

Slang Semantic Analysis on TikTok Social Media Generation Z

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Abstract

Language serves as a vital communication tool among individuals. There are various languages in the world, including Indonesian. Even so, each generation at its time will give birth to its own unique language style, and this also applies to the generation Z. This research aims to explore the semantic analysis of slang usage by Generation Z on social media. This research investigated: (1) the types of slang commonly used by Generation Z on social media, and (2) the reasons why Generation Z uses slang on social media. A qualitative descriptive method was employed to collect data from conversations on social media platforms, particularly TikTok, involving Generation Z. Data obtained through observations, documentation, and research questionnaires. Data analysis revealed that individuals, particularly Generation Z users, frequently employed slang on TikTok. The types of slang used include fresh and creative expressions, relaxed language styles, abbreviations, acronyms, and imitations of words. Based on observations, it is known that Generation Z uses slang on social media for various reasons, such as greeting friends or followers, starting conversations in a casual way, expressing impressions or feelings, and showing a sense of familiarity with their audience.

Keywords: Generation Z, Slang, TikTok.

Introduction

Language is considered as a very important means of communication to convey information. This is one of the vital elements in human life because it allows humans to communicate easily with each other (T. I. Rezeki & Sagala, 2019). It is important for everyone involved in communication to understand the language because it is a critical tool for communication (Thamrin et al., 2023). Slang is a type of language that is often used, where the style of speaking is characterized by the use of distinctive language which becomes a personal code for a particular generation or group. It is a means of communication used by a group of people to interact with each other and share their ideas in a relaxed atmosphere (Putrawan et al., 2020; Saputra & Marlina, 2019). Slang is an informal language used by special groups such as teenagers, musicians, or criminal groups to build their group identity. As a rule, slang is very popular among Generation Z.

In recent years, social media has become a very popular platform among people, and one of the leading platforms that dominates is TikTok. TikTok has succeeded in attracting the attention of millions of users from various age groups, including the millennial generation and Generation Z. As a medium for mixing various styles of language and culture, the use of slang in TikTok social media is an interesting phenomenon that deserves further investigation.

Slang

Slang words are a form of casual language that tends to be temporary in nature (Saputra & Marlina, 2019). They are typically employed by specific social circles during internal communication to avoid comprehension by individuals who do not belong to their particular group (Brown et al., 2020). Slang is commonly used by teenagers and young

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adults in this contemporary setting (Nuraeni & Pahamzah, 2021). Slang is a popular and current word that is stylistically inferior to formal and even polite informal speech. Slang is generally used to establish social groups, defy established grammar, and suggest informal settings. It is both a condensed illustration of language dynamics and a manifestation of the human capacity for linguistic invention.

From the definition provided, it can be inferred that slang is often incomprehensible to individuals outside specific social circles and serves to foster intimacy and solidarity among group members. Slang is words or phrases that are highly informal, often temporary, and are typically used to identify with peers and by people of various ages and social groups. Slang is a way to distinguish between group members and people outside the group, as a way for groups to separate themselves linguistically from other groups. Slang terms tend to describe things that are negative or taboo or things that are extreme.

In the context of semantics, semantics, as defined by Karlya (2022), refers to the study of meaning. Apart from that, it was also explained that semantics can be related to context and culture. Slang gets its meaning from the perceptions of its users which are formed because they have similar points of view or context with each other. Slang often involves changing the meaning of unusual words or phrases. Understanding how these words change in the context of slang and their impact on the people who hear them is the main focus of cognitive semantic studies. Slang also reflects the way language users construct their thoughts and perceptions. The use of slang words is often based on certain cognitive categories, such as grouping within a particular social group or unique experiences. Cognitive semantic studies explore how these cognitive constructs influence how slang is produced and understood.

Types of Slang Word

In research conducted by (K. Allan & K. Burridge, 2006) Slang was categorized into five different groups. These groups, namely fresh and creative, flippant, imitative, acronyms, and clippings, provide an overview of the variations and characteristics of slang used by the generation Z in online communication, especially on social media.

The fresh and creative group refers to slang words introduced to create new vocabulary in informal contexts, adding a creative and fresh nuance to the expression. Then, flippant group includes slang words that consist of two or more words and do not have a direct correlation with their denotative meaning. This reflects the way slang often adopts unconventional forms. The imitative category refers to slang words that imitate or are derived from words in Standard English. In use, these words may have different meanings or be combined in creative ways. Next, the acronym category involves creating slang words by taking the first letter of each word in a phrase or using the initials of a group of words or syllables, which are then pronounced as a new word. Lastly, clipping refers to slang words that come from deleting parts of longer words, creating a shorter form but retaining the same meaning. The Semantics Analysis of Slang (SAOS) approach aids in comprehending and analyzing the characteristics and variations of slang employed by the millennial generation in their online interactions and communication.

Reasons for Using Slang Words

In the (K. Allan & K. Burridge, 2006) researched, their conducted an insightful exploration into the myriad reasons underpinning the utilization of slang language. Their research identified seven diverse and illuminating motivations. Speakers employ slang words as a mode of addressing others, fostering a sense of closeness that is integral to maintaining relationships. This preference for informal addressing is particularly pronounced among individuals with pre-existing connections, eschewing formalities for a more personal touch.

Furthermore, slang proves to be an effective tool for initiating casual conversations, imbuing interactions with a smoother flow in comparison to formal settings. This propensity is especially evident among individuals already familiar with each other, who leverage specific slang terms to infuse conversations with an air of relaxation and comfort. Additionally, slang language is occasionally wielded to express feelings of discomfort or disdain towards others in a playful manner, functioning as a tool for teasing. Beyond these aspects, the use of slang words takes on the role of establishing an intimate atmosphere and signaling a deeper closeness in relationships. The researchers note that when speakers become intimate with someone, it may imply a connection that extends beyond the ordinary. Slang language also emerges as a means to express impressions, with speakers using it strategically to leave a lasting impact on listeners, thereby enhancing group intimacy and showcasing solidarity. Notably, slang words find utility in expressing anger in a more polished manner, allowing individuals to communicate frustration with a tone that is less harsh.

Speakers use slang words to demonstrate intimacy, adjusting their language to align with the preferences of their audience and making conversations resonate more closely with the listeners' language. Overall, Allan and Burridge's

research sheds light on these seven multifaceted reasons, providing valuable insights into the widespread use of slang language in diverse social interactions.

Generation Z

Generation Z is the young age group born after 1996, considered as digital natives. The digital native generation was born in a time of strong economic growth and rapid technology advancement, according to Parker 2020. They converse on social media with ease, which aids in the growth of slang (Rezeki & Sagala, 2019). The characteristics of this generation, which actively uses social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok as well as email, SMS, and instant messaging, have been shaped by globalization and technological advancements (Afifi et al., 2018);(Muthalib et al., 2020); (Muslem et al., 2022). Generation Z is known as a very diverse generation group, has a high level of education, expertise in digital technology, and a tendency to express themselves more actively (Muliadi, 2020).

Because of the growing use of the internet, Generation Z has created a language that is frequently only understood by themselves (Ardi, 2019). In Indonesia, Generation Z communicates in a variety of well-known languages both in person and online via social media. They rely heavily on technology and consider the internet to be a basic requirement for daily life.

The platform TikTok is popular among Generation Z, hence data from this study are gathered using this program. Generation Z typically employs slang when interacting with their pals, making this study fascinating. In addition, the younger generation frequently use slang in their communication. This study is significant since it focuses on slang usage, particularly among Generation Z.

TikTok

TikTok is an audiovisual media platform that provides users with access to both visual and auditory content simultaneously. Additionally, this application offers a wide range of distinctive and captivating special effects that users may use to quickly produce high-quality videos that can capture the interest of a large audience.

TikTok is a tool for making brief films with a number of content options that each user can select. Users can even take on different personas when creating videos, for example, by adding 30 seconds of rock music. Tiktok is used to capture a variety of information, both positive and bad, in addition to short music videos. Some individuals believe that TikTok is just a form of entertainment to pass the time. Ade identified internal and external factors as the two aspects that affect the adoption of TikTok. Internal elements include one's emotions, attitudes, personality traits, prejudices, wants, and worries. In contrast, external influences are things like family history, motivation, interests, and user needs (Rosdiana & Nurnazmi, 2021)

TikTok is a social media application that allows users to create videos with various features such as effects, music and stickers. This application has become very popular with many users in Indonesia and in the world. Despite initially experiencing some problems and complaints regarding negative content, TikTok was successful in negotiating with the government to improve privacy and content monitoring mechanisms, so that the initial ban by the Ministry of Communication and Information was lifted.

Another modularity that is mentioned as a contributing factor to TikTok's success is its ability to adapt content by using different algorithms. Content that TikTok recommends for each user is chosen based on their preferences and interactions, such as the amount of likes, comments, or shares on the specific content. TikTok uses the Buatan Algorithme to analyze and summarize content, and then it automatically presents it to users in the form of specially tailored videos for them (Wang et al., 2019)

According to (Chandra Kusuma & Oktavianti, 2020) users of TikTok come from a variety of groups, with the Z group being the most prevalent. Users of TikTok come from a variety of backgrounds, including the so-called "Internet Generation," or Generation Z, who were born between 1995 and 2010 (Putri, 2021). Generation Z is highly skilled and knowledgeable about the most recent technologies, including social media use (Pichler et al., 2021). They see the internet as a vital component of daily life that they utilize to communicate with others outside of the physical world. Even the majority of their time is spent on social media platforms. As a result, the term "Internet Generation" is frequently used to describe Generation Z (Ferniansyah et al., 2021)

This study aims to dig deeper into the use of slang words on social media TikTok. The main focus of this research is to understand the types of slang words that are commonly used, track how the slang words develop and spread on this platform, and analyze how the use of slang words on TikTok influences social interaction and communication patterns among millennials.

Through this research, it is hoped that it can provide in-depth insight into the phenomenon of using slang on the social media platform TikTok. The results of this research contribute to further understanding of language and culture in a digital context and its realization of communication in the rapidly growing era of social media.

Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method, typical in research focusing on in-depth analysis of specific issues (Gerring, 2017); (Lailatunnihayah et al., 2023) Utilizing the TikTok app's short films, data was gathered through literature studies. The study's findings are presented as a description or representation of data that have been explained through the use of listening and observational skills. According to (Sudaryanto, 2018), paying attention to language use can be done by using listening and observation strategies. Contextual analysis techniques are then used to examine the data once it has been acquired. These techniques require a thorough comprehension of, computations of, and associations with the context that the data is in (Widiastuti, 2021). The data were described in accordance with the known facts after the analysis procedure was complete.

The slang used in TikTok comments left by video viewers is part of the data collected. Words from TikTok videos posted and featured on the TikTok homepage in 2023 are included in this data. This research focuses on slang used and created by members of Generation Z. The process in this research uses data triangulation, triangulation is an approach in qualitative research used to test and ensure validity by analyzing from various points of view. While in quantitative research, validity is assessed based on the accuracy of measuring tools, namely research instruments, in qualitative research, validity refers more to the extent to which research findings accurately reflect the situation and are supported by relevant evidence (Nur Fauziyah R, 2015). There are three types of triangulation, namely source triangulation, technique triangulation, and time triangulation. The type of data triangulation used is technical triangulation. Technical triangulation is a method used to test the reliability of data by investigating and searching for the truth of the data through different techniques from the same source. This means researchers use different data collection techniques to obtain information from identical sources. In this context, researchers can combine observation, interview and documentation techniques which are then put together to formulate a conclusion (Sugiyono, 2013). The author uses triangulation techniques as follows: (1) data collection through observation of videos containing slang and comments as well as distribution of research questionnaires, (2) data categorization, (3) data analysis, and (4) presentation of explanations and descriptions based on data.

Result and Discussion

Result

After keeping track of TikTok videos that were shared throughout 2023, the author was able to compile information on the slang phrases used in the comments section of posts shared on the homepage called For You Page (FYP). The results from this data collection can be seen according to the types of slang words. Here are the data:

The results of the investigation of the slang functions and kinds used by Generation Z were reported in the current study. The participants utilized 90 slang terms, which are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Types of slang words, the data, and the meaning

Types of slang	Data	Meaning
Fresh and Creative	Mom	Refers to women or older people
	Brotha	Refers to men or older people
	Kidz	Refers to people of the same age and sometimes even seems dismissive
	Chils	It means kids
	Nope	It means no
	Dude	Greetings like bro, sir
	Blah	It means nothing
	Twist	It means girl
Flippant	Break a leg	Use to wish someone good luck
	Bawling my eyes	Crying furiously

Imitative

Spill the tea	Tell a secret
Get of my back	Do not disturb
Get my drift?	Understand what that means?
Get on my case	Very annoying
Spit it out	Say it quickly
Hit the spot	Very good/awesome
Buy the farm	Dead
Lost the plot	Running out of patience
Party pooper	A person who revels in the suffering of others
In someone's hair	Bother
In hot water	In trouble
In a pink	Healthy body condition
Ants in your pants	Nervous
Burnout	Very tired
Don't have kittens	Do not be nervous
Drop it	Just forget it
Ass out	Broke
Nailed it	Managed to do something
Earworm	Ringin' song
Chill out	Relax
Gonna	Going to
Wanna	Want to
Kinda	Kind of
Gotta	Got to
Y'all	You all
Gimme	Give me
Dunno	Do not know
Ain't	Am not, are not
Cir	Cheers
Luv	Love
Aight	Alright
Lemme	Let me

Acronym

LOL	Loud of laugh
ASL	Age/Sex/Location
AFAIK	As far as I know
IMO	In my opinion
ROFL	Rolling on the floor laughing
DIY	Do it yourself
AKA	Also known as
IMHO	In my humble opinion
WTH	What the hell
JK	Just kidding
POV	Point of view
OMW	On my way
ICYDK	In case you didn't know
TTYL	Talk to tou later
JSYK	Just so you know
BTW	By the way

	FYI	For your information
	AMA	Ask me anything
	BBL	Be back later
	YOLO	You only live once
	TBH	To be honest
	QOTD	Quotes of the day
	IRL	In real life
	DM	Direct message
	ILY	I love you
	IDK	I don't know
	TTYN	Talk to you never
	HMB	Hit me back
	CTN	Can't talk now
	GG	Good game
	HTH	Hope this help
	OT	Off topic
	BRB	Be right back
	ETA	Estimated time of arrival
	COD	Cash on delivery
	FOMO	Fear of missing out
Clipping	Cuz	Because
	Beb	Baby
	Hun	Honey
	Till	Until
	Fav	Favourite
	Diff	Different
	Tho	Though
	Yrs	Years
	Omgosh	Oh my gosh
	Sissy	Sister
	Bro	Brother
	Congrats	Congratulation

From Table 1, it is possible to extract a few facts that meet its full classification.

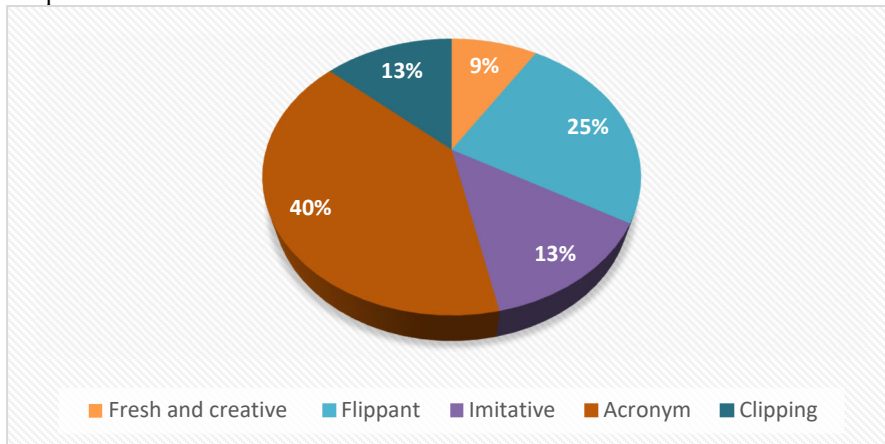


Figure 1. Percentage of slang types

The author was able to extract 8 fresh and creative data, 22 flippant data, 12 imitative data, 36 acronym data, and 12 clipping data from this information. This demonstrates that acronyms or phrase abbreviations are more frequently used than flippant, imitative, clipping, and fresh and creative.

Then, based on the data that had already been gathered, it was revealed that Generation Z was using slang language on social media, particularly TikTok. Drawing on the theory proposed by (K. Allan & K. Burridge, 2006) theory, which outlines various reasons discouraging the use of slang, the following points emerge:

Firstly, the use of slang becomes a means to address, fostering close connections between speakers and listeners. Within intimate relationships, informal greetings take precedence over formal ones. For instance, the term "mom" isn't reserved for the mother but is often used to address a lady or someone older, injecting a touch of familiarity into the conversation.

Moreover, slang becomes a tool in to start a casual conversation, particularly in contrast to formal settings. People initiate informal chats using slang terms to create a more effortless flow in the conversation. In the sphere of close relationships, individuals frequently deploy specific terms like "dude" as a pronoun or greeting, contributing to an environment of casual comfort.

Slang's versatility extends to the realm of emotions, as it is utilized to embarrass someone, conveying negative sentiments or disdain through playful teasing. For example, saying someone is "in someone's hair" denotes irritation or uneasiness.

Additionally, the use of the colloquial phrase "to create an intimate atmosphere" in relationships is a common practice. Rather than opting for formal language, people prefer the warmth of colloquial expressions, potentially implying a romantic connection. The informal term "hun," derived from "hooney," is one such example, conveying a sense of closeness and informality.

Furthermore, slang serves as a tool "to express impression." Individuals use slang to make their discussions memorable and distinctive. This usage not only fosters closeness but also builds unity among group members. Expressions like "break a leg" exemplify motivating phrases that stand out in memory.

Anger, when expressed, is often softened by the use of the slang expression "to express anger." For instance, saying "get on my case" communicates displeasure in a less harsh manner, effectively conveying irritation without intensifying the situation.

Lastly, "To Establish Intimacy," speakers modify their language to align with the preferences of their listeners. Slang phrases such as "FYI" (for your information) or "AMA" (ask me anything) are commonly used by young people to condense or personalize their communication, creating a sense of intimacy, especially in online interactions. These multifaceted applications of slang highlight its nuanced role in shaping and enhancing various aspects of interpersonal communication.

The results of the research questionnaire showed that 50 respondents in the Generation Z age category under 24 years stated that they were active users of the social media site TikTok, both as viewers and content creators. Respondents often encounter slang words and feel quite familiar with the slang words circulating in home videos on their TikTok application. Most respondents admitted that they also use slang in their daily lives, and this also influences their interactions with other TikTok application users. However, they can also differentiate between serious and jokey slang. Respondents admitted to having favorite slang words that they use every day and on average, mentioned types of acronyms or abbreviations for words such as FYI (For Your Information), POV (Point of View), and OTW (On the Way) that respondents use in everyday life. Most of the respondents admitted that the use of slang words had the impact of major changes in general society, and according to them, there must be a change in slang because as an era develops, the language will also develop. When asked why they use slang words, most people choose to use slang to start a casual conversation, then to express an impression, and the last one is to change words to make them more pleasant to hear.

Discussion

This research illustrates the interest in the use of the term TikTok by Generation Z. Several interesting points emerged during this research. First, the research highlights the evolution of language, emphasizing how Generation Z is developing its own language through the use of slang. In addition to influencing digital communication platforms like TikTok, these changes also have repercussions on spoken language. Then, the research discusses the function of slang in communication, illustrating that slang is not only a tool for conveying messages but also for developing intimacy, communicating impressions, and starting casual discussions.

This research categorizes slang into several types, including fresh and creative, cheeky, imitative, acronyms, and clippings. These categories reflect the diversity of slang used by Generation Z, with the predominance of acronyms

and abbreviations reflecting the fast and concise nature of online communication. Regarding TikTok, research shows the platform's important role in shaping and spreading slang. TikTok's multimedia capabilities, including its audio-visual format and special effects, significantly aid in the production of captivating content, particularly appealing to its youthful user base.

The impact of slang on social interactions is also highlighted, with it potentially influencing solidarity among users and helping them express themselves more casually. However, the exclusivity of slang was also highlighted as a potential barrier, making communication difficult for those not familiar with the slang phrases. Generation Z is often referred to as the "Internet Generation" because of their comfort with technology and use of social media. This research emphasizes how this generation has developed specific internet terms that differentiate them. In the context of linguistic studies, this research highlights the importance of understanding language in the digital era, especially in the context of rapidly changing online slang.

The results of this study provide a basis for further research into how online slang influences other aspects of society. Overall, this research shows the evolution of Generation Z language, particularly in relation to social media use, with an emphasis on the role of slang as a social identity and communication tool. The implications stretch from linguistic aspects to social impacts in a society that continues to change digitally.

Conclusion

Slang serves as a form of informal communication commonly employed by certain groups, notably Generation Z, in their intergroup interactions. Teenagers' use of slang is influenced by a variety of social, cultural, technological, and informational components that are evolving quickly in the modern world. Social networking platforms now have become primary sources for Generation Z to both employ and acquire the latest slang. TikTok is the most well-known and significant social media platform when it comes to influencing the vernacular of young people. TikTok social media has given rise to many new slang words and phrases, especially since a large portion of Generation Z uses this site.

Slang can be divided into numerous types, including fresh and creative, imitative, flippant, acronym, and clipping. Regarding the use of slang, it can be distinguished from these sorts. Although there are valid reasons for using slang, speech is also evolving due to Generation Z's increasingly sophisticated social relationships. The reason slang terms are used is to address, communicate more casually, embarrass, create a more intimate atmosphere, express impressions, express anger, and show intimacy.

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