X): Qualitative Study* by Pebriyanti and Rosyidah (2026) where they analyzed the types and functions of abbreviations used by Generation Z on Twitter (X). Using Schendl's (2001) classification and Jakobson's (1960) language functions, the study found that initialisms were the most frequently used type of abbreviation, while the referential function was the most dominant communicative function. The findings suggest that abbreviations are not merely used for linguistic economy but also function as markers of collective identity and social interaction in digital communication. Although the study provides valuable insights into the use of abbreviations on Twitter (X), it focuses only on one category of American English expressions, namely abbreviations, and analyzes online written communication. In contrast, the present study investigates a broader range of American English expressions—including slang, colloquial expressions, internet expressions, abbreviations, and idiomatic expressions—

and examines how female university students acquire and use these expressions in their daily conversations through the influence of American popular culture.

The fifth related study is an article written by Ishak, Desri Arwen, and Euis Yanah Mulyanah with the title *The Phenomenon of Language Mixing Used among Gen Z in Indonesian Students*. The research mainly focused on the code-mixing of English and Indonesian used among Gen Z in a certain University. The writers stated that the results indicate that language blending among Gen Z students is an organic result of social and exposure to digital media, along with a changing linguistic environment influenced by worldwide factors. This study is relevant to the present research because it demonstrates how linguistic practices among young people are shaped by social environments and digital media exposure. However, it focuses on code-mixing rather than the use of American English expressions in everyday communication.

Another relevant study was conducted by Mohsin entitled *The Influence of Popular Culture on English Language Usage* (2025). The study investigates how films and music contribute to English language acquisition among university students. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the researchers found that exposure to English-language films and songs helps learners acquire vocabulary, colloquial expressions, idioms, and slang used by native speakers. The findings also indicate that popular media increases learners' motivation and familiarity with authentic English used in everyday communication.

This study is relevant to the present research because it demonstrates that popular culture serves as an important source of exposure to authentic English expressions. However, unlike the present study, it focuses primarily on English language learning rather than examining how American English expressions are recognized, acquired, and used in everyday conversations among Indonesian university students. The present study extends the discussion by analyzing the relationship between American popular culture and the use of American English expressions from an American Studies and sociolinguistic perspective.

The last article reviewed by the writer is an article conducted by Yanfei Li et al. (2024) with the title *The Influence of American Popular Culture on Chinese English Majors: A Structural Equation Modelling Study*. The study conducted by Li et al. (2024) is particularly relevant to the present research because it explicitly examines the influence of American popular culture. While the study focuses on English learning among Chinese university students, it demonstrates how exposure to American media content contributes to language-related behaviors and cultural engagement. However, the study does not specifically investigate the use of American English expressions in everyday communication. The present study extends this discussion by examining how exposure to American popular culture may influence the recognition and use of American English expressions among female students at Diponegoro University.

1.6. Organization of Writing

This research is divided into five chapters:

1.6.1. Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, research problems, research questions, research objectives, previous studies, scope and limitations, and the organization of writing.

1.6.2. Chapter II: Conceptual Frameworks

This chapter discusses the theories and concepts used in the study. It includes American Studies perspectives, the concept of American popular culture, American English expressions, sociolinguistic theory, language, identity and social interaction, and relevant studies that support the analysis of the research findings. In addition, this chapter explains the research methodology, including the research approach, participants, data collection techniques, and data analysis procedures used in the study.

1.6.3. Chapter III: General Description

This chapter provides a general description of the participants and the research setting, including their social background, daily activities, media exposure, and communication practices related to the use of American English Expressions.

1.6.4. Chapter IV: Result and Discussion

This chapter presents and analyzes the research based on interview data and the American English Expression Recognition Checklist. The findings are discussed using the theories and concepts presented in Chapter II.

1.6.5. Chapter V: Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the main findings of the study, presents the conclusions, discusses the limitations of the research, and provides suggestions for future studies.

