


The Phenomenon of Slang Language Usage Among Gen Z on the X (Twitter) Platform

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: Slang, Generation Z, X Application, Social Media, Sociolinguistics</p>	<p>This study explores the phenomenon of slang usage among Generation Z (Gen Z) in online communication interactions through the X application. In the context of technological advancements and the rise of social media, language has undergone significant changes in both form and function. The aim of this research is to describe the forms of slang used by Gen Z, to understand its function in digital communication, and to analyze its impact on the preservation of standard Indonesian. This study employs a qualitative descriptive method, with data collected through non-participant observation of Gen Z user posts on the X application. The results indicate that the slang used includes abbreviations, shortened forms, and code-mixing. This type of language is used not only for communication but also as a form of identity expression, lifestyle, and resistance against formal language norms. The study reflects the crucial role of social media in shaping language dynamics and underscores the importance of linguistic awareness in preserving standard Indonesian amidst the forces of globalization.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

Language is a tool of communication among members of society, consisting of sound symbols produced by human speech organs, used to unite a nation (Keraf, 2005). As a means of communication, language is a fundamental need for every individual to express their intentions and thoughts. There are three types of language used in interaction: verbal language, non-verbal language, and sign language. Verbal language consists of words spoken explicitly, such as eat, sad, read, etc., where each word has its own meaning or may be contextual. Non-verbal language refers to unspoken expressions communicated through facial expressions or body gestures—for example, widened eyes may signal anger or surprise, and a hand wave may indicate farewell. Meanwhile, sign language is used by the hearing impaired, such as specific hand movements that carry particular meanings.

The development of information technology has brought major transformations in how people communicate. Social media, as a product of the digital era, has become not only a medium for sharing information but also a space that shapes unique social interaction

patterns, especially among young people. One prominent linguistic phenomenon on social media is the widespread use of slang language, particularly among Generation Z (Gen Z). This generation, born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, has grown up in a digital environment and possesses communication characteristics different from previous generations (Yustisia, 2016; Putri, 2023).

The use of slang language on social media, particularly on the X application (formerly Twitter), serves as a symbol of expression, group identity, and a form of linguistic adaptation to the dynamics of the times. According to Crystal (2011), social media accelerates language innovation and facilitates the emergence of new vocabulary within days rather than decades. The language used by Gen Z tends to be informal, highly creative, and reflective of collective culture and digital trends (Holmes, 2013; Aswin, 2015).

Generation Z refers to individuals born between 1996 and 2012. They are classified as the generation following the millennials—those who emerged during technological advancements, including Generation X and millennials. Gen Z is increasingly using foreign or slang languages, causing a decline in the proper and correct use of the Indonesian language. According to Marsudi (2008), the existence of a national language is not only influenced by its purity of use but also supported by its capacity to express new and emerging phenomena. It must be acknowledged that the world is rapidly changing due to the fast-paced flow of globalization. Another contributing factor is the influence of foreign cultures in Indonesia, which has altered the structure of the Indonesian language. To keep the Indonesian language alive in the globalization era, every citizen must build a sense of linguistic identity, especially among the younger generation such as Gen Z (Assapari, 2014).

However, this phenomenon also raises serious concerns regarding its impact on the preservation of formal and proper Indonesian. Several experts worry that the dominance of slang in online communication may erode the ability to use formal language, particularly among students and university learners (Chaer & Agustina, 2004; Kridalaksana, 1981).

From a sociolinguistic perspective, slang is a form of language variation that reflects the social condition of a heterogeneous society (Suwito, 1983). According to Bloomfield (1933, as cited in Arsyad et al., 2024), this language variety may appear in the form of abbreviations, wordplay, shortenings, and interjections. Slang not only functions as a tool for communication but also serves ideological, symbolic, and cultural purposes.

On the X application, this phenomenon is particularly interesting as the platform is known as a medium for opinions, critiques, and popular discourse. Within this space, Gen Z exhibits a fast, concise, and highly expressive communication pattern. Many users employ slang in expressing opinions on social, political, and cultural issues—even in everyday interactions (Faqih et al., 2024). Therefore, studying the use of slang language on X is important to understand how language evolves within an ever-changing digital landscape.

Based on the background above, this study aims to describe the forms of slang used by Generation Z on the X platform, to understand its communicative functions in online interaction, and to examine its impact on the preservation of standard Indonesian.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach grounded in sociolinguistic theory, aiming to describe and analyze the forms and functions of slang language used by Generation Z on the X platform. This method was chosen because it is well-suited for examining linguistic phenomena within a social context in a thorough and contextual manner (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Moleong, 2013).

The data source in this research comes from posts and comments made by users of the X application aged between 15 and 25 years old, who actively use slang in their interactions. Data collection was conducted through non-participatory observation, by directly observing various tweets or comments from Gen Z users without any intervention, and through online documentation to record relevant linguistic data.

The collected data was analyzed using content analysis, by categorizing the forms of slang based on predefined categories such as abbreviations, wordplay, shortenings, code-mixing, and interjections (Bloomfield in Arsyad et al., 2024). Each form was then examined in terms of its usage context and communicative function within online interactions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on observations of several posts and comments made by Gen Z users on the X platform, various forms of slang were found in online communication. This slang serves not only as a tool for communication, but also as a symbol of self-expression, a marker of group identity, and a medium for social critique. In general, the forms of slang identified can be grouped into three main categories: abbreviations and acronyms, shortened forms, and code-mixing.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

1. FOMO (Fear of Missing Out): Gen Z often uses FOMO to express the feeling of being left behind by trends, such as when others are discussing concerts or viral memes.
2. TBL (Takut Banget Loh): Common in scary content tweets, reflecting a humorous and dramatic emotional response.
3. OOTD (Outfit of The Day): Used in selfie or mirror photo captions as a form of visual self-expression.
4. PHP (Pemberi Harapan Palsu): Used in romantic contexts, often as satire or complaints.
5. HTS (Hubungan Tanpa Status): Expresses emotional fatigue in unclear digital relationships.
6. YOLO (You Only Live Once): Justifies impulsive decisions.
7. YGY (Ya Guys Ya): Used for emphasis or to seek agreement.
8. SUS (Suspicious): Indicates suspicion or sarcasm.
9. LOL (Laugh Out Loud): Expresses laughter.
10. PAP (Post a Picture): Often used playfully to request photos.
11. COD (Cash on Delivery): Sometimes literal, often humorous.
12. WDYT (What Do You Think?): Invites discussion.
13. FYP (For You Page): Though from TikTok, also used on X for viral posts.

14. OFC (Of Course): Quick agreement.
15. BTW (By The Way): For casual topic shifts.
16. VIP (Very Important Person): Used both literally and sarcastically.
17. IMO (In My Opinion): Polite way to express opinions.
18. FR (For Real): Emphasizes sincerity.
19. ASAP (As Soon As Possible): Indicates urgency.
20. IDC (I Don't Care): Expressive dismissal.
21. HBU (How About You?): Used in replies.
22. JK (Just Kidding): Softens statements to avoid offense.

Shortened Forms

1. Gabut ("gaji buta"): Indicates boredom or having nothing to do.
2. Bucin ("budak cinta"): Describes someone overly in love.
3. Gas (from "gaskeun"): Expresses spontaneity or encouragement.
4. Mager ("malas gerak"): Used to express laziness in a humorous way.
5. Kudet ("kurang update"): Refers to someone who is out of the loop.

Code-Mixing

1. "This is literally ngenes banget.": Combines English for emphasis with a local emotional expression.
2. "I can't. Kocak sih parah.": Blends English reaction with a humorous Indonesian phrase.
3. "Bestie, lu tuh queen banget!": Mix of pop culture terms with local slang for dramatic compliments.
4. "Dia tuh giving main character energy gitu loh.": Merges a global trend with a local expression.
5. "Gue mood banget sama vibe twit ini.": Integrates emotional and tonal expressions from both languages.
6. "Maaf ya, aku healing dulu dari semua kekacauan ini.": Shows adapted meaning of "healing" as a lifestyle.
7. "Self-reward dulu gak sih abis skripsian capek banget": Reflects Gen Z's humorous take on self-care.
8. "Ngab, that's so last year!": Mixes casual local address with meme-like English phrase.
9. "Not me crying over twit random jam 2 pagi.": Demonstrates dramatic emotional expression influenced by global digital trends.

Social Function Analysis

The primary functions of this slang usage include:

1. Emotional expression: Conveying feelings in a light and expressive way.
2. Group identity: Signaling inclusion in a specific digital community.
3. Criticism medium: Conveying critique, sarcasm, or satire subtly.

These findings support Suwito's (1983) view that language variation is influenced by the speaker's social context, and reinforce Marsudi's (2008) claim that language change reflects social and cultural dynamics.

However, despite its creative richness, the widespread use of slang may obscure the proper use of standard Indonesian, particularly in formal contexts. This concern echoes Kridalaksana's (1981) warning that uncontrolled language change can threaten the integrity of the national language if not balanced with linguistic awareness.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the use of slang by Gen Z on the X platform is part of the evolving dynamics of language in line with advancements in technology and social media. The most frequently used forms of slang include word shortenings, abbreviations and acronyms, and code-mixing between Indonesian and English. This language is not only used for communication but also for self-expression, building group identity, and creating humor or social critique. The language style employed by Gen Z on X reflects their creativity, speed, and distinctive digital lifestyle. Although it does not conform to standard Indonesian language rules, this phenomenon illustrates how language evolves to meet the needs of its users. Therefore, the use of slang on social media should be understood as a natural part of sociolinguistic development, as long as it does not overshadow the importance of maintaining proper and correct Indonesian in formal contexts.

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