

Digital Sor-Singguh: A Narrative Inquiry into Ethnotech-Pragmatics among Youth in Denpasar

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Abstract

The research broadens the Ethnotech-Pragmatics conceptual model, initially introduced by Wedananta (2023), for investigating how the young people of Denpasar juggle the tensions between Balinese cultural values and the digital world of Instagram. This paper employs a narrative qualitative method so as to reveal the "genuine experience" of these young people in their engagement with Balinese cultural values and the digital world of Instagram, which is a follow-up to the research that initially uncovered this phenomenon. This study was done by first having ten high school students, aged 17-18 of Denpasar talk separately and at length, and then it showed how the technical features of digital communication - such as the 'Close Friends' list, temporary Stories, and sticker use - can be the means to go around traditional Sor-Singguh (language hierarchy) and tactic of keeping one's face or dignity. Data collection was done through semi-structured narrative interviews as well as "scroll-back" sessions where participants performed some phone interactions and narrated the context. Then, thematic narrative analysis was employed to examine the data. The findings present that Ethnotech-Pragmatics is more than a language change; it is also a profound identity negotiation in which technology acts as a facilitator of politeness across different cultures. Moreover, the introduction of ethnotech-pragmatics in the school curriculum offers a valuable opportunity for the youth of Bali to reconnect with their cultural heritage on a profound level.

Keywords: Balinese youth; Computer-mediated communication; Ethnotech-pragmatics; Instagram; Sor-Singguh

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INTRODUCTION

The expansion of social media has greatly influenced the field of sociolinguistics, particularly in the context of multilingual societies where the digital egalitarianism contrasts with the traditional social hierarchies. Sor-Singguh system in Bali is a complex register system that dictates speech according to one's caste and social level. In her groundbreaking dissertation, "Language Use Among Youths in Instagram: The Emergence of Ethnotech-Pragmatics," Wedananta (2023) brought up the point that the online world is not just a neutral environment for these customs. It generates a new "third space" where ethnicity, technology and pragmatics intersect."

Concept of "third spaces" is increasingly appreciated as online transformations, especially the way young people in Denpasar using the Internet for their cultural self-expression, are raising the challenge. According to Gutiérrez (2008) these spaces are extremely valuable because they encourage youths to cross the traditional cultural

boundary in their identity exploration despite the pressure of cultural norms and modern technologies (Greene et al., 2018). The fresh use of Instagram's features not only helps in the conservation of Sor-Singgih cultural elements but also gives the youth a voice to publicly express their resistance and challenge the established order. The fact that the same technology is both a medium of cultural expression and at the same time a platform for resistance changes the nature of the interaction between online communication and sociocultural identity, with the implication that Ethnotech-Pragmatics may serve as a tool for the interpretation of related situations in other multilingual communities.

Besides, when the youth in Denpasar use these digital platforms, the consequences of their interactions go further than just negotiating their identities; in fact, they also mirror larger sociolinguistic changes that question the traditional ways of language acquisition. Cross-linguistic transfer, which is hardly given any consideration in digital communication, indicates that the hybrid character of online interactions may even lead to a new loose conception of language hierarchies, where youth are not only adapting the language but at the same time developing new linguistic practices (Papadimitriou & Jurafsky, 2020) (Yadavalli et al., 2023). This elasticity gives rise to the building of a peer community and simultaneously opens the discussion on the place of old Sor-Singgih rituals in the context of the increasingly globalized digital world. Ethnotech-Pragmatics, as a field of study, helps understand how these teenagers may, in the course of their identity construction in virtual realms, change cultural conventions.

While the youths of Denpasar walk through the changes of these digitized environments, the consequences of ethnotech-pragmatics shape community-building and cross-cultural communication, thus revealing social media's value as a cultural journal and the platform for preservation and innovation. Through the exchange and transformation of indigenous languages and storytelling among their peers, young individuals experience a sense of belonging. Simultaneously, social networking platforms are capable of arousing the interest of worldwide users towards their cultural intangible assets. Sociolinguistic researchers have long documented that digital storytelling, among other things, amplifies unheard voices and can even inspire resistance against cultural uniformity, especially in the context of community research that supports youth engagement and civic participation (Greene et al., 2018a). Besides, as young people try to build their online personas, they may inadvertently go overboard by presenting their virtual selves so excessively that it makes the interactions very shallow and impersonal, which in turn leads to a loss of the realness of their cultural expressions (Janáček & Balázová, 2024). The interplay of the culture's true essence with the demands of digital media, in fact, calls for recognizing that the technology's role in the identity development in today's world is a big challenge to the human understanding.

Language in this context, deeply influences, serving not only as one of the means of cultural transmission but, more importantly, as sites of identity negotiation, as digital interactions becomes identity shaping tools. New linguistic forms, like code-switching and the creation of new lexical items, show that Denpasar's young people are not only passive readers of digital contents but also powerful rewriters/ producers of their cultural narratives through language (Tianda et al., 2024). The interrelation of language and technology indicates a broad pattern in multilingual societies where local dialects intermingle with global languages on online platforms leading to a creation of a distinctive identity of a blend of local culture and global influences. As these youngsters navigate their digital selves, they challenge the age-old language hierarchies and help in the emergence of a new sociolinguistic environment that recognizes and celebrates the qualities of being versatile and adaptable. Concept of belonging is redefined in the technologically connected world through this process.

Some younger people in Denpasar are discovering how to mix up their traditional culture and new technologies. A digital sense of belonging is gradually becoming a significant part of their lives. This kind of belonging, especially through social media, not only strengthens their ties to the Balinese identity but also reveals the struggles of those who are marginalized in their own communities, such as immigrants or diasporic groups. Instagram and other social media platforms can offer digital spaces where people can exchange stories and cultural practices, thereby fostering community and mutual support. However, if a person does not engage with these technologies, or if their online and offline identities do not align, they might experience a sense of alienation (Madenoglu, 2022). The shifting nature of ethnotech-pragmatics requires us to rethink how digital communication can be a double-edged sword in cultural differences. It also stresses the need for approaches that not only recognize local traditions but also respect the diverse experiences of all members of the community.

Wedananta (2023) has used "ethnotech-pragmatics" to refer to the impact of technological features on the changing or breaking of pragmatic norms of an ethnic community. The paper mainly succeeded in listing and classifying many types of language usages, including new word formation and situations; however, the authors feel that there is a need to understand the explanation behind such choices. What makes a Balinese student answer to a lecturer's Instagram Story by using a particular sticker instead of texting? In what way does the "Close Friends" function allow a temporary bypass of caste-based linguistic regulations? If we introduce Ethnotech-Pragmatics, which means the combining of cultural knowledge and technology in communication, in school syllabuses, how might it help in enhancing the digital literacy and cultural awareness of the Balinese youth when they are trying to discover their identities in the world of globalization?

In this article, we are going to answer these questions by doing an in-depth study on the phenomenon of Denpasar where urban modernism and traditional fidelity come together. We use a qualitative narrative research to do this, which means we don't just count how often people talk about going online, but rather the stories they tell about going online, so we can fully understand how Ethnotech-Pragmatics actually takes place in people's lives.

The Framework of Ethnotech-Pragmatics

The main theoretical framework for this research is Wedananta (2023). He claims that the digital communication of Balinese youth is an ethnotech hybrid, i.e., it is neither merely "global" nor "local." Traditional pragmatics (Levinson, 1983) is concerned with language use in social settings. However, it usually presupposes that the participants are engaged in direct interchanges. Ethnotech-pragmatics holds that technology—the "unsend" feature, the transient character of a Story, the visual anonymity of a meme—is not just a tool for the practice of cultural politeness, but a critical element.

As the development of the Ethnotech-Pragmatics framework is in progress, one of the issues that needs to be addressed is evaluating the role of visual language in youth culture at Denpasar. A lot of people tend to be more expressive and break language barriers when they use emoticons, stickers, and memes for communication. Employing memes that reflect specific cultures, not only a way to entertain, but is also a powerful bonding tool and a good way to identify with one another, which gives rise to funny re-creations of the Sor-Singih events in digital media. This dynamic interaction is, in fact, a demonstration that visual or pictorial elements are very much tied to cultural self-expression, in support of the studies that indicate the similarity of the concept of politeness across various cultures and communication channels. Hence, understanding these visual pragmatics is indispensable for revealing the ways children manage their cultural worlds

digitally, which has profound consequences for language maintenance and artistic expression in the Balinese culture.

The use of visual communication in Ethnotech-Pragmatics leads us to consider how digital interaction influences the language use of Balinese teenagers. Indonesian and English are the languages commonly used in schools and social settings (especially in international schools that emphasize English teaching)," says Diari (2024). The possibility of the Balinese language survival seems to be decreasing as these languages continue to dominate. This scenario leads us to ask how digital platforms going to impact language endangerment either negatively or positively. Although on Instagram you can share and preserve culture, it may also unconsciously support the use of dominant languages which leads to decline in local language trends. Therefore, understanding the balance of promoting digital inclusiveness while at the same time preserving linguistic heritage is very important. This is because it mirrors the general tendencies of multilingual societies where technology can either bring people of different cultural identities together or isolate them.

Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) and Identity

Numerous authors such as Androutsopoulos (2006) and Herring (2019) have demonstrated that computer-mediated communication provides a richer space for identity performance. The "Gaul" (slang) language in Indonesia is mostly considered by its users as a symbol of modernity (Smith-Hefner, 2007). In Bali, Basa Alus (High Balinese) is a language that adds to the risk factor. Errors made in the social hierarchy may lead to consequences affecting the whole society. The research reveals that Instagram gives users new means to mitigate such risks and at the same time preserve their Balinese identity without the fear of committing mistakes in High Balinese.

As more and more people in Denpasar base their personal identities on the internet, it is important to consider how community contact is a very potent factor in this new identity formation. One aspect of using dialects and cultural expressions on social media platforms like Instagram is that it not only makes people feel like part of the community, but it also causes culture to be revived, especially among younger people who are less familiar with cultural traditions. In this way, digital storytelling can make Balinese traditional tales more accessible to the public and also elevate the pride of the audience in their cultural heritage. The reason is, these cultural storytelling platforms can really bring the heritage to life and engage the public in the stories. It is in line with the studies by Kardana & Satyawati (2019) who found social media plays a key role in preserving culture, providing a platform for marginalized groups to share their stories and resist cultural homogenization, especially through community initiatives that empower young people. Moreover, this change in the way culture is communicated is in line with the recent findings that social media play a key role in maintaining cultures, have the capacity to allow minorities to tell their stories and to resist the trend of cultural homogenization particularly through youngsters' community projects (Kardana & Satyawati, 2019).

As more and more young people from Denpasar are going online, the issues raised by ethnotech-pragmatics involve the changes in cultural values due to their exposure to global influences while trying to keep local traditions intact. Code-mixing is the most visible interaction form here when people combine their local dialects with global languages like English. This exhibits not only a change in communication patterns but also a larger cultural adaptation process that challenges the fixed nature of traditional language hierarchies (Husnita et al., 2025). Social media plays a key role in sparking cross-cultural dialogues. It is an important platform for young people to express themselves authentically while at the same time grappling with the challenge of preserving their culture in a modern world (Jati et al., 2025). This paradox shows that we need to study further how digital communication can help us understand better the formation of cultural

identities, especially in multicultural communities where the youth have a major influence in shaping societal norms.

As young people in Denpasar discover new ways of self-expression through digital media, the blending of technology and cultural identity stirs up quite a few thought-provoking questions regarding whether social media serves as a means of empowerment or a source of loneliness. Indeed, social networks like Instagram can be great for sharing culture and forming communities, however, they sometimes make the digitally excluded or not-so-savvy feel more isolated, like refugees and people who have been relocated (Greene et al., 2018a). Such a development calls for inclusive digital strategies that respect and celebrate local culture but also include and involve all members of the community, thereby preserving and innovatively continuing the traditional stories in line with the present era. This tension exemplifies why it is necessary to hold ongoing conversations and collaborate in order to both bolster cultural pride and enhance digital literacy.

METHOD

This study decides to adopt the Narrative Inquiry paradigm (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) for this research. To depict the complexity and real-life nature of participants' experiences, the participants' lens of internet interactions as cultural negotiation stories (not only as data) prompted us to use this method. The research location was Denpasar, Bali. Purposive sampling was carried out in selecting ten high school students, aged 17-18 for the research. The criteria were: (1) active Instagram users posting at least three times a week, (2) Balinese by ethnicity, fluent in both Indonesian and Balinese, and (3) willing to share their recording of digital interactions. Data collection was done through semi-structured narrative interviews as well as "scroll-back" sessions where participants performed some phone interactions and narrated the context. Thematic narrative analysis was employed to examine the data and to create "episodes" depicting the development of Ethnotech-Pragmatics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The analysis of the data showed that ethnotech-pragmatics is mostly expressed in what we call "technological buffering." In other words, the young people use the features of Instagram to "loosening" the very strict Balinese norms. The narrative gave rise to three main concepts:

Theme 1: The "Sticker" as a Polite Middleman. *Ethnotech-pragmatics can be very well understood by the example of how visual affordances replaced the use of High Balinese text.*

Narrative 1: Made's Dilemma. *Made (18, male) sees his older family member, who belongs to a higher caste (Ksatria), on Instagram. He thought of commenting on a photo of religious ceremony that his cousin posted. They would have had to use Alus Sor (humble high Balinese) if they had talked to each other face to face.*

Made said, "Typing in Indonesian feels like being very rude. Nevertheless, if I try to type 'Alus,' I'm afraid I'll make a mistake in spelling or I'll use the wrong word, and my family will take a screenshot and make fun of me in the WhatsApp group."

Made's solution was ethnotech-pragmatic. He wrote something related to "Hands Folded" () and gave a regular "Rahajeng" sticker to Made. Technology enabled him to express the respect needed without the danger of saying the wrong thing.

Such accords with Wedananta's (2023) claim that technology brings about new means of expression. Here, the kind of 'sticker' is a language replacement which, at the same time, highlights the practical value of the use of High Balinese without being too difficult grammatically. Through the lens of this case, it is evident how young people employ technology inventively to convey respect and efficiently avert the dangers of

language hierarchies associated with tradition. Besides helping teenagers cope with the changes brought about by new forms of communication, this narrative also exemplifies how digital media can keep young people culturally aware.

Data proves that the integration of visual aspects in communicating not only preserves the cultural principles but also promotes the sense of belonging amongst the youth of Denpasar by creating a link between the traditional values and modern forms of expression. This paper highlights the role of visual communication in the perpetuation of cultural practices through the experience of the youth in the digital media as well as their traditional engagement. The findings reveal that it is a must to revise cultural heritages to fit in the new digital lifestyle of the youth which is one way of keeping the traditional values alive and understood in present-day situations. Such a revision gives importance to the core values of Balinese culture while showing how the young generation finds a new way to relate to their cultural heritage within a digital context.

This research points out the necessity to examine how technology mediates culture, especially when the youth of Denpasar are changing their cultural interaction in the context of Ethnotech-Pragmatics. The study suggests that the visual signals are an indispensable part of cultural orientation and that stickers and emojis are excellent mediums for transmitting traditional values even in the realm of digital communication. The power of the digital media to influence the cultural practices is getting potentially more and more decisive. This paper lays bare both the challenges and the opportunities that the young generation in our contemporary world has to maintain the traditional values.

Theme 2: The "Close Friends" (CF) Register. *The "Close Friends" (CF) setting on Instagram essentially opens a window wherein the classic Sor-Singgih customs are temporarily set aside. This leads to a quite paradoxical language register that is at once bold and culturally intact.*

Narrative 2: Ayu's Two Identities. *Ayu (17, Female), to maintain her perfect public image, she always captions her photos in English or formal Indonesian. Her scripting for the "Close Friends" introduces a different storyline though. She even videotaped herself complaining to the researcher about how the traffic situation in Denpasar was terrible.*

Tauntingly she told, "In the CF [Close Friends], I speak in 'Basa Kasar' (Rough Balinese) - this is my most intimate friend circle." "I definitely employ 'Naskeleng' type of words (a very strong obscene word). If by chance the wider public gets the message, even a teacher or an uncle can see it. That's why the green circle (which means a CF story) is a kind of safe place for me to be real with my friends: "I am being genuine now, I am showing my real self."

In a way, in this case, it is the technology which makes a decision: whether or not the event is going to take place in the real world. The green circle in the "Close Friends" feature is a digital token of intimacy which not only signals to a person that "Rough Balinese" is permissible here but also that the situation is appropriate. This is an instance of ethnotech-pragmatics: the CF algorithm is the technology that arranges a secure linguistic milieu. This research shows the ways through which digital platforms, especially Instagram, provide young people with a deeper sense of cultural norms and hence, allow them to handle their identities in a changing sociocultural environment.

This paper reveals that the engagement of Denpasar youth with Instagram's features enables them to change their cultural expressions and set new rules for time-honored communicative practices. The researchers see that the combination of digital communication and cultural patterns is key to explaining how young people in Bali remodel their selves in a globalized environment. The research into Ethnotech-Pragmatics explains the ways how the Denpasar younger generation blend old cultural forms with new digital communication ones to express their identity. The digital communication and

cultural identity interaction helps to the better understanding of ethnotech-pragmatics and highlights the need for further conversation about cultural conservation in the digital era.

This research offers a new perspective on digital heritage by showing how the youth in Bali can use technology to keep alive and possibly even make changes to their traditional practices. The research has identified social media as a powerful tool in changing cultural norms, especially in the context of how young people in Denpasar re-arrange and re-negotiate their identities through a digital lens. Such a simulation provides fresh insight into the methods Denpasar teenagers deploy in carrying out their cultural identity journeys with the help of Instagram, pointing out the importance of digital media in encouraging culture continuity and change. The results of the research highlight the significance of web-based platforms in supporting cultural staying power by giving examples of how the youth in Denpasar interact with their ancestry while at the same time meeting the challenges of modern identity-making.

Theme 3: Using Ethnotech-Pragmatics in schools. Indonesian youths from Bali can get a double bonus of digital and cultural skill through school using Ethnotech-Pragmatics. This call question shows the way schools can practically employ digital means for learners to be familiar with cultural norms of a multiethnic world.

Narrative 3: Dewi's Class Experience. Dewi (17, Female) shares the story how the class was using Ethnotech-Pragmatics. The teacher told us that the main tool to post cultural identity sharing are Instagram accounts, "she continued, "Not only that, we could put stickers, memes, and Balinese dialect as well," At the very beginning, I really did not want to use the dialect," she added, "but it felt really good when my classmates shared the stories."

Dewi also tells about the time when a collection of students' work was finished that depicted a Balinese traditional ritual through the Instagram Stories tool, "The main topic that we looked at was the meaning of different components in Balinese and the Indonesian language. On top of that, it was fun to notice the way my friends adapted their language in order to suit the digital format," she commented. In a way that some of them recorded short videos for sketching up the tradition, the rest of them were mostly signaling the cultural icons by using emojis.

This narrative is a fine example of how the combination of conventional and contemporary methods of teaching can inspire students. Through the context of ethnotech-pragmatics (the exploration of the mutual relations of technology and culture), teachers can support their students to discover the inner self. Then, the tale of Dewi depicts that it really matters in the world that every young person is capable to use the technology proficiently to communicate the cultural legacy and feel comfortable with it.

These results indicate that, thanks to the internet, it is mainly schools that shape how young people understand and connect with their cultural identities. For example, teachers can turn social media sites such as Instagram into their teaching aids so as not only to prompt students to examine their cultural stories but also to help them make friends by identifying with their cultural community. Besides shedding light on the importance of raising digital literacy, this approach also reveals very clearly that the traditional ways of doing things indeed still have their place and can even be made relevant in the new, digital world. The research shows the necessity of educators modifying their teaching materials according to the culture of the location. Children, as a result, after they find themselves through this exercise, will be able to get a sense of their identity and realization their global belonging. This work illustrates how ethnotech-pragmatics, when taken into account in the learning environment, can help to raise the level of digital literacy and cultural participation among Balinese young people. This article calls for making changes in the teaching approach using ethnotech-pragmatics while at the same time it backs up the idea that teachers can lead the way for Balinese young generation in using digital media for the promotion of their culture and identity.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that Instagram functions not merely as a medium for casual youth interaction, but as a culturally meaningful space where Balinese adolescents negotiate politeness, identity, intimacy, and language hierarchy. Through the narratives of Denpasar youth, this study confirms that digital communication reshapes the practice of Sor-Singgih by providing technological resources that allow users to manage cultural expectations without fully abandoning traditional values. The three themes identified in this study—the use of stickers as polite intermediaries, the emergence of the Close Friends register, and the pedagogical potential of ethnotech-pragmatics—demonstrate that Balinese youth are not passively losing their cultural competence in digital spaces. Rather, they are actively adapting cultural norms to fit the affordances of social media. This finding supports Wedananta's (2023) concept of ethnotech-pragmatics, which argues that digital tools influence how ethnic pragmatic norms are maintained, modified, or strategically bypassed in online communication.

The first finding, concerning the use of stickers as polite intermediaries, confirms previous research on computer-mediated communication, which emphasizes that digital platforms expand the semiotic resources available for identity and relational work. Androutsopoulos (2006) argues that online communication allows users to combine linguistic and non-linguistic signs in ways that reshape sociolinguistic practice. In this study, Made's choice to use a folded-hands emoji and a "Rahajeng" sticker instead of composing a full High Balinese response reflects this process. The sticker did not simply decorate the message; it performed a pragmatic function by expressing respect while reducing the risk of linguistic error. This finding also extends Levinson's (1983) theory of pragmatics, which focuses on language use in social context, by showing that in digital interaction, pragmatic meaning can be carried by platform-based visual elements rather than by verbal language alone. In the Balinese context, where inappropriate word choice in Sor-Singgih may produce embarrassment or social criticism, visual signs become a safe politeness strategy.

This result also aligns with studies on politeness in technology-assisted communication. Sudar et al. (2025) found that digital communication can shape how politeness is expressed in student-lecturer interaction, particularly when users rely on technological mediation to manage social distance. Similarly, this study shows that stickers and emojis enable Balinese youth to preserve respectful interaction while avoiding the pressure of producing grammatically and socially accurate Basa Alus. However, the finding also extends previous studies by showing that the issue is not merely politeness in a general sense, but politeness embedded in a local hierarchical language system. Thus, the study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that visual affordances can serve as substitutes for culturally loaded linguistic registers. This suggests that digital communication may not necessarily weaken politeness norms; instead, it may relocate politeness from verbal expression to multimodal expression.

The second finding, the emergence of a Close Friends register, demonstrates how Instagram's privacy architecture allows youth to create different linguistic identities for different audiences. Ayu's narrative shows that the Close Friends feature enables the use of Basa Kasar among trusted peers while maintaining a more formal public identity through English or Indonesian captions. This finding confirms Herring's (2019) view that computer-mediated discourse evolves together with technological systems, as users adapt their communicative practices to specific platform features. In this case, the green circle of the Close Friends feature operates as a digital boundary marker that defines who may access informal, intimate, or socially risky language. The platform does not merely host communication; it helps organize the social conditions under which particular language varieties become acceptable.

This finding also supports Smith-Hefner's (2007) discussion of youth language and gaul sociability in Indonesia, where informal language becomes a marker of modernity, solidarity, and peer identity. However, the present study extends that argument by showing that Balinese youth do not use informal language only to appear modern or socially close. They also use platform-based audience control to protect themselves from the consequences of violating traditional expectations. In other words, the Close Friends register allows youth to move between cultural respectability and peer authenticity. This challenges the assumption that digital youth language is simply evidence of cultural erosion. Instead, it shows that young people manage multiple identities simultaneously: a public identity that remains polite, careful, and socially acceptable, and a private peer identity that is more spontaneous, emotionally expressive, and intimate.

At the same time, this finding partially complicates previous claims about digital belonging. Madenoğlu (2022) explains that digital spaces can create feelings of belonging by enabling users to share experiences and identities with selected communities. The Close Friends feature clearly supports this kind of belonging by allowing Balinese youth to communicate freely with trusted peers. However, the finding also suggests that digital belonging is selective and controlled. Not everyone is included in the intimate linguistic space, and cultural authenticity becomes something managed through platform settings. This confirms Janáček and Balázová's (2024) concern that online self-presentation may produce divided selves, where users carefully separate public and private identities. Nevertheless, in the context of this study, such division should not be viewed only negatively. For Denpasar youth, managing multiple selves may be a practical strategy for surviving the tension between traditional hierarchy and contemporary youth culture.

The findings also relate to language preservation debates. Diari (2024) notes that Balinese faces challenges in multicultural and multilingual contexts, particularly as Indonesian and English dominate education, public communication, and digital spaces. At first glance, the use of English captions, Indonesian expressions, emojis, and stickers may appear to accelerate the decline of Balinese. However, the narratives in this study suggest a more complex picture. Balinese youth continue to use Balinese, including Basa Kasar and cultural expressions, but they do so selectively according to audience, platform feature, and perceived risk. This means that digital platforms may both threaten and support language maintenance. They may reduce the use of formal High Balinese, yet they also provide spaces where young people continue to perform Balinese identity through mixed codes, visual symbols, ritual references, and peer-based storytelling. This confirms Tianda et al.'s (2024) view that language in the digital era functions as a reflection of personal identity and is shaped by flexible, hybrid communication practices.

The third finding, concerning the use of ethnotech-pragmatics in schools, extends the discussion from informal digital practice to educational application. Dewi's narrative shows that Instagram-based classroom activities can help students explore Balinese identity through stickers, memes, dialects, short videos, and bilingual explanations of cultural rituals. This finding confirms Greene et al.'s (2018) argument that digital storytelling can support youth engagement, civic participation, and the expression of marginalized or local voices. In the present study, digital storytelling did not only make learning more enjoyable; it also encouraged students to reflect on how language choices represent cultural meanings. This supports the idea that social media can be used as a pedagogical bridge between traditional knowledge and contemporary communication practices.

This finding also extends the literature on digital culture by showing that ethnotech-pragmatics can become a practical framework for culturally responsive education. Kardana and Satyawati (2019) emphasize the importance of polite communication strategies in Balinese, while Jati et al. (2025) highlight the role of youth in preserving local

wisdom and strengthening character education. The present study brings these two concerns together by suggesting that students can learn cultural politeness not only through conventional instruction but also through guided analysis of their own digital practices. When teachers invite students to examine how stickers, memes, captions, and dialect choices communicate respect, intimacy, or identity, students become more aware of the cultural values embedded in everyday online interaction. Therefore, ethnotech-pragmatics has the potential to strengthen both digital literacy and cultural literacy.

The study confirms prior research showing that digital media reshapes language, identity, and cultural participation, but it also extends existing knowledge by situating these processes within the specific hierarchy of Balinese Sor-Singgih. Unlike general studies of youth language that focus on slang, code-mixing, or online self-presentation, this study shows that digital affordances help young people manage culturally sensitive relationships involving caste, age, intimacy, and respect. The findings do not support a simple narrative of language decline. Instead, they reveal a process of cultural adaptation in which Balinese youth use Instagram features as pragmatic tools to maintain dignity, avoid linguistic risk, express peer solidarity, and reinterpret cultural identity. Thus, ethnotech-pragmatics offers a valuable lens for understanding how local languages and cultural norms survive, transform, and gain new meanings in digital environments.

CONCLUSION

This paper is a detailed narrative description of the model by Wedananta (2023). It supports that Ethnotech-Pragmatics is an essential foundation for the knowledge of today's Balinese youth culture. The results in Denpasar show that Instagram is not deteriorating Balinese language abilities; instead, it equips teenagers with technological "crutches" and "shields"—stickers to hide their lack of High Balinese and algorithmic circles to protect the privacy of Low Balinese. The paper points out the need for future work on how digital connections help to preserve and change cultural identities of Balinese youth in the face of globalization. The research calls for fresh ideas that combine cultural heritage with the digital lifestyles of the younger generation, thus maintaining the importance of traditional values in today's world. The research demonstrates that digital technology is the key to both the protection of cultural heritage and the participation in modern communication trends. The research underlines the radical possibilities of digital technology in changing cultural practices, especially by focusing on how the youth in Denpasar argue their identities through unconventional uses of social media.

This narrative inquiry highlights the importance of ethnotech-pragmatics as a key concept for redefining the impact of technology on the cultural identity of Balinese youth. It stresses the urgency of experimenting with different contexts for further deliberation. Through exploring Balinese youth's identity in the digital era, this paper highlights the role of culturally responsive methods in facilitating technology-based interactions and learning. Ultimately, this research is a call to teachers, government, and online entertainment sites for a synergistic effort to balance the power of the digital wave in reshaping and conserving Balinese cultural elements effectively.

Moreover, ethnotech-pragmatics can be introduced as a part of the academic curriculum through which young Balinese people can rediscover their cultural identities at a deeper level. If teachers learn how to use digital mediums effectively, then they will be able to help learners understand local cultural practices and also prepare them for a culturally complex world where identities keep on changing. This paper brings out the importance of taking the dual role of being teachers of old methods and learners of new technological developments at the same time. Incorporating this plan will help Denpasar youth to be more culturally sensitive and, at the same time, making them more able to adjust to cultural changes. One of the advantages of this integration is that young people

in Denpasar acquire better language skills, get to know their Balinese cultural heritage more deeply, and feel a stronger sense of belonging. In addition to giving them access to their cultural roots, students are also being equipped with the necessary competencies to be successful in a global digital world through this integration.

RECOMMENDATION

Future studies could consider extending this approach to other platforms such as TikTok, a place where the combination of images and sounds might generate diverse ethnotech-pragmatic instances. While Denpasar is developing into a modern city, it is through the digital interaction of Sor-Singgih that most of the cultural knowledge will probably be transmitted to the next generations.

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