

## THE PHENOMENON OF ENGLISH USAGE IN INDONESIAN CYBERSPACE

Rangga Aditya<sup>1</sup>, Sitti Aminah<sup>2</sup>, Harmilawati<sup>3</sup>, Sabaruddin<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> Universitas Islam Ahmad Dahlan, Sinjai, Indonesia

Author's Correspondence. E-mail [anwarsinjai@gmail.com](mailto:anwarsinjai@gmail.com)

### Submission Track:

||Submitted: 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2025||Reviewed: 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2025||Published: 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2025

Copyright © 2025 Rangga Aditya, Sitti Aminah, Harmilawati, Sabaruddin



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

### Abstract

This study explores the growing trend of English language usage in Indonesian cyberspaces, particularly in social media comments. The researchers employ a qualitative research approach, specifically a phenomenological study. Data is collected using the documentation method, through screenshots of comments containing English on social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Facebook. This methodology allows for an in-depth examination of the real-world manifestations of English usage in Indonesian digital communication. This research aims to understand the motivations, contexts, and implications of this linguistic phenomenon. The results show that the use of English in Indonesian online spaces shows how language, technology, culture, and worldwide connections mix together. It shows Indonesia is more involved in global online talks while trying to keep its own language and culture. The findings suggest that English usage in Indonesian cyberspace is a complex phenomenon driven by various factors, including globalization, digital connectivity, and changing perceptions of language prestige.

**Keywords:** Phenomenon; English; Cyberspace

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi tren penggunaan bahasa Inggris yang berkembang di dunia maya Indonesia, khususnya dalam komentar di media sosial. Para peneliti menggunakan pendekatan penelitian kualitatif, khususnya studi fenomenologi. Data dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan metode dokumentasi, melalui tangkapan layar dari komentar-komentar yang mengandung bahasa Inggris di platform media sosial seperti Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, dan Facebook. Metodologi ini memungkinkan pemeriksaan mendalam terhadap manifestasi dunia nyata dari penggunaan bahasa Inggris dalam komunikasi digital di Indonesia. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami motivasi, konteks, dan implikasi dari fenomena linguistik ini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan bahasa Inggris di ruang daring Indonesia menunjukkan bagaimana bahasa, teknologi, budaya, dan koneksi di seluruh dunia bercampur menjadi satu. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa Indonesia semakin terlibat dalam pembicaraan online global sambil berusaha mempertahankan bahasa dan budayanya sendiri. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan bahasa Inggris di dunia maya Indonesia merupakan fenomena yang kompleks yang didorong oleh berbagai faktor, termasuk globalisasi, konektivitas digital, dan perubahan persepsi tentang prestise Bahasa.

**Kata Kunci:** Fenomena; Bahasa Inggris; Dunia Maya

## 1. Introduction

Language is a fundamental component of communication and a powerful force in shaping human society (Junadi & Laili, 2021). As a symbolic system of sounds and signs, language enables individuals to express thoughts, emotions, and ideas, facilitating mutual understanding and connection (Budiyono et al., 2021). Far from being static, language is inherently dynamic—evolving alongside its speakers and adapting to social, cultural, and technological changes (Budiasa et al., 2021). Its hierarchical structure, encompassing phonemes, morphemes, words, and texts, forms a complex system for organizing and conveying meaning (Frank et al., 2012). Consequently, language not only reflects but also shapes human thought, social structures, and cultural identity (Satria Prayudi & Nasution, 2020).

In the modern world, communication has become increasingly multifaceted due to technological advancements. From face-to-face interaction to online discourse, communication now spans verbal, nonverbal, synchronous, and asynchronous modes, profoundly influencing daily life (Pohan & Fitria, 2021). Indonesia has witnessed rapid digital transformation, with the internet and social media playing crucial roles in everyday communication. This digital revolution has reshaped information exchange, cultural interaction, and even governance practices (Hodzi, 2022).

Indonesia's unique sociolinguistic landscape—home to over 270 million people and more than 700 living languages—has experienced significant transformation with the rise of digital communication. With over 200 million internet users as of 2024, Indonesia has become one of Southeast Asia's largest digital markets. Social media, online forums, and digital content platforms have not only transformed how Indonesians interact but also altered language practices, especially among younger users (Iswatiningsih et al., 2021). Teenagers, in particular, are deeply embedded in online networks, using platforms like Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, and Twitter almost continuously (Zeva et al., 2023). This connectivity impacts their cognitive development, social behavior, and, critically, their language usage.

Amid these changes, English has emerged as a prominent language in Indonesian cyberspace, propelled by its dominance on global internet platforms and its role as the lingua franca of science, technology, and international communication (Sharma, 2024). Over 60% of global websites are in English (Giannakouloupoulos et al., 2020), exposing Indonesian users, especially youth to English vocabulary, expressions, and discourse conventions on a daily basis. This exposure has led to increased English adoption, particularly on digital platforms, where it is often perceived as a symbol of global connectivity, modernity, and educational status (Lim, 2013).

This linguistic shift has given rise to linguistic hybridity, characterized by the blending of English with Bahasa Indonesia and local dialects. Known colloquially as "Indoglish" or "Engdonesian", this hybrid language reflects Indonesia's engagement with global digital culture while maintaining local linguistic identity (Rahman & Rahman, 2021). Such practices are evident across online forums, blogs, and social media posts, where code-switching and borrowing are commonplace. For Indonesian youth, these practices often signify social identity, cultural alignment, or aspirational values.

The urgency of this research lies in understanding the socio-cultural and linguistic implications of English usage in Indonesian digital spaces. As English continues to penetrate everyday communication, it raises important questions: How does this impact Bahasa Indonesia and local languages? What are the motivations behind English usage in informal online settings? And how does this phenomenon affect language learning, identity, and communication norms among Indonesians, particularly the youth?

From a theoretical standpoint, this study engages with multiple linguistic frameworks. Chomsky's Transformational Grammar (deep vs. surface structure), Grice's Conversational Implicature (contextual meaning), and sociolinguistic theories of code-switching and World Englishes provide essential analytical tools (Wilson & Sperber, 2022; Bonvillain, 2019).

Cyberspace conceptualized as a non-physical, interactive, and globally connected realm (Ferreira & Vale, 2021; Zhuge, 2020) serves as the primary site of this investigation. The characteristics of cyberspace, including interactivity, anonymity, and ubiquity, uniquely shape how languages are used, blended, and transformed. In this context, the growing use of English represents not just a linguistic change but a deeper socio-cultural shift influenced by globalization, identity politics, and digital media consumption.

In sum, this study is crucial for understanding how digital communication, globalization, and technological advancements intersect with linguistic practices in Indonesia. By focusing on English usage among Indonesian netizens particularly in social media, it seeks to uncover the evolving nature of language, identity, and communication in the digital era.

## 2. Method

This study employs a qualitative methodology by using Phenomenology. Qualitative research method is a technique utilized to address research issues connected to data presented in narrative form. Qualitative research is conducted because there is something unique and interesting to be studied by researchers. The goal of qualitative research is to comprehend the circumstances of a setting by focusing on a comprehensive and thorough depiction of the conditions within a natural environment (Fadli, 2021). A qualitative approach using phenomenological studies is a research method that focuses on individual experiences and the meanings associated with the phenomena experienced by them.

The phenomenon studied is the use of English in Indonesian Cyberspace. So the focus of this research is to understand the motivation, context, and implications of the use of English among Indonesians. The participants in this study are social media users who often use foreign languages in social media activities. Participants were selected based on the criteria that often use foreign languages in writing status or commenting on social media. The participants in this study are social media users who often use foreign languages in social media activities. Participants were selected based on the criteria that often use foreign languages in writing status or commenting on social media.

Data collection was done through documentation techniques by taking data from social media. Data is collected by documenting or capturing screenshots of relevant social media content over a specific period of time. Screenshots were taken from popular Indonesian social media platforms, such as Instagram, YouTube, Tik tok, and Facebook. Data collection involved gathering screenshots of comments containing English words or phrases from popular Indonesian social media platforms and online forums. These comments were then analysed to identify patterns, contexts, and potential motivations for English usage.

## 3. Results and Discussion

Screenshots were collected over a period of time from various social media platforms including Instagram, YouTube, Tik Tok, and Facebook. Comments or posts containing English were identified and categorized as follows:

### 3.1 Types of English Usage in Indonesian cyberspace

#### a. Mixed English (Indoglish)

Indoglish is a term used to describe the use of English that still maintains cultural and Indonesian elements. In sociolinguistic studies, this phenomenon is referred to as code-switching and borrowing. However, upon closer examination, Indoglish appears unique because it is a blend of English and Indonesian. Indoglish is a special form because, although it is a blend of two languages, it does not clearly belong to either Indonesian or English. The form of its utterance is English, but the meaning contained within it is rooted in Indonesian culture and language (Rakhmawati et al., 2016). The use of Indoglish among Indonesian netizens is as follows:



jle\_mupa\_ 4 jam

Salah 1 wishlist kak. Bisa ngebawa impact banget ga buat gw yg pemalas gini kak



Balas

### Picture 1 Use of Indoglish on Instagram



kikielias.

sorry.. but sumpah aku ga nyangka emg ada yang kyk gini ya? myb im that one friend, and as that one friend, i feel bad abt complaining mylife sm, but kayaknya mending jujur drpd malah ngomongin gt

15 j Balas

483

### Picture 2 Use of Indoglish on Tik Tok



Lili Lili • Ikuti

Thanks mbak sharingnyaa.. ijin share dan save yaaaa

1 mgg Suka Balas

### Picture 3 Use of Indoglish on Facebook



@Nur Anis • 5 h lalu

Terlalu effort buat orang yang selalu ngasih kita feeling lonely, dibutuhin sesuai mood dia aja, dibuat jadi orang yang selalu ngemis waktu

👍 🗨️ 📧

### Picture 4 Use of Indoglish on YouTube

## b. Acronym

Acronyms are abbreviations formed from the initial letters of a phrase or word. They are pronounced as a word, unlike abbreviations which are not pronounced as a word (Pujiyanti & Nur Ardini, 2019). English acronyms are widely used on Indonesian social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and Tik Tok. These acronyms are often used to shorten words or phrases, making it easier and faster for users to communicate. The use of English acronyms on Indonesian social media has contributed to the evolution of the Indonesian language and facilitated cultural exchange between Indonesia and other English-speaking countries. The use of acronyms among Indonesian netizens is as follows:



lol ngl  
ngakak bgt ga boong 🤔

2023-11-12 Balas

4.016

### Picture 5 Use of acronym on TikTok

LOL is an acronym that stands for "Laugh Out Loud" or "Laughing Out Loud." It's primarily used to express laughter or amusement in response to something funny or entertaining.



Kaum react HAHA otw menyerang

20 jam Suka Balas

### Picture 6 Use of acronym on Facebook

"OTW" is another popular acronym used in digital communication. OTW stands for "On The Way". It's primarily used to inform someone that you are in the process of traveling to a specific location or destination.



Wwkkwkw another relate video from uuu zahid, thanks a lot yaa. Jadi pengen lanjutinn habit journalingg.

FYI gaiss, Meditations by Marcus Aurelius ( maybe the most tokoh stoik paling famous) adalah hasil dari Journalling keseharian diaaa wkkwkw, sengefek itu emggg

1

### Picture 7 Use of acronym on YouTube

FYI stands for "For Your Information". Used to preface information that might be useful or relevant to the recipient, often without requiring immediate action and Serves to highlight that the following information is worth noting, even if it's not the main topic of discussion.



OMG SO UNREAL 🤯

Balas



5

### Picture 8 Use of acronym on Instagram

OMG stands for "Oh My God". Primarily used to express shock, surprise, disbelief, or strong emotion. Often used to emphasize the intensity of a reaction or situation.

### c. Slang

Slang is a linguistic phenomenon that reflects language development and social dynamics within society. This phenomenon is characterized by the use of language variations that emerge as a result of linguistic evolution and social interaction. In Indonesia, slang is known as "bahasa gaul". This colloquial language is particularly popular among young people and is frequently used when they communicate with peers or other social groups.

The use of "bahasa gaul" can be viewed as a way for young people to express their identity, build social bonds, and distinguish themselves from other groups in society. This phenomenon demonstrates how language can function not only as a communication tool but also as a social and cultural marker. "Bahasa gaul" tends to be informal, creative, and often changes over time, reflecting the dynamic nature of social interactions and cultural developments among Indonesian youth. The use of slang among Indonesian netizens is as follows:



**Picture 9 Use of slang on Tik Tok**

The slang expression "I feel blue" is used to convey a feeling of sadness, melancholy, or depression. Typically used in casual conversation rather than formal contexts. It's a figurative way of expressing emotions, not literal blue coloration.



**Picture 10 Use slang on Tik Tok**

"Gotcha" is a contraction of "Got you" or "I've got you." Often used when someone has been caught doing something, especially in a playful or teasing manner.



**Picture 11 Use slang on YouTube**

The slang term "slay" is used informally, especially among younger people and in online contexts, to express strong approval or admiration. Saying someone "slayed" means they did exceptionally well or looked amazing.



isw 2 hari

yapping min

Balas



### **Picture 12 Use slang on Instagram**

"Yapping" isn't typically used as slang on its own, but it's part of some slang expressions. "Yap" or "yapping" can mean to talk excessively or annoyingly. "Shut your yap" means "be quiet" or "stop talking."

### **3.2 The contexts of English usage in Indonesian cyberspace**

The contexts of English usage in Indonesian cyberspace are diverse, reflecting various aspects of online communication and digital culture. Key contexts include:

1. **Social media:** Users often incorporate English phrases or hashtags in status updates and posts. Comments on international content frequently use English, and bilingual posts are common to reach both local and global audiences.
2. **Entertainment and pop culture:** English is prevalent when commenting on international music, movies, and TV shows. Fandoms and fan communities often communicate in English to connect with global audiences.
3. **Educational contexts:** Online learning platforms and educational resources frequently use English. Academic discussions and research sharing also commonly occur in English, facilitating international collaboration.
4. **News and information sharing:** English language news sources are widely shared and discussed. International events are often analyzed using English terms, allowing for broader participation in global conversations.
5. **Blogging and content creation:** Many Indonesian bloggers and content creators produce bilingual or English-only content. Tech, lifestyle, and travel blogs often use English to reach a wider audience and participate in global online communities.

### **3.3 The motivation for using English in Indonesian cyberspace stems from several factors:**

1. **Global connectivity:** English serves as a lingua franca online, allowing Indonesians to communicate with a wider international audience.
2. **Access to information:** Much of the content on the internet is in English, so using the language enables Indonesians to access a broader range of information and resources.
3. **Cultural influence:** Exposure to English-language media and pop culture motivates many Indonesians to use English online to engage with these cultural products.
4. **Social prestige:** In some circles, using English may be perceived as a marker of education or sophistication.
5. **Youth culture:** Younger generations often mix English words or phrases into their online communication as a form of self-expression.

### **3.4 The implications of using English in Indonesian cyberspace are far-reaching and multifaceted, affecting various aspects of Indonesian society, culture, and language:**

1. **Language evolution:** The widespread use of English online is influencing the Indonesian language itself. This has led to the emergence of "Indoglish" or "Bahasa Gado-gado," a mix of Indonesian and English. Over time, this could result in significant changes to the Indonesian language, potentially incorporating more English loanwords and phrases.
2. **Digital divide:** While English usage can broaden access to global information, it may also exacerbate the digital divide. Those with strong English skills gain advantages in accessing information and participating in global conversations, potentially leaving behind those who are less proficient in English.

3. Cultural identity: The prevalence of English in cyberspace raises questions about cultural identity. While it allows Indonesians to engage with global culture, there are concerns about the potential erosion of Indonesian cultural uniqueness and linguistic heritage.
4. Economic opportunities: English proficiency, demonstrated through online interactions, can open up new economic opportunities. It can lead to better job prospects, particularly in multinational companies or industries with global connections.
5. Educational impact: The use of English online is influencing education in Indonesia. There's increased pressure on the education system to improve English language instruction to prepare students for the digital world.
6. Global representation: English usage allows Indonesians to represent their perspectives and culture on the global stage. This can lead to increased international awareness and understanding of Indonesia.
7. Shift in media consumption: The comfort with English in cyberspace is influencing media consumption habits, with more Indonesians accessing English-language content, potentially affecting local media industries.
8. Generational gap: The prevalence of English online, particularly among younger users, may widen the generational gap in digital literacy and online participation.
9. Linguistic pressure: There may be increased pressure on non-English speakers to adapt, potentially leading to feelings of exclusion or the need for rapid language acquisition.

These implications highlight the complex interplay between language, technology, culture, and globalization in the Indonesian context. While English usage in cyberspace offers numerous benefits, it also presents challenges that need to be carefully navigated to ensure inclusive and balanced development of Indonesia's digital landscape.

The use of English in Indonesian online spaces shows how language, technology, culture, and worldwide connections mix together. It shows Indonesia is more involved in global online talks while trying to keep its own language and culture. This trend shows Indonesian internet users can adapt and join worldwide discussions. It helps them get global knowledge and work with people from other countries. But it also makes people wonder how to keep Indonesian language and culture strong in a world where everyone is connected.

The common use of English online shows Indonesia needs to grow its internet presence carefully. While it helps connect with the world, we also need to make sure people who don't speak English well or aren't as connected to global trends aren't left out. This trend reflects bigger changes in Indonesian society, especially how younger people think about language, identity, and being part of the world. It shows how cultural identity can change in the digital age. Basically, English use in Indonesian online spaces brings both good things and challenges of worldwide internet use. It's important for Indonesia's future online world, and needs careful handling to make sure everyone can take part and benefit equally.

The increasing use of English in Indonesian cyberspace reflects a complex interplay between language, technology, culture, and globalization, highlighting both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, English functions as a form of linguistic capital that enables Indonesians, particularly the younger, urban population to participate in global digital conversations, access international knowledge, and project a cosmopolitan identity (Azzahra & Masduqi, 2022). This aligns with broader globalization trends, positioning English as a gateway to modernity and economic mobility. However, it also introduces concerns about linguistic inequality and cultural erosion, as the dominance of English may marginalize speakers of Bahasa Indonesia and regional languages, thereby threatening Indonesia's rich linguistic heritage (Tupas, 2015). Furthermore, this shift risks excluding digitally and linguistically less-equipped populations from fully engaging in online spaces, amplifying existing social divides. Thus, while the use of English offers valuable global

connections, it necessitates careful, inclusive strategies to ensure equitable participation and the preservation of cultural identity in Indonesia's evolving digital landscape.

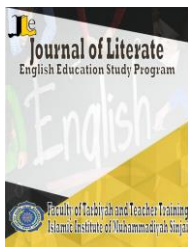
#### 4. Conclusion

The findings suggest that English usage in Indonesian cyberspace is a complex phenomenon driven by various factors, including globalization, digital connectivity, and changing perceptions of language prestige. The integration of English into online Indonesian communication reflects a broader trend of linguistic hybridity in the digital age. This phenomenon raises questions about the future of language use in Indonesia and the potential long-term effects on Indonesian language and culture. While some view this trend as a natural evolution of language in a globalized world, others express concern about the preservation of Indonesian linguistic heritage.

From this phenomenon, there are two major impacts that occur: the use of foreign languages can give a sense of modernity and seem more slang. But on the other hand, the excessive use of foreign languages has the potential to erode the use of Indonesian. This phenomenon reflects the complex dynamics between globalization and national identity in a digital context. The challenge is to capitalize on the positive aspects of English usage while maintaining and developing the richness of the Indonesian language.

#### References

- Azzahra, F. I., & Masduqi, H. (2022). English language and identity construction in Indonesian digital context. *Journal of Language and Cultural Education*, 10(1), 55–70.
- Bonvillain, N. (2019). *Language, culture, and communication: The meaning of messages*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Budiasa, I. G., Weddha Savitri, P., & Shanti Sari Dewi, A. A. Sg. (2021). Penggunaan bahasa slang di media sosial. *Humanis*, 25(2), 192–198. <https://doi.org/10.24843/jh.2021.v25.i02.p08>
- Budiyono, S., Pranawa, E., Yuwono, S. E., Widya, U., & Klaten, D. (2021). Language as a communication tool, motivation, achievement, negotiation, and business professionally. In *Seminar Nasional Riset Linguistik dan Pengajaran Bahasa (SENARILIP V)* (pp. 5–6).
- Fadli, M. R. (2021). Memahami desain metode penelitian kualitatif. *Humanika: Kajian Ilmiah Mata Kuliah Umum*, 21(1), 33–54. <https://doi.org/10.21831/hum.v21i1.37285>
- Ferreira, D., & Vale, M. (2021). From cyberspace to cyberspatialities? *Fennia–International Journal of Geography*, 199(1), 113–117.
- Frank, S. L., Bod, R., & Christiansen, M. H. (2012). How hierarchical is language use? *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 279(1747), 4522–4531. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2012.1741>
- Giannakouloupoulos, A., Pergantis, M., Konstantinou, N., Lamprogeorgos, A., Limniati, L., & Varlamis, I. (2020). Exploring the dominance of the English language on the websites of EU countries. *Future Internet*, 12(4), Article 76. <https://doi.org/10.3390/fi12040076>
- Hodzi, R. O. (2022). The digital revolution and its impact on democracy. In *EISA* (Issue 1).
- Iswatiningsih, D., Pangesti, F., & Fauzan. (2021). Ekspresi remaja milenial melalui penggunaan bahasa gaul di media sosial. *KEMBARA: Jurnal Keilmuan Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pengajarannya*, 7(2), 476–489.
- Junadi, S., & Karomatul Laili, R. (2021). Fenomena bahasa gaul sebagai kreativitas linguistik dalam media sosial Instagram pada era milenial. *Jurnal PENEROKA*, 1(1), 69–78. <https://doi.org/10.30739/peneroka.v1i01.741>
- Lim, M. (2013). The internet and everyday life in Indonesia: A new moral panic? *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde / Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia*, 169(2–3), 133–147. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134379-1Z340008>



- Mostafizar Rahman, A. R. M., & Mahbuber Rahman, A. R. M. (2021). Linguistic hybridization in a television talk show: A sociolinguistic analysis. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 17(2), 767–782. <https://doi.org/10.52462/jlls.54>
- Pohan, D. D., & Fitria, U. S. (2021). Jenis-jenis komunikasi. *Cybernetics: Journal Educational Research and Social Studies*, 2, 29–37. <https://doi.org/10.1002/0471715220.ch3>
- Pujiyanti, A., & Nur Ardini, S. (2019). Analysis of acronym and abbreviations in IJAL journal. *Journal of English Language Learning (JELL)*, 3(2), 9–21.
- Rakhmawati, A., Saddhono, K., Hastuti, S., & Devilito, R. (2016). A phenomenon of Indoglish usage at universities in Indonesia: Breaking down the motives. In *International Seminar Prasasti III: Current Research in Linguistics* (pp. 146–152).
- Satria Prayudi, & Nasution, W. (2020). Ragam bahasa dalam media sosial Twitter. *Jurnal Metamorfosa*, 8(2), 269–280. <https://doi.org/10.46244/metamorfosa.v8i2.1140>
- Sharma, S. (2024). The importance of English language fluency in digital business communication. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(4), 7545–7550. <https://doi.org/10.53555/kuey.v30i4.2607>
- Tupas, T. R. F. (2015). Inequalities of multilingualism: Challenges to mother tongue-based multilingual education. *Language and Education*, 29(2), 112–124.
- Wilson, D., & Sperber, D. (2022). On Grice's theory of conversation. In *Conversation and discourse* (pp. 155–178). Routledge.
- Zeva, S., Rizqiana, I., Novitasari, D., & Radita, F. R. (2023). Moralitas generasi Z di media sosial: Sebuah esai. *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan*, 1(2), 1–6.
- Zhuge, H. (2020). *Cyber-physical-social intelligence*. Springer.