

SELF-ACKNOWLEDGEMENT PORTRAYAL OF INDONESIAN READERS THROUGH MOJOK.CO ‘CURHAT’ SECTION

Elisabeth Marsella¹ and Putri Rindu Kinasih²

¹Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta, ²Universitas Bunda Mulia
elisabeth.marsella@uajy.ac.id; pkinasih@bundamulia.ac.id

ABSTRAK

For years, scholars have been researching the quarter-life crisis. Quarter-life crisis (QLC) is a popular term for developmental crisis episodes that occur during early adulthood. It occurs when a person is switching or has just switched from a life structure that is unstable, open, and exploratory to one that is more settled, more predictable, and more rooted in productive roles (Robinson, 2019). A considerable amount of research had successfully spotlighted the existence of QLC in Indonesia. However, limited studies really explained to what extent QLC is projected in society. In addition, none of the studies above managed to show QLC projection through electronic discourse. Experts believe that technology offers opportunities for linguistic research. Electronic communication is considered an important linguistic means that covers every phase of human life (AbuSa'aleek, 2015). Here lies the reason why the writers decided to use the corpus to see the projection of QLC through the 'Curhat' section of Mojok.co. This online-news portal is chosen for the study since it has become a preferred platform for young adult readers mainly ranging from 18-34-year-old readers (Sokowati & Junaedi, 2020; Saraswati & Hastasari, 2020; Utomo, 2015). Reflecting on the section name, the readers share their problems in this section to get suggestions from the editorial in return. However, to see the insight of the readers' life experience, this study only analyses the writing from the users. Data for this case study was a corpus compiled from 179 correspondences written by Mojok.co users from November 2016 to October 2020. To analyze the data, this study applies a corpus approach since corpus studies have been used to analyze the representation of life issues from different platforms such as newspapers, Twitter, and fiction (Bednarek, 2020; Simanjuntak, et al., 2020; Pace-Sigge, 2018). First, the data was fed to AntConc, and it resulted in 64,862-word tokens and 7173-word types. Afterward, the writers checked the word list feature. Among the word types, this study focuses on the top 50 most frequent words used in the correspondence. Then, the writers carefully selected the words associated with QLC based on QLC theory from Robinson, Wright, Smith, and Arnett that had been summarized by Agarwal, et al (2020). To examine the issue, the collocation of each word was checked by using the level features. From the concordance line, it can be seen how the words collocated in the readers' text. As to the scope and the limitation, this study focuses on one of QLC's developmental features, which is self-acknowledgement. The study showed that the subject of the issues were the users themselves who projected negative emotions such as confusion and helplessness. Furthermore, the most projected problems are correlated with the developmental features one and three: feeling trapped in between and instability in roles and relationships.

Keywords: QLC, self-acknowledgement, corpus, online media

INTRODUCTION

The term 'quarter-life crisis' was first introduced by Robbins and Wilner (2001) as a growing phenomenon in society suffered by many young adults in the age of 20s and 30s. It is a period of stress, instability and major life change. The quarter-life crisis happens when young-adults feel doubted about their future and feel like they are being trapped in their life choice. Since then, Thorspecken (2005) noted that the issue of 'quarter-life crisis' began to gain attention in the media. Quarter-life crisis became the topic of talk shows such The Oprah Show, TV series episodes such ER, movies entitled Garden State (Thorspecken, 2005, p. 120). As quarter-life crisis has finally gained recognition in society, various researches about quarter-life had been done in Indonesia in the field of psychology, literature, philosophy and religion.

Herawati and Hidayat (2020) conducted a quantitative psychology research by distributing Likert-chart questionnaires to 236 adults in Pekanbaru who attended for 20-30 years. The results showed that the early adult individual quarter-life crisis in Pekanbaru reached 43.22%, which means that most of individuals within 20-30s in Pekanbaru experienced the Quarter-Life Crisis period (Herawati & Hidayat, 2020, p. 151). In addition, the results showed the fact that factors affecting the quarterly life crisis estimated as gender, status, and occupation (Herawati & Hidayat, 2020, p. 154). Similarly, Balzarie & Nawangsih (2019) stated that Bandung students' between 18-29 years-old experienced quarter-life crisis period; and among students who experienced a quarter-life crisis they showed average resilience level. In other words, even if they experienced quarter-life crisis they still had beliefs and strength to continue living. In the literature field, Nurhidayah & Kistanto (2016) analyzed the portrayal of quarter-life crisis in the movie Laggies, through the main character Megan. In that movie, in her mid-20s Megan is shown

suffering a quarter-life crisis in which she does not know what she wants to do for her future. The study also shows that eventually Megan has finally overcome her quarter-life crisis and lived according to her interest and values of life. Lastly, in the field of philosophy and religion, it was found out that the moderator variable of religiosity showed insignificant results. So it can be said that religiosity cannot moderate the influence of anxiety about the future on subjective well-being (Habibie et al., 2019; Qolbi et al., 2020).

On the whole, a considerable amount of research had successfully spotlighted the existence of quarter-life crisis on subjects with the age range between 20s-30s. However, none of the studies above really explained to what extent the quarter-life crisis is shown in Indonesia. In addition, none of the studies above managed to show quarter-life crisis projection through electronic discourse. To interpret quarter-life crisis experts had proposed to use the theory of emerging adulthood JJ Arnett and the model of early adult crisis by Robinson, Wright, and Smith that had been summarized by Agarwal, et al (2020). Theory of emerging adulthood proposes five defining developmental features: (1) feeling ambiguous in terms of adult status – young people in this age range typically describe themselves as in some ways an adult, yet in some ways not, and as being caught in between; (2) a period of active exploration of self and world; (3) a time of instability in roles and relationships, stemming from a continued lack of long-term ties that permits changes in lifestyle, role and residence; (4) a time of adaptive self-focus as young people attempt to invest in their own future; and (5) a time of future-focus and optimism. Considering this, the writers are interested in finding out further which feature from the five characteristics above that dominantly shown by Indonesian respondents.

Experts believe that technology offers opportunities for linguistic research. Crystal (2001) summarizes that "once in a lifetime" chance provided by the emerging means of communication. An innovative scholarly research of "Internet Linguistics" contains a comparative research of the variations of electronic discourse and the expansion of language revolutionize inside these means of communication (as cited in AbuSa'aleek, 2015). The electronic communication is considered as the important linguistic means. It covers every phase of human life, as well as the education and learning of the target language (AbuSa'aleek, 2015). Taking the issue into account, the writers are intrigued to find out Quarter Life Crisis Projection of Indonesian Readers through Mojok.co 'Curhat' Section. Therefore, this research is aimed at answering the following questions:

1. Which feature from the characteristic of QLC that is dominantly projected by Mojok.co users?

METHOD

This study applies a corpus linguistic approach which can be used to extract the information drawn from global structuring of texts (Herat, 2020). The information includes the conceptual and subjective entities which can be reflected from the usage-based linguistics. The usage-based linguistics refers to natural language produced by users that can be used as the basis of language model (Rajeg et al., 2019). Furthermore, this approach allows researchers to investigate texts by looking at a particular linguistic variable in the corpus like the prosodics, phonetics, lexicon, grammar, discourse, or pragmatics (Baker, 2010). In this study, the corpus was used to reveal the QLC from a data corpus since the corpus can reveal the social reality. To analyze the data, this study applies a corpus approach since corpus studies have been used to analyze the representation of life issues from different platforms such as newspapers, Twitter, and fiction (Bednarek, 2020; Pace-Sigge, 2018; Simanjuntak et al., 2020).

The exploration of this study was based on 179 correspondences of www.mojok.co readers in the 'Curhat' section. This online-news portal is chosen for the study since it has become a preferred platform for young adult readers mainly ranging from 18-34-year-old readers (Saraswati & Hastasari, 2020; Sokowati & Junaedi, 2020; Utomo, 2015). Reflecting on the section name, the readers share their problems in this section to get suggestions from the editorial in return. However, to see the insight of the readers' life experience, this study only analyses the writing from the users.

The tool used to analyze the data is AntConc software version 3.5.9 (Anthony, 2020). This software allows users to compile the data to be a corpus and facilitate the corpus analysis by categorizing the word list, keyword list, collocation, and cluster (Herat, 2020; Luszczuk et al., 2020). Words in the corpus are listed based on the frequency of word occurrence in the corpus. This software also enables the users to see the collocation of the words. The collocation can be seen by setting the Kwic Sort where the software users can see words on the right and left side of the reference words.

To use the software the data collected from the 'Curhat' section was converted into .txt format fed to software. It resulted in 64,862-word tokens and 7173-word types. According to Baker (2010), texts

can reflect social reality by investigating the linguistics variables including the lexical. Therefore, this study focuses on the top 50 most frequent words used in the correspondence. Then, the writers carefully selected the words associated with QLC based on the research conducted by Agarwal, et al. (2020) figured out words which represented strengths of correlation to QLC. The first person pronouns which was observed in users going through QLC are “I”, “my”, and “myself”. In addition, this research also highlighted references focused on reflection and a willingness to conduct activities, which are “I should”, “I can”, and “I could”. With this consideration, the writers chose the words “*saya*” and “*bisa*”. Lastly, analyse the findings by using QLC theory from Robinson, Wright, Smith, and Arnett that had been summarized by Agarwal, et al (2020). To examine the issue, the collocation of each word was checked by using the level features. From the concordance line, it can be seen how the words collocated in the readers’ text.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

The most frequently used word ‘saya’

Firstly, the writers decided to take a look at the most frequently used word from the corpus. From there, the writers got the most frequently used words as it is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Most frequent used words

Rank	Freq	Word	Rank	Freq	Word
1.	4686	saya	11.	458	sudah
2.	1811	yang	12.	427	tapi
3.	1157	dan	13.	423	nggak
4.	852	di	14.	417	sama
5.	837	dia	15.	412	kami
6.	808	ini	16.	399	bisa
7.	721	dengan	17.	399	saja
8.	594	tidak	18.	371	karena
9.	530	Itu	19.	368	aku
10.	488	untuk	20.	353	dari

From the table above, it can be seen that the most frequent word used by Mojok.co users is ‘saya’. Afterwards, the writers then used AntConc to see how the word ‘saya’ or ‘I’/‘Me’/‘My’ is used in the corpus. The table below shows the most frequent collocation to the word ‘saya’ with the sorting level of 1L and 1R.

Table 2. Most frequent collocations to the word 'saya' with the level 1L and 1R

1L	Frequency	1R	Frequency
Yang	117	Ini	119
Membuat	66	Sudah	118
Pacar	64	Tidak/Nggak	102

The table above shows that, in the setting of 1L the word ‘saya’ is mostly preceded with the word ‘yang’ with 117 hits, ‘membuat’ with 66 hits, ‘pacar’ with 64 hits. On the other hand, when the writers study the word ‘saya’ in the arrangement of 1R; interesting results are revealed. Table 2 shows that the word saya is mostly followed by the word ‘ini’ with 119 hits, ‘sudah’ with 118 hits, and ‘tidak/ nggak’ with 102 hits.

The most frequently used verb ‘bisa’

Secondly, the writers decided to analyse the word ‘bisa’ [be able to]. The result can be seen in Table 2 below:

Table 3. Most frequent collocations to the word 'bisa' with the level 1L and 1R

1L	Frequency	1R	Frequency
Negation forms (<i>nda, ngga, tak, and tidak</i>)	99	Saya (I)	17
<i>aku/saya</i> (I)	51	<i>dikatakan/dibilang</i> (said)	13
<i>yang</i> (which)	25	<i>menerima</i> (accept)	9

After being sorted in the setting of 1L, it is shown from table above that the most frequent collocations were negation forms (*nda, ngga, tak, and tidak*) with 99 hits, followed by *aku/saya* (I) with 51 hits, and *yang* (which) with 25 hits. While in the setting of 1R level, the most frequent collocations were *saya* (I) with 17 hits, *dikatakan/dibilang* (said) with 13 hits, and *menerima* (accept) with 9 hits.

Discussion

The most frequent used word ‘saya’

Firstly, from Table 1, it can be seen that the most used word is ‘saya’. It shows that Mojok.co users are actually referring to themselves as the one who experienced trouble and confusion. Interestingly, when the word ‘saya’ is analyzed further, more result can be drawn from the collocation list. When the writers check the word in the setting of 1L, the word on the top list is a relative pronoun - ‘yang’.

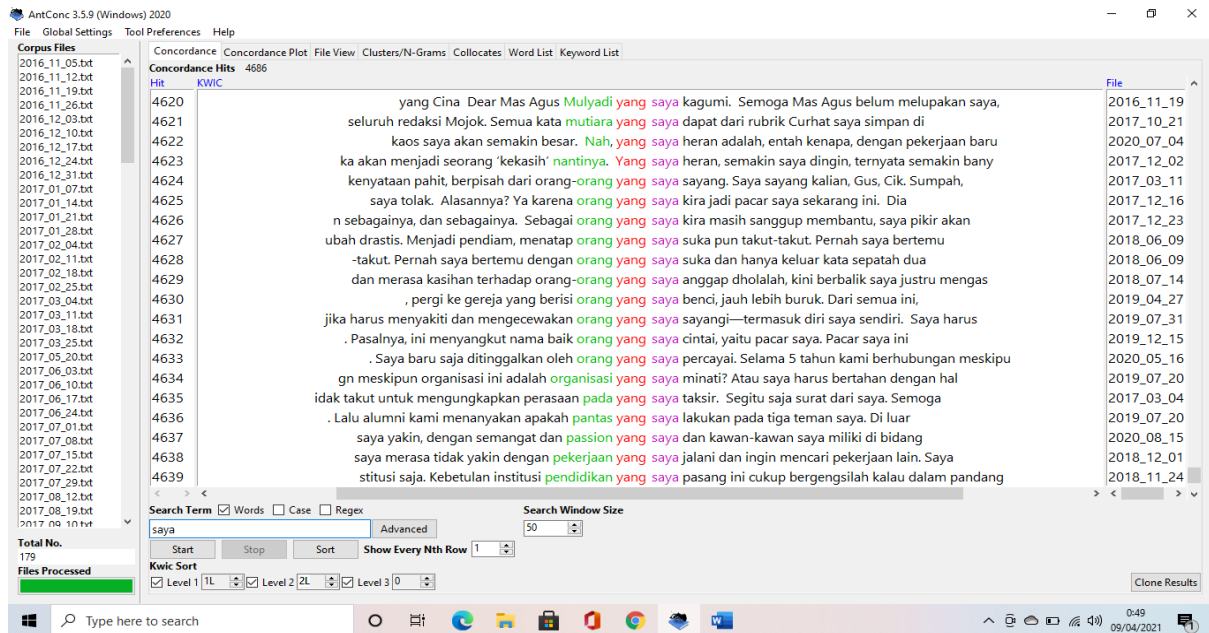


Figure 1. Collocations of the word 'yang' related with the word 'saya'

Result shows that Mojok.co users used the word ‘yang’ mostly to describe their confusion by asking yes/no question preceded with the word ‘apa/ apakah’ (with 11 hits), for example: *Apakah yang saya lakukan sudah benar?* [Is the thing I am doing is right?] By asking the question, it can be seen that Mojok.co users are doubting themselves which makes them confusedly asked whether his/her action is actually correct or not.

Then, the usage of the word ‘yang’ also can be found whenever Mojok.co users refer to the person they are having problem with, such as: ... *jika harus menyakiti dan mengecewakan orang yang saya sayangi – termasuk diri saya sendiri.* [If I have to hurt and disappoint the person that I love – including myself]. From the example above, it can be seen that Mojok.co users used the word ‘yang’ whenever they explained with whom they are having problem with. The preceded words before ‘yang’ are usually refer to people such as: *orang yang saya...* [the person that I...], *perempuan yang saya...* [the woman that I...], *laki-laki yang saya* [the man that I...].

Afterwards, the writers check the word in the setting of 1R, the word on the top list is pronoun - ‘ini’. Result shows that Mojok.co users used the word ‘ini’ mostly to describe their uselessness and their low self-esteem. The example can be seen from the figure below.

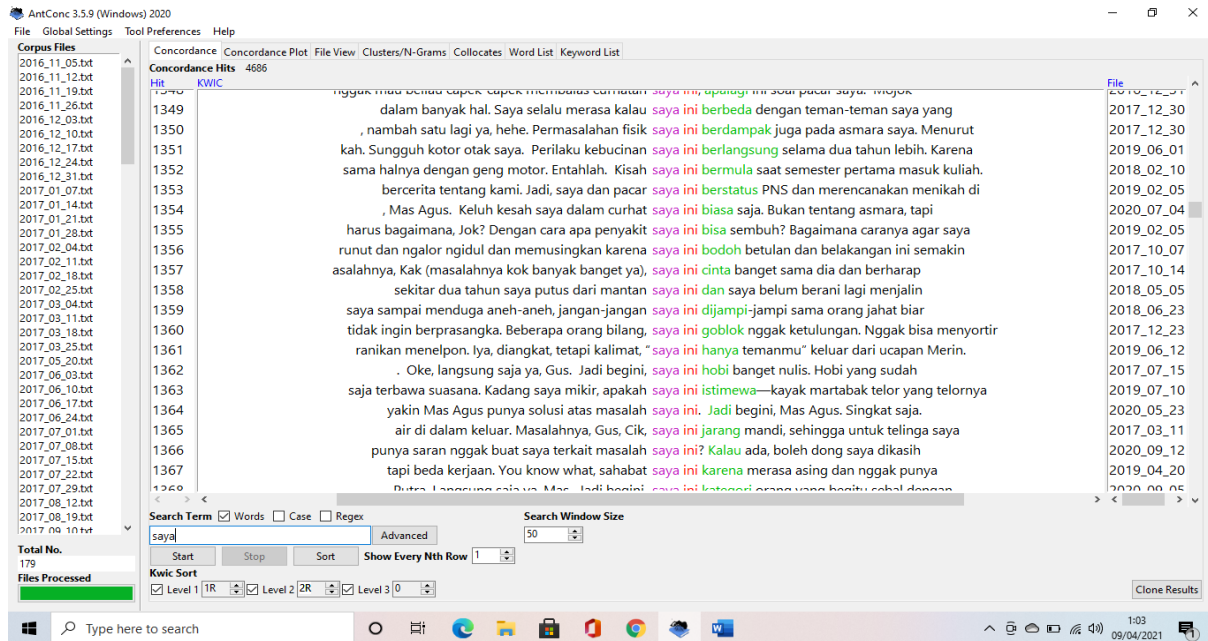


Figure 2. Collocations of the word 'ini' related with the word 'saya'

Align with the previous finding, in the setting of 1R, it can be seen that Mojok.co users used the word 'saya' mostly to describe their confusion about themselves. Surprisingly, *Mojok.co* users are so open in labeling themselves with negative words, such as: *saya ini bodoh betulan* [I am totally dumb]; *saya ini goblok nggak ketulungan* [I am irrationally foolish] ; *saya ini berbeda dengan teman-teman* [I am different from my friends]; *saya ini dijampi-jampi orang jahat* [I was under black magic spell].

By looking at the finding above, it can be seen how low the self-esteem of *Mojok.co* users in seeing themselves. Based on Robinson, Wright, Smith, and Arnett, as summarized by Agarwal, et al (2020) there are five defining developmental features. Among these developmental features, the result shows that from the 'usage' of the word 'saya' portrays the first and the third problem of QLC; which are: (1) feeling ambiguous in terms of adult status – young people in this age range typically describe themselves as in some ways an adult, yet in some ways not, and as being caught in between; and (3) a time of instability in roles and relationships, stemming from a continued lack of long-term ties that permits changes in lifestyle, role and residence.

The first problem in QLC is that people in that range of age feel ambiguous and trapped in between being an adult and not an adult yet. For example, from Table 2, it can be seen that in the sorting level of 1L the word 'saya' is also usually preceded with the word 'membuat'. The word 'membuat'; is used for example: *lantas hal itu membuat saya bimbang, satu sisi ketika saya melepas hijab maka ayah dan bunda akan marah karena anaknya tidak lagi mematuhi petuah orang tua* [so, that **makes me anxious**; on one hand when I stop wearing hijab then my father and mother will be angry as their daughter is no longer following their advice]. From the example above, it can be seen that one the users are caught in between following her own belief and becoming a good daughter for the parents. Her decision is still very much affected by her parents' opinion and it leads to confusion.

Secondly, another example of how the users used the word 'saya' is shown in Figure 2: *dia sempat bilang kalau saya ini laki-laki yang nggak punya rancangan masa depan* [she once said that **I am a man with no plan for the future**]. Interestingly, when the writers examined the text further, the user is mainly feels confused and intrigued because the sentence before was stated from the subject 'dia'; the girl that he likes. Aside from being triggered of having a stable life; the user wanted to impress this girl. Hence, he is asking about the move he has to make to get her. In conclusion, from the usage of the word 'saya' ['I'/'Me'/'My'] in the corpus; it can be seen that most projected problems are issues related with the developmental features one and three: feeling trapped in between and instability in roles and relationships.

The most frequent used verb 'bisa'

To strengthen discussion above, the writers decided to analyze the word 'bisa' (able to). The result shows that it collocated frequently with the negation forms (not) for verbs as shown in the figure below:

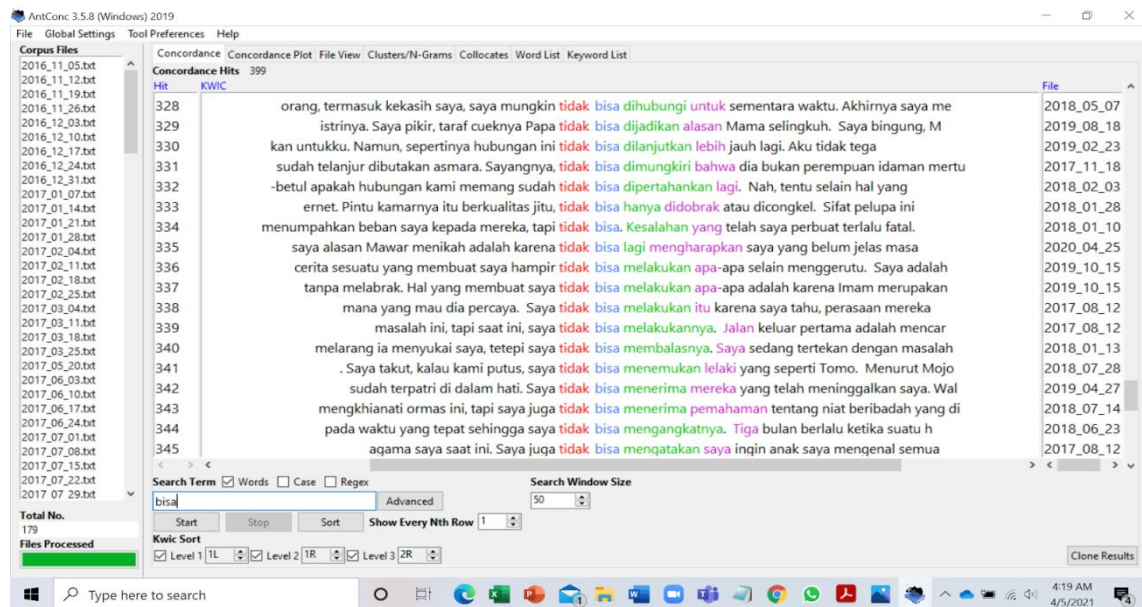


Figure 3. Collocations of the word 'tidak' related with the word 'bisa'

In English, the negation forms (not) would mean 'not able to'. The result shows that Mojok.co users used the negation form repeatedly to express their inability in doing things. Robinson (2019) explains that young adults usually experience the QLC in the form of feeling locked-in or locked-out. The collocate of the negation and the word 'bisa' shows the first phase of feeling locked-in where the persons feel inauthentic and false as the result of their dissatisfaction. Similar with discussion of the word 'saya'; it can be seen from the concordance list that Mojok.co users are showing their dissatisfaction for not being able to do things such as cannot be contacted [*tidak bisa dihubungi*], cannot do anything [*tidak bisa melakukan apa-apa*], cannot accept things [*tidak bisa menerima...*], and others. They were expressing the struggles and dissatisfaction related to the relationship.

By the same token, similar results are shown by the occurrence of word 'saya' as the writer checked the word 'bisa' in the setting of 1R. In general, Mojok.co users show overlapping usage of negation forms in the previous discussion above. Here is the example of how the word 'bisa' collocates with the word 'saya' in the setting of 1R: *Hal yang selama ini entah kenapa tak bisa saya temukan dalam hubungan antara saya dan Yuni walau saya yakin kami saling mencintai* [The things that I do not know why, **I cannot** find in my relationship with Yuni even though we love each other]. From the example, it can be seen that although the word 'bisa' represents ability, but the word is negated since the user describes the inability of doing things regarding the relationship. Thus, the discussion of the word 'bisa' supported the findings that Mojok.co users experiencing problems related with the developmental features one and three: feeling trapped in between and instability in roles and relationships.

CONCLUSION

All in all, the discussion of the word 'saya' and 'bisa' showed that the subject of the issues were the users themselves who projected negative emotions such as confusion and helplessness. In addition, the most projected problems are correlated with Robinson, Wright, Smith, and Arnett's developmental features one and three: feeling trapped in between and instability in roles and relationships. In this phase, while making decisions in their life, they are still very much influenced by their parents' point of view; and they encounter instability in roles and relationships.

REFERENCES

- AbuSa'aleek, A. O. 2015. *Internet Linguistics: A Linguistic Analysis of Electronic Discourse as a New Variety of Language*. International Journal of English Linguistics, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v5n1p135>
- Agarwal, S., Guntuku, S. C., Robinson, O. C., Dunn, A., & Ungar, L. H. 2020. *Examining the Phenomenon of Quarter-Life Crisis Through Artificial Intelligence and the Language of Twitter*. Frontiers in Psychology, 11. March, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00341>
- Anthony, L. 2020. *AntConc Version 3.5.9 (3.5.9)*. Waseda University. <https://www.laurenceanthony.net/software>
- Baker, P. 2010. *Sociolinguistics And Corpus Linguistics*. Sociolinguistics and Corpus Linguistics, 1–189.

- Balzarie, E. N., & Nawangsih, E. 2019. *Kajian Resiliensi pada Mahasiswa Bandung yang Mengalami Quarter Life Crisis*. *Prosiding Psikologi*, 5(2), 494–500.
- Bednarek, M. 2020. *Invisible Or High-Risk: Computer-Assisted Discourse Analysis of References to Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander People(S) and Issues in A Newspaper Corpus about Diabetes*. *PLoS ONE*, 15. 6 June 2020. 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0234486>
- Crystal, D. 2001. *Language and the Internet*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139164771>
- Habibie, A., Syakarofath, N. A., & Anwar, Z. 2019. *Peran Religiusitas terhadap Quarter-Life Crisis (QLC) pada Mahasiswa*. *Gajah Mada Journal of Psychology (GamaJoP)*, 5(2), 129. <https://doi.org/10.22146/gamajop.48948>
- Herat, M. 2020. *“I Feel Like Death On Legs” : COVID-19 Isolation And Mental Health*. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 2(1), 100042. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2020.100042>
- Herawati, I., & Hidayat, A. 2020. *Quarterlife Crisis Pada Masa Dewasa Awal di Pekanbaru*. *Journal An-Nafs: Kajian Penelitian Psikologi*, 5(2), 145–156. <https://doi.org/10.33367/psi.v5i2.1036>
- Luszczuk, M., Padrtova, B., & Szczerbowicz, W. 2020. *Łuszczuk2020.pdf*. *Oceanologia*, 608–621.
- Nurhidayah, A., & Kistanto, N. H. 2016. *The Quarter-Life Crisis Experienced By Megan In lynn Shelton’s Laggies*. English Department.
- Pace-Sigge, M. 2018. *How Homo Economicus Is Reflected In Fiction – A Corpus Linguistic Analysis Of 19th And 20th Century Capitalist Societies*. *Language Sciences*, 70, 103–117. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2018.07.005>
- Qolbi, F. H., Musthofa, A., & Chotidjah, S. 2020. *Masa Emerging Adulthood pada Mahasiswa: Kecemasan akan Masa Depan, Kesejahteraan Subjektif, dan Religiusitas Islam*. *Psikoislamika : Jurnal Psikologi Dan Psikologi Islam*, 17(1), 44. <https://doi.org/10.18860/psi.v17i1.8821>
- Rajeg, G. P. W., Denistia, K., & Rajeg, I. M. 2019. *Working With a Linguistic Corpus Using R: an Introductory Note With Indonesian Negating Construction*. *Linguistik Indonesia*, 36(1), 1–36. <https://doi.org/10.26499/li.v36i1.71>
- Robbins, A., & Wilner, A. 2001. *Quarterlife Crisis : The Unique Challenges Of Life In Your Twenties*. <http://www.amazon.com/dp/1585421065>
- Robinson, O. C. 2019. *A Longitudinal Mixed-Methods Case Study of Quarter-Life Crisis During the Post-university Transition: Locked-Out and Locked-In Forms in Combination*. *Emerging Adulthood*, 7(3), 167–179. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696818764144>
- Saraswati, D. A., & Hastasari, C. 2020. *Strategi Digital Content Marketing pada Akun Media Sosial Instagram Mojok . co dalam Mempertahankan Brand Engagement Digital Content Marketing on the Social Media Instagram Account of Mojok . co* in Maintaining Brand Engagement dapat dipertimbangkan oleh p. 9(2), 152–171.
- Simanjuntak, R. R., Wahyuningtyas, B. P., Anindito, & Yunus, U. 2020. *Twitter’s Projection On Identities And Realities Of University Graduates*. *Proceedings of 2020 International Conference on Information Management and Technology, ICIMTech 2020, August, 756–760*. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICIMTech50083.2020.9211260>
- Sokowati, M. U., & Junaedi, F. 2020. *Understanding The Problem of Control and Ownership of Mojok.co: Is It Still Alternative? Nyimak Journal of Communication*, 4(2), 181–198.
- Thorspecken, J. M. 2005. *Quarterlife Crisis: The Unaddressed Phenomenon*. *Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the New Jersey Counseling Association, “Research Papers,” 145*. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.477.3573&rep=rep1&type=pdf#page=121>
- Utomo, W. P. 2015. *Menertawakan Politik : Anak Muda, Satire dan Parodi dalam Situs Mojok.co*. *Studi Pemuda*, 4(1), 190–205. <https://jurnal.ugm.ac.id/jurnalpemuda/article/view/36729>

CURRICULUM VITAE

Complete Name	Institution	Education	Research Interests
Elisabeth Marsella	Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta	S2 Linguistik Terapan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Katolik Indonesia Atma Jaya	Corpus Linguistics, Multilingualism, Sociolinguistics
Putri Rindu Kinasih	Universitas Bunda Mulia	S2 Linguistik Terapan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Katolik Indonesia Atma Jaya	Sociolinguistics, Pragmatics, Literature