

## **Framing devices in Indonesian Comics**

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One of the more dynamic drivers of language change in contemporary Indonesia is popular youth language, commonly known as bahasa gaul ‘the language of sociability’. Innovative features of youth language can spread quickly throughout Indonesian society via the pervasive presence of popular media, which cuts across geographic, social and discourse spaces. Although primarily conceived as a colloquial spoken register, Indonesian youth language is having profound effects on written modalities as well. This is particularly apparent in genres produced by and for youth, which form an important part of the twenty-first century Indonesian media and linguistic landscape. As key resources for creating intersubjectivity, features from conversational youth language make their way into print media with the aim of (re)creating a sense of involvement in order to appeal to youth audiences. Broad research questions which arise include: What features of conversational language are employed by writers of youth genres? Why are these (and not others) employed for creating a sense of involvement in print form? Are there new linguistic forms to mark high-involvement youth style that are emerging in non-conversational modes? In what ways can the choices writers make in their choice of features tell us something about the pragmatic functions of these features?

In this paper I examine one specific example of this process: a framing structure that can be characterised as a conditional or topicalisation construction. This structure is marked by *kalo* (sometimes spelled *kalau*), often glossed ‘if’ but more appropriately characterised as a framing particle as it marks a range of structures including clauses, adverbials and nominal elements which always function to frame a concomitant portion of discourse. First the use of *kalo* structures in casual conversation are described in terms of frequency, distribution and discourse functions. This is compared with the use of these same framing constructions in one print genre aimed at youth audiences – comics – in order to see whether this aspect of ‘informal’ grammar is utilised by writers as one means of representing an informal, youthful style. It will be shown that *kalo* structures that use clauses for framing and which can be read as having conditional-like meanings are common in both colloquial conversation and in written genres that incorporate colloquial features. However, *kalo* structures using nouns and other non-clausal material for framing, while ubiquitous in colloquial conversation, are rare in written genres that incorporate colloquial features. It is suggested that these different framing devices are in fact deployed by users based on different discourse, interactional and cognitive needs and this in turn explains their very different distribution across genres, which otherwise are similarly intended to evoke the involvement of youth sociability.