

JEPAL

Journal of English Pedagogy and Applied Linguistics

<https://www.jurnal.masoemiversity.ac.id/index.php/englishpedagogy>

Submitted: 5 May 2026 Revised: 22 July 2026 Accepted: 30 July 2026 Available Online: 1 August 2026

NEURO-PSYCHOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE ASBUN PHENOMENON AMONG GENERATION ALPHA ON TIKTOK

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Abstract: This study explores the phenomenon of 'Asbun' (speaking without real substance, or "just making noise") among Generation Alpha, approached through a neuro-psycholinguistic lens. Growing up saturated in digital environments, this generation exhibits distinctive speech patterns marked by rapid word retrieval alongside a diminished capacity for verbal self-restraint. The research aims to examine how patterns of digital engagement shape these 'Asbun' speech characteristics, and to use this connection as a way of understanding breakdowns in self-regulation during the process of producing language. Employing a qualitative approach, the study draws on five TikTok video transcripts sourced from different accounts (@alinaa_chan, @istrifadhli, @ibuendog, @leehanim, and @mat_pecii), gathered on March 31, 2026. Theoretically, the analysis combines Levelt's (1989) model of speech production with neurocognitive perspectives on Prefrontal Cortex (PFC) function and Theory of Mind (ToM). The results indicate that 'Asbun' speech may be better understood as an outcome of disrupted digital cognitive patterns and impaired linguistic self-monitoring, rather than as deliberate rudeness, although sociopragmatic and performative interpretations cannot be ruled out. Heavy consumption of short-form digital media appears to speed up access to the mental lexicon, but at the cost of the sociopragmatic filtering typically governed by the PFC. Because the study relies on an exploratory design with a limited dataset and does not independently confirm the ages of the speakers, its conclusions should be read as a theoretical proposition rather than a generalizable empirical finding. Overall, the language patterns identified in Generation Alpha suggest a form of cognitive restructuring, in which the demand for instant digital communication takes precedence over conventional norms of politeness, a shift that carries important implications for both education and social interaction.

Keywords: generation alpha, psycholinguistics, neurological development, TikTok

INTRODUCTION

A profound demographic transformation is exemplified by Generation Alpha, a cohort whose lives blur the line between virtual environments and physical reality. This group is unique as they have been nurtured from infancy amidst artificial intelligence, interactive touchscreens, and predictive algorithmic systems. Consequently, continuous interaction with short-form multimedia content conditions them to favor immediate gratification and rapid information ingestion. Out of this distinctive digital landscape, a novel linguistic pattern termed the 'Asbun' (*asal bunyi*) phenomenon has surfaced. This behavior is characterized by impulsive, candid, and frequently disjointed speech that deviates significantly from traditional bidirectional sociopragmatic conventions.

Although society frequently misconstrues these verbal outbursts as a moral decline or a lack of manners, scholarly perspectives suggest these linguistic shifts represent a cognitive adaptation to digitized settings (Fitriyani, 2026). Young individuals routinely employ digital discourse fragments, viral expressions, and internet memes to forge their identities as digital natives (Wirasasti et al., 2025). This indicates a paradigm shift in communicative capability; for these children, the capacity to quickly project identity via algorithmic tropes seems to overshadow the importance of formal decorum (Putri et al., 2025). Normatively, childhood language acquisition aligns with the incremental development of executive functions, specifically socio-pragmatic mindfulness and inhibitory control which allow children to tailor their speech to external social environments (Levelt, 1989; Miller, 2006). Within domestic and educational settings, true communicative competence entails not just vocabulary expansion, but also the capacity to suppress impulsive verbal reactions via cognitive oversight.

Nonetheless, the modern digital landscape offers a contradictory scenario. The ubiquity of micro-video applications like TikTok exposes children to highly fragmented communication, algorithmically tailored streams, and trending slang at an accelerated rate. While a few contemporary investigations have explored the digital vernacular of Generation Alpha and how social platforms drive slang adoption (Ayu et al., 2026; Wirasasti et al., 2025; Subramaniam and Thangavelu, 2025), these analyses are largely confined to sociolinguistic or media studies frameworks. As a result, they offer scarce insights into the internal neurocognitive operations that trigger spontaneous verbal outputs.

Up to this point, there remains a lack of scholarship merging psycholinguistic speech generation models with neurobiological viewpoints to clarify why Generation Alpha exhibits the impulsive or contextually detached speech tied to the 'Asbun' trend. Prior literature typically details the linguistic outcomes without probing the interplay between digital schema stimulation, vocabulary retrieval, and inhibitory mechanisms. To address this lacuna, the current inquiry synthesizes Levelt's language production framework with neuro-psycholinguistic parameters, focusing specifically on the Theory of Mind (ToM) and the Prefrontal Cortex (PFC). This cross-disciplinary vantage point forms the core novelty of this research, offering a more profound comprehension of linguistic behaviors in a tech-saturated childhood era.

Consequently, this investigation is directed toward resolving two pivotal research inquiries. First, in what ways can the sociopragmatic and lexical properties of the 'Asbun' phenomenon in Generation Alpha be interpreted via Levelt's model of speech production? Second, how do neurocognitive processes, particularly Theory of Mind (ToM) and inhibitory management, facilitate the generation of spontaneous, contextually incongruent utterances within tech-mediated spaces? By answering these

prompts, this study endeavors to connect sociolinguistic assessments of internet-based language with neuro-psycholinguistic accounts of speech synthesis. Ultimately, this multidisciplinary inquiry aims to provide a holistic view of how algorithmically driven settings reshape children's verbal competence and cognitive-linguistic trajectories (Levelt, 1989; Miller, 2006; Jiang et al., 2026).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Neuro-Psycholinguistics: The Relationship between the Brain and Language Mechanisms

As an interdisciplinary domain, neuro-psycholinguistics investigates the direct correlation between cognitive linguistic representations and the underlying neural architecture of the human brain. Foundational texts in this arena, including *Fundamentals of Psycholinguistics*, argue that verbal communication transcends mechanical behavior; it represents a perceptual construct that converts physical acoustic or visual signals into organized linguistic structures through neurophysiologically executed mental processes (Fernández & Cairns, 2010).

Regarding vocabulary generation, Levelt's speech production model (1989, 1999) remains the benchmark paradigm for explaining the sequential phases of speech, spanning from initial conceptualization and preverbal messaging to formulation, encompassing lexical retrieval and phonological sequencing and culminating in vocal articulation. Moreover, contemporary neuro-psycholinguistic inquiries have begun exploring how technology consumption modulates cognitive control and memory systems, pointing specifically to inhibitory control impairments among frequent users of micro-video applications (Jiang et al., 2026).

Executive Function and Inhibitory Control in Language Production

Executive function represents a cornerstone of successful verbal interaction, encompassing high-level cognitive operations that supervise attention distribution, working memory retention, cognitive adaptability, and inhibitory control. Within this cognitive matrix, inhibitory control is paramount in enabling individuals to suppress irrelevant or sociopragmatically unsuitable vocabulary before vocal execution occurs. From a psycholinguistic standpoint, effective interpersonal communication demands not only the retrieval of lexical nodes but also the capacity to monitor and moderate competing linguistic options based on immediate contextual boundaries (Levelt, 1989; Krzysik, 2020).

In Levelt's language production framework, inhibitory mechanisms become crucial during the transition from the formulation phase to actual articulation. Although multiple lexical candidates routinely become active during the planning stage of speech, only the variants that align with the speaker's communicative intent and immediate social environment should undergo final selection. The internal self-monitoring node operates as a cognitive filter evaluating linguistic inputs before they are vocalized (Levelt, 1999). A degradation in this monitoring loop often causes speakers to generate utterances that are syntactically coherent yet pragmatically deficient.

Current advancements in cognitive neuroscience demonstrate that these inhibitory operations are tightly coupled with executive mechanisms orchestrated by the Prefrontal Cortex (PFC). The PFC modulates behavioral impulse regulation, future planning, and social awareness, thereby allowing individuals to calibrate their verbal output to match the implicit expectations of any given communicative setting (Miller, 2006). The

development of these neural pathways is vital during childhood, a developmental window wherein youth gradually learn to harmonize vocabulary retrieval with interpersonal empathy, cognitive perspective-taking, and socio-pragmatic insight.

Accumulating evidence further indicates that immersion in short-form video (SFV) channels can recalibrate executive operations. Scholarly reports indicate that intense exposure to rapidly fluctuating audiovisual inputs can erode sustained focus and foster a dependence on automatic, stimulus-driven behavioral responses (Asif & Kazi, 2024; Drüppel et al., 2024). In a similar vein, Jiang et al. (2026) demonstrated that compulsive short-form video consumers display quantifiable deficits in inhibitory control. This implies that habitual interaction with algorithm-curated interfaces may compromise the cognitive frameworks tasked with behavioral response regulation. Viewed through this lens, the impulsive, uncontextualized utterances common among Generation Alpha may transcend isolated behavioral quirks, representing systemic adjustments in executive functioning induced by a saturated digital milieu.

Consequently, the dynamic interplay between language synthesis and executive functioning offers a vital theoretical lens for interpreting the 'Asbun' trend. Rather than reducing these verbal expressions to a mere defiance of politeness paradigms, they can be understood as the direct byproduct of a collision between highly accessible digital lexical schemas and immature, still-developing neurocognitive inhibitory controls.

Generation Alpha: 21st-Century Digital Natives

Generation Alpha is demographically categorized as the demographic cohort born from 2010 through the mid-2020s (Runcan, 2025; Wirasasti et al., 2025). Diverging from Generation Z, this group represents the first generation of "absolute digital natives," having been immersed since infancy in a lifestyle dictated by automated intelligence, touchscreen machinery, and social media data streams (Podara & Matsiola, 2024).

Academic literature indicates that this unique upbringing sparks a form of "precocious" development or accelerated maturity, wherein young children encounter adult-oriented data pipelines devoid of developmental filters, ultimately altering their cognitive framing and physical behaviors (Susanti, 2023). Furthermore, their everyday routines are heavily calibrated by interactions with platform delivery algorithms on systems like TikTok and WhatsApp, which ultimately forge their collective demographic identity (Ayu et al., 2026; Nariswari & Istiqomah, 2025).

Digital Schema and Algorithm-Driven Language Acquisition

Modern models of language acquisition increasingly acknowledge that linguistic growth is shaped not only by domestic or institutional schooling environments but also by technologically mediated interactions. For Generation Alpha, whose daily realities are fundamentally bound to mobile devices and interactive media networks, virtual platforms operate as a secondary channel of linguistic input, persistently altering vocabulary accumulation, semantic mapping, and communicative actions (McCrindle & Fell, 2020; Podara & Matsiola, 2024). Consequently, the mechanics of language internalization can no longer be evaluated solely through traditional face-to-face engagements; they must incorporate the structural influence of algorithmically curated media exposure.

The concept of a digital schema provides a valuable framework for deciphering this shift. In cognitive psychology, a schema denotes an organized mental map of knowledge that dictates perception, information processing, and memory recall. Within

virtual spaces, chronic exposure to distinct lexical arrays, memes, trending catchphrases, and multimodal tropes gradually builds associative networks within the user's mental lexicon. These mental loops are continually reinforced by predictive recommendation algorithms that isolate and feed comparable content styles to the user, thereby escalating the cognitive retrieval speed of specific expressions over traditional vocabulary (Levey, 2025).

The mechanics of social media algorithms are highly impactful because they systematically reward user engagement, sensational novelty, and continuous repetition. Viral terminologies and catchphrases are encountered across disparate contexts, making them highly prominent in the mind and easily retrievable during unmapped communication. As a result, children frequently internalize and mirror these verbal expressions without necessarily grasping their etymological origins or the socio-pragmatic constraints governing their appropriate usage. This developmental pathway aligns with Social Learning Theory, which states that individuals adopt complex behavioral and linguistic traits via the observation and replication of highly visible environmental models (Subramaniam & Thangavelu, 2025).

Additionally, contemporary research indicates that the digital vernacular practices of Generation Alpha are tightly interwoven with peer-group inclusion and online identity architecture. Navigating slang, internet memes, and algorithm-fueled phrasing acts as both a communication vehicle and a symbolic badge of belonging within virtual subcultures (Ayu et al., 2026; Putri et al., 2025). Verbal expressions that older generations perceive as arbitrary or nonsensical frequently operate as an encrypted cultural dialect among youth sharing identical online spaces. Hence, the emergence of the 'Asbun' phenomenon represents a broader cognitive integration wherein digital schemas become embedded within the mental lexicon, subsequently dictating impulsive speech generation.

From a neuro-psycholinguistic angle, the symbiotic relationship between algorithmic conditioning and lexical retrieval requires closer scientific scrutiny. Habitual triggering of digitally dominant schemas can enhance the speed of lexical access while minimizing the window necessary for deliberative socio-pragmatic appraisal. This dynamic provides a crucial conceptual bridge connecting digital media intake patterns with traditional models of speech generation, validating the premise that children's verbal output in the high-tech era is shaped by an interaction between human cognitive architecture and algorithmic technology parameters (Jiang et al., 2026; Levey, 2025).

The 'Asbun' Phenomenon: The Evolution of Digital Language and Slang

The linguistic habit colloquially branded as '*asal buny*' (uttering phrases absent of context or clear logic) among Generation Alpha can be empirically defined as the deployment of digitized slang, vocabulary that spreads at hyper-speed via the mechanics of innovation diffusion (Subramaniam & Thangavelu, 2025; Wirasasti et al., 2025). This verbal transition is structurally accelerated by algorithm-mediated adoption pathways, wherein slang variants such as '*rizz*,' '*skibidi*,' or '*sigma*' achieve viral proliferation via micro-video content formats. Young individuals internalize these idioms through processes outlined in Social Learning Theory, integrating them into daily speech without requiring a grasp of their underlying etymological roots (Wirasasti et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the linguistic habits of Generation Alpha have noticeably gravitated toward multimodality and onomatopoeic structures, breaking past the limits of text-

only vernaculars. This dialect combines graphic symbols, emojis, and distinct audio catchphrases that serve as expressions of emotional hyperbole in virtual messaging (Ayu et al., 2026; Sari et al., 2024). Ultimately, the application of idioms that appear nonsensical or chaotic to older cohorts serves as a complex ingroup code or an identity anchor, cementing group cohesion and peer solidarity within digital spaces (Nariswari & Istiqomah, 2025).

METHOD

To explore the psycholinguistic occurrences within children's speech, this investigation adopts a descriptive qualitative method framed within a case study design. The primary empirical data were derived from five purposively selected TikTok video transcripts that encapsulate the 'Asbun' phenomenon. These videos were chosen based on specific criteria, namely their demonstration of spontaneous communication among Generation Alpha children within atypical sociopragmatic contexts. The empirical corpus comprises video materials from the following accounts: @alinaa_chan (published January 9, 2026), @istrifadhli (published January 20, 2026), @ibuendog (published February 2, 2026), @leehanim (published February 11, 2026), and @mat_pecii (published March 21, 2026). On March 31, 2026, these online resources were accessed, archived, and professionally transcribed to prepare them for linguistic review. The decision to analyze these particular clips rested on their transparent depiction of impulsive, technologically conditioned verbal exchanges defining Generation Alpha's communicative habits. In gathering the data, the 'simak dan catat' (observation and notation) approach was deployed, under which the investigator generated orthographic transcriptions of every spoken utterance within the video files (Viora & Wahyuningsi, 2025).

This inquiry relied entirely on publicly available online multimedia sourced from TikTok profiles that were openly accessible during the data collection window. Throughout the research pipeline, no private conversations, restricted documents, or personally identifiable information were gathered. The analytical lens was strictly directed at the structural linguistic properties of the spoken output, completely omitting the individual identities of the youth or other participants featured in the videos. The inclusion of platform usernames serves exclusively to ensure data traceability and maintain academic transparency.

The five videos were selected through purposive sampling according to three criteria: (a) featuring an identifiable child engaged in spontaneous, unscripted speech; (b) occurring within a socially distinctive or atypical setting (domestic, religious, commercial, medical, and familial contexts) that would make any departure from sociopragmatic conventions more visible; and (c) offering audio-visual quality clear enough for accurate transcription. Given the study's exploratory and interpretive orientation, the five cases were not selected with statistical generalizability in mind, but rather to achieve analytical or theoretical generalizability. That is, to demonstrate a range of plausible cognitive-linguistic mechanisms operating across varied social settings. Data collection stopped once the corpus reflected enough contextual diversity (domestic, religious, commercial, medical, festive) to support cross-case analysis, consistent with the concept of information power (Malterud et al., 2016), which holds that a small but contextually rich sample can provide sufficient analytical depth when the research question is tightly focused and the cases themselves are information-dense.

Rather than claiming data saturation in the grounded-theory sense, this study positions itself as an exploratory multiple-case study intended to generate, rather than fully verify

Because the ages of the children featured were not independently confirmed through birth records or parental verification, this study treats "Generation Alpha" membership as an inferred category rather than an established demographic fact. This attribution relied on a combination of contextual indicators visible in the videos, apparent developmental stage, schooling context (e.g., attending Islamic elementary school), and age references mentioned on-screen by accompanying caregivers. This constraint is openly acknowledged: since TikTok's account information does not verify the age of the people shown, it remains possible that some speakers fall outside the Generation Alpha birth-year window (2010 to the mid-2020s; Runcan, 2025). As such, the findings should be understood as illustrative of speech patterns typical of digital-native Generation Alpha users, rather than as verified claims about a confirmed population sample.

Transcript analysis followed a two-stage coding process that combined discourse-pragmatic analysis with psycholinguistic coding guided by theory. In the first stage, each utterance was evaluated for its pragmatic function and situational appropriateness using Levinson's (1983) framework for context-dependent meaning, with particular attention to cases where an utterance departed from situational or relational expectations (such as mismatched register, face-threatening remarks, or topic incongruity). In the second stage, the utterances identified in the first stage were mapped onto the stages of Levelt's (1989, 1999) model of speech production (Conceptualizer, Formulator, Articulator, and Self-Monitor) based on observable linguistic cues. For example, smooth, hesitation-free delivery was taken as a sign of an unobstructed transition from Formulator to Articulator, while lexical insertions unrelated to the topic were interpreted as evidence that retrieval had bypassed self-monitoring. Neurocognitive concepts (PFC-related inhibitory control, ToM, and limbic reactivity) were then used as interpretive frameworks, grounded in existing literature, to explain the observed pragmatic and linguistic patterns, not as directly measured neural phenomena, since no neuroimaging or physiological data were gathered. The coding process was carried out by the researcher and verified against contextual details from each video (such as setting, the relationship between speakers, and situational stakes) in order to minimize interpretive bias. To assess the consistency of pragmatic-violation coding, two independent coding rounds were conducted one week apart.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data analysis reveals that the 'Asbun' trend stems from the intrusion of digital schemas into formal linguistic spaces, a process in which the articulation phase is heavily dominated by syntactic primitive structures.

Table 1. Corpus of generation alpha's spontaneous speech data on Tiktok

Video	Social context	Key participant	Primary Utterance Analyzed
Video 1	Home/domestic	Mother and child	"Kita terbuat dari clay mahal" ("We are made of expensive clay")
Video 2	Religious school	Teacher and student	Q: "Nabi sulaiman bisa berbicara dengan?" A: "Mantan" (Q:

Video	Social context	Key participant	Primary Utterance Analyzed
Video 3	Public bazaar	Child and teen seller	"Prophet Solomon could speak with?" A: "Exes.") <i>"Kenapa jualan? Miskin ya?"</i> ("Why are you selling things? Are you poor?")
Video 4	Hospital visit (UGD)	Teacher and student	<i>"Nggak ada! Kagak! Malas gue!"</i> ("There's no one! Nope! I'm lazy!")
Video 5	Eid al-fitr gathering	Father and child	<i>"Papah cari istri lagi dong sepuluh"</i> ("Dad, go find ten more wives.")

Subsequent to gathering the baseline data compiled in Table 1, the research advanced to analytical processing guided by Levelt's Speech Production Model. A comprehensive summary of this evaluation is detailed in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Psycholinguistic and neuro-cognitive analysis of 'asbun' phenomenon

Utterance Context	Linguistic Phenomenon	Cognitive Mechanism	Neuro-Biological Interpretation
<i>"clay mahal"</i> ("expensive clay")	Semantic Reconstruction	Relational Mapping	High TPJ activation (Humor/Incongruity)
<i>"Mantan"</i> ("exes")	Lexical Interference	Priming effect from SFV	Fast Lexical Retrieval/Low PFC Inhibition
<i>"miskin ya?"</i> ("are you poor?")	Pragmatic Failure	Theory of mind (ToM) deficit	Delayed maturation of social-emotional filters
<i>"malas gue!"</i> ("I'm lazy!")	Syntactic Primitives	Impulse-driven resistance	Dominant Limbic System response
<i>"istri sepuluh"</i> ("ten wives")	Associative Thinking	Relational logic optimization	Excessive dopamine-driven reward seeking

Detailed Case Analysis of the 'Asbun' Phenomenon

To construct a comprehensive understanding of how algorithm-driven environments shape language production, this section dissects each piece of collected data through an integrated lens of Levelt's speech production model and neurobiological frameworks.

Data 1: Semantic Reconstruction in "Clay Mahal"

Within the analyzed data, the 'Asbun' phenomenon manifests through distinct cognitive pathways, one of which is intentional creative deconstruction. In Video 1, the child's spontaneous use of the term *"Kita terbuat dari clay mahal"* ("We are made of expensive clay") functions as more than mere random slang. From a psycholinguistic standpoint, this response highlights a high degree of cognitive flexibility where the

subject does not merely repeat a phrase blindly, but actively remaps their self-identity by synthesizing specific visual references popularized on social media platforms with their immediate physical reality. This aligns with the findings of Putri et al. (2025), which suggest that for Generation Alpha, the mental lexicon is no longer a static repository of formal words, but a dynamic, fluid system heavily shaped by digital aesthetics and online subcultures.

To evaluate this empirical evidence further, Levelt's (1989, 1999) speech production model offers a structured explanation. At the Conceptualizer stage, where a preverbal message is generated based on intent and environmental cues, Generation Alpha draws from a unique knowledge depository heavily saturated with digital schemas. As noted by Levey (2025), repeated exposure to specific multimodal patterns and memes embeds alternative associative networks directly into the child's cognitive architecture. The phrase "*clay mahal*" is an ongoing aesthetic and comedic trope on TikTok used to describe flawless, idealized, or high-status visual entities.

Neurologically, when the child processes the social interaction, the Temporoparietal Junction (TPJ), which governs humor, structural incongruity, and creative relational mapping is highly activated. Instead of retrieving standard, conventional adjectives from their mental lexicon to describe beauty or physical quality, the child's Formulator bypasses traditional formal registers. The digital schema acts as a powerful cognitive prime, accelerating the retrieval of "*clay mahal*" because it carries a high reward value associated with digital-native peer alignment and solidarity within the cyber landscape (Nariswari & Istiqomah, 2025; Wirasasti et al., 2025). The speech is articulated smoothly without hesitation, showing that the internal Self-Monitoring loop approves the utterance because, within the child's identity construction paradigm, the phrase is deeply meaningful and socially validating (Putri et al., 2025).

Alternative interpretations of this utterance deserve consideration as well. Rather than reflecting an unintentional cognitive misstep, the phrase could just as plausibly be understood as a deliberate comedic act, the child may be consciously drawing on a familiar TikTok trope to entertain viewers, functioning as a form of identity performance in line with Nariswari and Istiqomah's (2025) view of digital slang as a marker of ingroup belonging rather than evidence of a self-monitoring failure. From this perspective, the confidence and fluency of the delivery would not signal a bypassed self-monitor, but rather the successful execution of a creative, performative intention. In other words, the utterance remains pragmatically appropriate relative to its actual communicative purpose (humor, alignment with peers), even though it departs from adult-normative speech conventions.

Data 2: Inhibitory Failure and Priming in "Mantan"

Conversely, the data from Video 2 reveals a more concerning mechanism where an utterance emerges not as a conscious creative choice, but as a direct result of accidental inhibitory filter failure. During a rapid Q&A lesson in a religious school setting, the teacher asks, "*Nabi Sulaiman bisa berbicara dengan?*" ("Prophet Solomon could speak with?"), and the student instantly responds with, "*Mantan!*" ("Exes!"). Within Levelt's (1989, 1992) speech production framework, the Formulator stage appears to be severely compromised by a powerful, algorithmically induced priming effect. Because digital platforms repeatedly expose children to high-frequency lexicons, these viral words become hyper-accessible in the brain's short-term memory (Chen et al., 2020; Fatmasari et al., 2025).

Consequently, when a stimulus requires an immediate verbal response, the brain retrieves the most accessible digital schema, completely disregarding the specific sociocultural or religious constraints of the situation (Fatmasari et al., 2025). This indicates a radical narrowing of the cognitive pause, where speed of retrieval outpaces the accuracy of situational judgment.

From a neurobiological standpoint, successful communication requires the Prefrontal Cortex (PFC) to exercise robust executive function, specifically inhibitory control, to suppress competing but contextually inappropriate lexical candidates before articulation can occur (Miller, 2006; Krzysik, 2020). In this religious environment, the contextual framing should automatically activate lexical networks related to "animals" (*hewan*) or "jinn" (*jin*). However, as demonstrated by Jiang et al. (2026), problematic short-form video users exhibit measurable inhibitory control deficits due to repeated engagement with rapid audiovisual stimuli. This excessive use of short-form content lowers the activation threshold for emotionally charged slang like "*mantan*" within the mental lexicon. When the question is posed, the child's under-construction PFC fails to execute timely response regulation. The internal Self-Monitoring component (Levelt, 1999), which functions as an internal filter evaluating linguistic appropriateness before articulation, is bypassed by the sheer speed of the retrieval process. The outcome is a response that is grammatically valid but pragmatically malfunctioning (Krzysik, 2020).

A non-deficit explanation is also worth considering here: the response could instead reflect a form of verbal play or classroom humor commonly rehearsed among peer groups, where children come to learn that giving an unexpected answer tends to draw laughter and social approval, independent of any underlying issue with cognitive control. Likewise, the broader linguistic culture of the child's family or classroom, for instance, an environment where joking responses to quiz-style questions are treated as normal, could just as plausibly explain the utterance, without needing to invoke a breakdown in inhibitory control.

Data 3: Pragmatic Breakdown and ToM Deficit in "Miskin Ya?"

The analysis of Video 3, where a child asks a teenage vendor at a public bazaar, "*Kenapa jualan? Miskin ya?*" ("Why are you selling things? Are you poor?"), provides a stark illustration of a significant sociopragmatic failure. Neurologically, the ability to modulate speech to prevent interpersonal friction is a complex executive function that relies heavily on the maturation of the Prefrontal Cortex (PFC) and social-emotional networks (Miller, 2006). The PFC serves as the neural substrate for empathy and Theory of Mind (ToM), the capacity to conceptualize, value, and predict the mental and emotional states of others (Miller, 2006). The extreme bluntness and complete lack of politeness filters observed in this case suggest that chronic, high-level screen exposure may be desensitizing the child's neural pathways to face-to-face social cues, supporting the observations made by Brojanowska et al. (2026). Without the continuous reinforcement of real-world social feedback, the ToM filter remains underdeveloped, leading to utterances that are grammatically correct but pragmatically deaf to the listener's feelings.

In the context of Levelt's (1989) model, a properly functioning Conceptualizer utilizes ToM inputs to tailor the preverbal message according to interpersonal and socio-pragmatic norms. In this data point, however, the child treats social hierarchies and economic vulnerabilities through the lens of a gamified digital schema. As noted by Subramaniam and Thangavelu (2025), children frequently adopt digitalized slang and

social tropes through the mechanism of Social Learning Theory, often imitating models without fully understanding their specific etymological or sociopragmatic real-world implications.

Because the child lacks sufficient face-to-face communicative competence, their language production mechanism functions without simulating the psychological impact of their words on the recipient. The internal monitor treats a highly offensive social taboo as a low-stakes internet comment, demonstrating how algorithmically driven language acquisition can detach speech from basic human empathy (Ayu et al., 2026; Podara & Matsiola, 2024).

It is equally plausible that this utterance reflects the generally underdeveloped pragmatic competence characteristic of early childhood, representing a developmental-stage effect rather than one specific to digital media. Children across different cultures and historical periods have long been observed producing blunt, face-threatening questions before their Theory of Mind fully matures (Miller, 2006). Since this study lacks a comparison group of children with limited digital exposure, it cannot disentangle the specific contribution of digital media from ordinary developmental immaturity. Future research that includes comparative data from children with lower levels of digital media exposure would help clarify which of these competing explanations better accounts for the pattern observed.

Data 4: Syntactic Primitives and Limbic Dominance in "Malas Gue!"

Videos 4 and 5 further demonstrate the dominance of the limbic system in initiating aggressive, spontaneous, and contextually disruptive speech. In Video 4, recorded during a stressful hospital emergency room (UGD) visit, the student aggressively reacts to an inquiry by shouting, "*Nggak ada! Kagak! Malas gue!*" ("There's no one! Nope! I'm lazy!"). The impulsive usage of colloquialisms like "*Kagak*" or the socially incongruent display of resistance suggests a temporary disruption in the Basal Ganglia-Thalamocortical (BGTC) circuits. These circuits, which regulate the motor initiation of speech, appear to operate with a shortcut mechanism that bypasses the regulatory control functions of the frontal lobe (Krzysik, 2020).

Psycholinguistically, the emotional distress of the physical environment triggers an immediate activation of the Amygdala and the broader Limbic System. This limbic dominance restricts the cognitive resources available for complex syntactic planning within Levelt's Formulator stage (Cholin et al., 2011). Rather than generating structured, socially appropriate sentences to communicate physical discomfort, the child's brain resorts to syntactic primitives—short, fragmented linguistic units that require minimal cognitive processing. As highlighted by Jadmiko and Damariswara (2022), these informal and aggressive primitives are heavily modeled, repeated, and reinforced by casual digital dialogue on social media platforms like TikTok. Under stress, the neural preference shifts entirely toward rapid-fire, stimulus-driven responses over the slower, energy-expensive process of social deliberation, validating the attention-deficit concerns raised by Drüppel et al. (2024).

The situational stress inherent to an emergency hospital setting offers a simpler, competing explanation: acute distress is known to reliably produce blunt, abbreviated speech in individuals regardless of age or media exposure, independent of any digital conditioning. The limbic-dominance interpretation proposed in this study should therefore be treated as one plausible contributing factor among several, alongside the

well-documented tendency for stress to simplify speech even outside digital-media contexts.

Data 5: Associative Optimizations and Reward Seeking in "Istri Sepuluh"

A similar mechanism of frontal-lobe bypassing occurs in Video 5, where a child turns to their father during a formal Eid al-Fitr family gathering and says, "*Papah cari istri lagi dong sepuluh*" ("Dad, go find ten more wives"). This highly inappropriate and humorous utterance showcases how associative thinking and digital reward-seeking structures alter language planning. In Levelt's architecture, the Conceptualizer combines disparate concepts if they are linked by a strong associative memory network. Hyperbolic relationship dynamics and polygamy jokes are prominent comedic themes engineered by platform designs to maximize algorithmic engagement (Levey, 2025; Nariswari & Istiqomah, 2025). The child does not understand the literal socio-religious implications of the statement; rather, they recognize the phrase as an optimization tool to generate shock value and immediate laughter (Wirasasti et al., 2025).

From a neurological standpoint, Generation Alpha's constant engagement with platform recommendation algorithms conditions the brain to continually pursue dopaminergic rewards (Asif & Kazi, 2024; Runcan, 2025), rewards that manifest as likes, attention, and heightened engagement online. During a significant real-world family gathering, the child appears to be attempting to recreate these same dynamics of digital validation within a physical, offline setting. The phrase "*istri sepuluh*" ("ten wives") is drawn from the mental lexicon precisely because it functions as an algorithmically proven formula for capturing attention (Sari et al., 2024). Here, the immediate pursuit of social-dopaminergic reward appears to override conventional pragmatic filters entirely, illustrating how profoundly a digital-native identity can shape speech behavior even in physical, non-digital contexts a pattern consistent with Susanti's (2023) earlier caution regarding the "precocious" maturation of children exposed to unfiltered media. That said, this utterance might alternatively be explained as an instance of an established family joking register: many households maintain a habitual pattern of teasing or hyperbolic humor surrounding a parent's hypothetical remarriage, in which case the behavior would reflect familiar domestic humor rather than digitally primed reward-seeking specifically.

General Discussion and Implications

The empirical socio-pragmatic breakdowns and psycholinguistic anomalies detailed in the preceding case analyses cannot be dismissed as isolated instances of childhood behavioral defiance or temporary linguistic trends. When aggregated, these data points offer a profound look into a systematic socio-cognitive shift occurring within Generation Alpha. The constant intersection of developing neural pathways with predatory engagement algorithms creates a unique communicative ecology. In this environment, long-standing evolutionary mechanisms of human language acquisition are forced to compete with hyper-stimulating digital inputs.

To fully understand the scope of this phenomenon, it is necessary to move beyond descriptive linguistics and examine the systemic repercussions of this shift. The following sections provide a broader theoretical synthesis, examining how these behavioral patterns challenge established cognitive models of speech production, redefine the dual nature of modern youth identity, and demand immediate, structural interventions within our educational and familial systems.

Implications for Brain Language Processing and Model Reconfiguration

The cumulative findings offer a profound reconfiguration of our understanding of language processing in the digital age. The 'Asbun' phenomenon serves as empirical evidence of a paradigm shift in the speech production model. The self-monitoring stage, which Levelt (1989) identified as a crucial internal filter for appropriateness, is increasingly being sacrificed in favor of articulation speed and engagement. This shift suggests that Generation Alpha is developing a reactive-pathway for language, where the feedback loop between the Conceptualizer and the Monitor is weakened by the sheer velocity of digital discourse.

This process represents an intricate interaction between memory activation, inhibitory control, and environmental priming. The digital environment continuously strengthens particular semantic and phonological connections, increasing their activation threshold within the mental lexicon. Consequently, when children encounter communicative stimuli, these digital schemas may be automatically retrieved before higher-order socio-pragmatic evaluation processes are fully engaged. This interpretation is consistent with recent cognitive neuroscience studies emphasizing the crucial role of executive function and inhibitory mechanisms in regulating speech production and syntactic processing (Thothathiri et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the operation of social media algorithms is particularly influential because they privilege engagement, novelty, and automatic repetition. Viral words and expressions are repeatedly encountered across multiple contexts, making them cognitively salient and easily retrievable during spontaneous communication (Levey, 2025). Consequently, children may internalize and reproduce these linguistic forms even when they do not fully understand their original meanings or the socio-pragmatic conditions governing their appropriate use. This structural shift implies that the mental layout of language development in children is no longer a linear maturation of communicative boundaries, but a fluctuating architecture constantly rewritten by predictive algorithms and high-frequency digital exposures (McCrindle & Fell, 2020; Podara & Matsiola, 2024).

The Dual Nature of the 'Asbun' Phenomenon

However, it is essential to avoid a purely pathological interpretation of this phenomenon, as noted by Fitriyani (2026), who suggests viewing this not as a moral crisis but as an evolutionary cognitive process. While it presents a politeness crisis from a traditionalist perspective, it also reveals an unprecedented level of linguistic innovation. Children are not just misusing language; they are constructing hybrid digital identities that prioritize speed, meme-literacy, and global connectivity (Wirasasti et al., 2025). The 'Asbun' phenomenon should be understood as possessing a dual nature. On the one hand, it reflects the remarkable adaptability and creativity of Generation Alpha in responding to new communicative environments. On the other hand, it raises important concerns regarding the development of empathy, contextual awareness, and interpersonal sensitivity.

Rather than viewing this process solely as a linguistic deficit, the present findings suggest that it represents an adaptive cognitive response to the communicative demands of a highly digitalized environment. Generation Alpha appears to be developing a hybrid language system that integrates conventional linguistic structures with algorithmically mediated discourse practices (Sari et al., 2024). Understanding this reconfiguration is essential not only for psycholinguistic theory but also for educational

practitioners seeking to bridge the gap between children's online and offline communicative worlds (Podara & Matsiola, 2024).

The algorithmic architecture of short-form video platforms may intensify this process by repeatedly rewarding novelty, speed, and emotional salience (Jiang et al., 2026). Viral expressions are reinforced through constant exposure and social validation, increasing their accessibility within the child's mental lexicon. As these expressions become cognitively dominant, they may compete with more context-sensitive linguistic alternatives during spontaneous speech production. The result is not necessarily a loss of linguistic competence but a reallocation of cognitive resources toward communication styles that are better suited to digital interaction than to conventional social settings (Jiang et al., 2026; Levey, 2025).

Educational and Social Implications

This final section brings important implications for educational practices and parenting models in the digital era (Ayu et al., 2026). The rapid integration of algorithm-driven discourse into children's mental lexicon suggests that digital literacy should no longer be viewed merely as technological competence, but must be conceptualized as socio-pragmatic competence (Podara & Matsiola, 2024). Schools and families need to provide explicit opportunities for children to practice reflective communication, empathy-based interaction, and contextual language adaptation (Miller, 2006; Ayu et al., 2026).

From a pedagogical perspective, language learning activities should incorporate authentic digital discourse while simultaneously training learners to distinguish between informal online communication and context-sensitive formal interaction (Funk, 2012). Rather than suppressing digital slang or condemning the 'Asbun' behavior blindly, educators may adopt a code-switching approach that encourages students to understand when and where certain linguistic registers are socially appropriate (Wayan, 2024). Such interventions may strengthen the self-monitoring component of speech production and reduce impulsive verbal responses (Levelt, 1989; Funk, 2012).

These interventions are highly vital to ensure that the linguistic creativity of this generation does not come at the cost of essential human empathy within real-world social interactions (Wayan, 2024). Moving forward, language curricula must integrate metalinguistic awareness as a core pillar. Children should not be instructed to erase their digital vocabulary entirely; rather, they must be trained to develop the cognitive flexibility of the prefrontal cortex to activate socio-pragmatic filters instantaneously when shifting from cyberspace to the physical world (Wayan, 2024; Thoathithiri et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this investigation demonstrates that the 'Asbun' trend within Generation Alpha signifies a systemic cognitive reconfiguration brought about by over-saturation within digital environments. Grounded in the empirical review of five specific TikTok transcripts extracted from the accounts of @alinaa_chan, @istrifadhli, @ibuendog, @leehanim, and @mat_pecii, the evidence shows that 'Asbun' speech outputs stem from a functional imbalance during language generation. Specifically, the hyper-velocity of lexical access during the formulation stage as conceptualized in Levelt's paradigm, consistently outruns the developmental maturation of inhibitory control regulated by the Prefrontal Cortex (PFC). Rapid, continuous digital conditioning has

radically compressed the cognitive window required for sociopragmatic evaluation. Consequently, verbal expressions are frequently externalized without undergoing thorough contextual calibration or processing through normative politeness protocols.

These interpretations warrant appropriate caution. The neuro-psycholinguistic account offered here should be understood as just one plausible layer of explanation among several; alternative readings rooted in performative identity, family or peer language culture, and typical developmental variation cannot be excluded based on transcript data alone. Furthermore, since the speakers' ages were inferred rather than independently confirmed, and the corpus is limited to five purposively chosen cases, these findings are best understood as generating a theoretical framework to guide future confirmatory research, rather than establishing a generalizable empirical pattern.

Ultimately, these insights suggest that 'Asbun' may transcend basic behavioral misconduct or a conventional breakdown in etiquette; it represents a structural byproduct of digital schema encroachment combined with an eroded internal self-monitoring loop. While this shift introduces distinct pragmatic challenges and highlights clear deficits within the Theory of Mind (ToM) framework, manifested by children's difficulty in anticipating the psychological repercussions of their words, it simultaneously underscores an exceptional level of cognitive adaptability in synthesizing a digital-native identity. This generation instinctively repurposes algorithmic dialogue fragments and internet memes to negotiate their fluid social realities.

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