

## LINGUISTIC SHIFT AMONG GEN Z IN INSTAGRAM-BASED COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION

**Conny**

*Sekolah Tinggi Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Binjai, Indonesia*  
Email: coniegeorgina@gmail.com

**Nudia Yultisa**

*Sekolah Tinggi Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Binjai, Indonesia*  
Email: nyultisa@gmail.com

**Rakhmat Wahyudin Sagala**

*Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara, Indonesia*  
Email: rakhmatwahyudin@umsu.ac.id

**Tri Indah Rezeki**

*Sekolah Tinggi Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Binjai, Indonesia*  
Email: trindah.rizky@gmail.com

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**Abstract:** In the rapidly evolving context of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) revolution, understanding how Generation Z (Gen Z) adapts their language use is critical. As digital natives, Gen Z actively reshapes communication in the digital age. This study examines linguistic shifts in Gen Z's digital discourse, with a focus on Instagram. Through qualitative content analysis of Instagram posts and comments, this research identifies key features of Gen Z's language, such as language mixing, slang and new expressions, non-standard spelling, emoji use, and contextualization within pop culture and social media trends. The findings reveal how these linguistic practices are integral to Gen Z's construction of digital identity and engagement with cultural trends. This study enhances our comprehension of how digital platforms influence language and social interaction, with implications for sociolinguistic theory, pedagogy, and communication strategies.

**Keywords:** *linguistic shift of generation z (gen z), computer-mediated communication, social media.*

### INTRODUCTION

How people connect, communicate, and express themselves has changed dramatically in the last several decades due to the rapid progress of information and communication technology (ICT) (Gössling, 2018; Line et al., 2011). Generation Z (Gen Z), born roughly between 1997 and 2012, are among the most affected by this digital change since they grew up when social media, mobile technology, and the internet were commonplace (Alruthaya et al., 2021). In contrast to earlier generations, Gen Z's language development is closely linked to digital communication channels, such as forums, social media, and video-sharing websites (Shamim & Riaz, 2023). This distinct interaction with technology has led to notable shifts in their language use and communication styles

(Remizantseva & Ablyazov, 2019; Tankovic & others, 2022).

The main goal of this study is to investigate and analyze how the digital discourse has impacted Gen Z's linguistic patterns. The study's specific objectives are to recognize how the linguistic shifts of Gen Z are changing how people communicate in digital environments.

This study is crucial because language is fundamental to human identity and social interaction. As Gen Z's communication practices evolve with technological advancements, it is essential to understand these changes and their broader implications (Liu et al., 2023). Insights from this research can inform educators, linguists, and policymakers about the evolving nature of language and its impact on social cohesion and intergenerational communication. Furthermore, by comprehensively understanding

these shifts, we can better anticipate future trends in digital communication and their societal implications.

Previous studies have conducted researches about this topic. First, Ajmain (2020) conducted research about impacts and effective communication on generation Z in industrial revolution 4.0 era. This study showed that technological innovation has significantly impacted Gen Z's social communication abilities (Syaputra et al., 2024; et al., 2023; Williandani & Mulyadi, 2023). It is recommended that in order to effectively engage this generation, one must understand their mindset, speak to them in their "tech language," and stay current on information technology (IT) developments to remain relevant in their context. Groundwork is necessary for all of them to interact directly with each other using Gen Z's methods.

Second, Butakova (2021) analyze the language ability, speech competence, speech activity of Generation Z. The study reveals that frequent slang, graphic symbols, and familiar cognitive patterns in writing and associative speech mark Generation Z's language use (Luhulima et al., 2024; Siagian et al., 2023; Wedananta et al., 2023). Their communication often centers on personal narratives, with essays reflecting structural simplicity and cohesion through repetition. This highlights Gen Z's reliance on pre-formed cognitive frameworks and their distinctive adaptation to the digital communication landscape.

Third, Chen & Ha (2023) explored Gen Z's social media use and global communication. The "news finds me" effect—a passive method of acquiring news—is one way that digital and social media significantly impact Generation Z's communication and worldviews, as this study demonstrates. According to insights from the OMGC preconference, Gen Z's interaction with social media sites like Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter shapes their perspectives of the world and their social identities (Karimi & Fox, 2023; Setiadi et al., 2024; Soyudoğan & Abdalli, 2023). Further investigation into these dynamics is imperative to fully comprehend Gen Z's distinct role and influence in the digital age.

In exploring Gen Z's linguistic shift in digital discourse, this study hypothesizes that the extensive use of ICT has led to significant changes in how Gen Z communicates, creating a unique blend of digital and traditional language forms (Loos & Ivan, 2024; Xia et al., 2024; Yanti et al., 2023). These shifts are posited to influence

their modes of communication, interpersonal interactions, social contexts, and linguistic identity in the digital age. The study employs qualitative insights to investigate these hypotheses and explore Gen Z's attitudes toward digital communication. Additionally, content and discourse analysis of digital texts and controlled experiments on communication behavior provide a deeper understanding of how Gen Z navigates linguistic expression in online settings (Chan & Lee, 2023; Mandić et al., 2023; Manley et al., 2023; Sophomore Talle Vacalares et al., 2023). Through this method, this study aims to illuminate the broader cultural and social implications of Gen Z's evolving linguistic practices in the digital era.

This study significantly enriches the broader field of research by illuminating how digital platforms reshape the linguistic practices and communication strategies of Generation Z. It highlights the ways in which tools like social media and messaging apps foster new forms of expression—such as emojis, memes, and internet slang—that redefine conventional communication frameworks.

Additionally, this study hypothesizes that the pervasive use of ICT has led to a hybridization of digital and traditional language forms, with profound effects on Gen Z's linguistic identity and social interactions. The research employs qualitative methods, including discourse analysis of digital texts and controlled experiments, to explore these dynamics. By understanding these changes, educators and communication professionals can better engage with Gen Z, tailoring their approaches to align with their digital communication preferences. This study also advances theoretical and methodological frameworks, providing a comprehensive model for future research on language evolution in the age of ICT.

## **METHOD**

This research used qualitative content analysis methods to explore the language shift of Generation Z in the context of digital discourse, with a particular focus on the social media platform Instagram. The data used in this study came from comments on popular accounts frequented by Generation Z.

The data source for this study consisted of Generation Z individuals who are actively using Instagram. Generation Z, or Gen Z, typically includes those born between 1997 and 2012. The sampling method employed is purposive

sampling, which involves selecting Instagram accounts demonstrably representative of Gen Z's linguistic trends (Ames et al., 2019). This will include accounts of influencers, content creators, and everyday users who frequently post and engage with content on Instagram. Additionally, hashtags, popular posts, and comments that showcase the distinctive language patterns of Gen Z will be targeted to ensure a comprehensive understanding of their linguistic shifts. To identify whether comments came from members of Generation Z, several approaches were used: first, user profile analysis was carried out to assess age cues, such as profile picture, bio, and content activities that often reflect typical Gen Z interests and preferences. Second, comments were analyzed based on language patterns that are unique to Gen Z, such as the use of contemporary slang, informal writing style, and references to pop culture that are common among them. Researchers also considered the context in which the comments were left, for example, on the accounts of celebrities or influencers known to be popular among teenagers and young adults. These comments are then analyzed based on theories about using mixed language, new slang and expressions, non-standard spelling, emojis, symbols, and contextualization in pop culture and social media trends.

The primary instrument for this study is qualitative content analysis tools, which will systematically examine and interpret the linguistic data from Instagram, such as identifying patterns in word usage, emojis, hashtags, and other textual elements (Lindgren et al., 2020). Data collection was carried out with a focus on comments left by users that demonstrated typical Generation Z communication characteristics. Analysis was done by identifying and coding relevant linguistic elements and then interpreting how these elements reflect Gen Z's communication patterns and linguistic identity in the digital landscape. Limitations of the study include the inability to confirm the exact ages of users and the limitation of the analysis, which only focused on one social media platform.

This study was conducted through procedures. First is selection of data sources. It identified a diverse range of Instagram accounts that are popular among Gen Z, including influencers, content creators, and everyday users. These accounts will be selected to cover various interests and subcultures within Gen Z. Gather posts, comments, and stories that exhibit

linguistic features of interest, such as code-switching, new slang, non-standard spelling, emojis, and pop culture references. Hashtags and trending topics relevant to Gen Z will also be monitored to capture broader conversational contexts. Second is data collection. Data were collected from a sample of posts and comments from accounts and taken from the last 3 months to capture ongoing linguistic trends and minimize temporal biases. Document the textual content and contextual information for each post, including the use of language, emojis, and any relevant pop culture or social media trends. Third is analyzing the data in depth to understand how each identified linguistic feature (e.g., code-switching, slang) functions within the digital communication of Gen Z. It focused on how these features contribute to interpersonal communication, social context, and linguistic identity within the digital landscape. Contextualize findings with reference to pop culture and social media trends to explore their influence on language use. Fourth is categorizing the data into themes based on the theoretical framework adopting McCrindle (2021): (i) Mixing language: Analyze how Gen Z blends different languages and the contexts in which this occurs; (ii) New Slang and Expressions: Identify new slang terms and expressions unique to Gen Z and explore their meanings and usage; (iii) Non-standard Spelling: Examine the use of abbreviations and non-standard spelling and their role in conveying informality or familiarity; (iv) Emoji Language and Symbols: Assess the frequency and context of emoji use and how they supplement or replace textual communication; and (v) Pop Culture and Social Media Trends: Investigate how references to pop culture and viral trends are integrated into their language use.

The study assumes that the language used by Generation Z on Instagram accurately mirrors their broader linguistic practices across other digital and real-world contexts despite the unique nature of the platform. It is considered that the selected sample of Instagram accounts captures a representative cross-section of Gen Z's linguistic diversity, encompassing various cultures and subcultures.

The data collection period is assumed to be adequate for observing stable linguistic trends, even though language can evolve rapidly. Additionally, the influence of Instagram's platform-specific features, such as its visual focus and hashtag use, is a shaping factor in Gen Z's communication style. Lastly, it is assumed that

the public posts and comments analyzed reflect genuine communication despite potential differences between online personas and real-world interactions.

The qualitative content analysis of Gen Z's linguistic practices on Instagram offers a rich and detailed understanding of how this generation communicates within the digital sphere. The scope of this methodology includes capturing a wide array of language phenomena such as code-switching, the creation of new slang, the use of non-standard spelling, and the incorporation of emojis and pop culture references. This approach is well-suited to reveal the nuances and dynamics of Gen Z's language use, mainly as they engage in fluid and informal online exchanges. However, the limitations include the platform-specific nature of Instagram, which may only partially represent Gen Z's language use across other digital or offline contexts. Additionally, the visual and textual blend unique to Instagram posts may influence linguistic choices differently than other forms of communication. Focusing on public posts might also exclude more private or nuanced expressions in direct messages or other less accessible interactions. Despite these constraints, this methodology provides valuable insights into

the linguistic shifts characterizing Gen Z in the context of digital discourse.

We have used a number of measures to mitigate these constraints, such as collecting data from diverse accounts that include various subcultures within Generation Z and monitoring trends over a prolonged duration. Additionally, this research posits that the linguistic patterns used by Generation Z on Instagram are adequately indicative of their wider linguistic behaviours on other digital platforms and in face-to-face encounters. However, everyone agrees that Instagram's unique combination of visual and textual elements significantly influences their language choices.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gen Z tend to shift their language in digital discourse like in social media. McCrindle (2021) highlight the characteristics of Gen Z's language shift such as mixing language, new slang and expression, use of non-standard spelling, emoji language and use of symbols, and contextualization in pop culture and social media trends. The data were collected This finding can be described in the table below.

Table 1. Analysis of Gen Z's linguistic shifts

No	Data	Gen Z's Linguistic Shifts				
		Mixing language	New Slang and expression	Non-standard spelling	Emoji	Pop culture trends
1.	@lyodraofficial No smoking No alcohol No wa kamu berapa?	English-Indonesian	wa	wa kamu		wa
2.	@delonthamrinofficial Wah wah wah Lily Ultah. B.day adik Lily. Makin terus bersinar ya. Gbu always	English-Indonesia	ultah	B'day, Gbu	♡♡ ♡👉👉 👉	
3.	@petruskardian MY BBY		BBY	BBY	👉👉 👉👉	BBY and emojis
4.	@vinaaa_chan Cantik bgtt pesona pak junaedi 2		bgtt	bgtt	👉👉 👉, 👉👉, 👉👉, 👉👉	
5.	@defaldip Kalo gini caranya, gpp deh w suka sm junaedi		gpp deh w suka sm	gpp, sm		
6.	@fitridyah30 Rani plisss kamu meresahkan	Indonesian-English		plisss	👉	

7.	@uuz_90 Nicol sendiri doyan mepet cwe lain,, giliran cweknya mepet cwok lain berasa jadi korban 😓		Doyan, mepet, cwe, cwok	Cwe, cwok	😓	
8.	@jungkookierun Yaudah sih jeff gausah play victim, kali aja dia bisa bikin maria lebih aman dan nyaman.	Indonesian- English	Gausah, kali aja	Gausah		The concept 'play victim'
9.	@restulestari315 Kaya nya El bener naksir Eca...karna dia GK mau gimik2an soal cinta		Naksir, gimik2an	kaya nya, karna, gk		The notion of "gimik2an soal cinta"
10	@erdianarif Tu nolak tandanya. Mgkn org pikir dy PHP in si el. Tp aq lihat dy bkn PHP tp lebih ke g enak (sungkan) krn si El nya mepet terus,ngejar terus. Dan mgkn si El blm nembak,sekedar temen dekat. Ya kali suruh eca lgsg jaga jarak? Krn eca mikirnya ya temenan sm siapa aja sah" aj sih		PHP, mepet terus, Nembak	Tu, mgkn, org, dy, aq, bkn, tp, g, krn, sm. lgsg, aj		the term "PHP"
11	@reninr97 Kata gw juga apa RN itu love language nya pshychal touch wkwk	Indonesian- English	kata gw, wkwk	RN, pshychal		
12	@cherrycute1996 Moga Syifa dapat suami yg lebih baik, ganteng, sholeh. Mimin, pakar ekpresi, shipper yg gak bisa move on kasian bgt Syifa diginiin seolah <sup>2</sup> Rizky gak happy kalo lagi sama dia 😓	Indonesian- English	shipper yg gak bisa move on	Moga,yg, gak, bgt, seolah2,	😓	The term "shipper" and "move on"
13	@enok_otih_hindrik Aku mh lebay org nya pas all bilang dady aku lngsung mewek 😓	Indonesian- English	lebay, mewek	mh, org, lngsung	😓	
14	@cangkirkencurcengkeh Kereeen😓 emang hrs begini jd cewek apalg cm pacaran. Msh bnyak ikan di laut, jgn mau merusak diri masa dpn n harapan org tua cm gara2 lelaki gk yg worth to fight for😓	Indonesian- English	Kereeen, wort to fight for,	emang, hrs, jd, apalg, cm, msh, byak, diri masa dpn, gk	😓 and 😓	msh banyak ikan di laut
15	@aaliyah.massaid makasihhh bestieku❤️		bestieku	makasihhh	❤️	bestie

All the data reflect several aspects of Gen Z's  
linguistic shifts in digital disourse. Below, we

analyze these clauses through the lens of the theories outlined by McCrindle & Wolfinger (2009):

#### *Mixing language*

Mixing language involves alternating between languages or dialects in communication. Some clauses exemplify mixing language by combining English phrases with Indonesian such as data 1 (English: "No smoking," "No alcohol", Indonesian: "No wa kamu berapa?"), data 2 (English: B.day (birthday), Gbu (God bless you) always), data 6 (English: pliss (please), data 8 (English: play victim), data 11 (love language, pshychal touch), data 12 (English: move on, happy), data 13 (English: dady), data 14 (English: worth to fight for) dan data 15 (English: bestie (best)).

#### *Slang*

Gen Z frequently uses new slang and expressions that are unique to their generation and often evolve rapidly. The use of "wa" as shorthand for WhatsApp (data 1), "Ultah" is a shorthand for "ulang tahun" (data 2), "BBY" is a modern slang abbreviation for "baby," commonly used as a term of endearment (data 3), "Bggt" is an informal, slang expression used widely among Indonesian-speaking Gen Z (data 4), Phrases like "gpp deh w suka sm" show the use of modern slang and informal expressions that are prevalent among Gen Z. "W" is a shorthand for "gue" or "saya," meaning "I" in Indonesian slang (data 5), the terms "doyan" and "mepet" are examples of slang that convey specific social behaviors. "Cwe" and "cwok" are informal shorthand for "cewek" (girl) and "cowok" (boy), respectively (data 7), the term "gausah" (short for "nggak usah," meaning "no need to") and "kali aja" (meaning "maybe" or "possibly") are colloquial and widely used in informal conversations among Indonesian-speaking Gen Z (data 8), the terms "naksir" (meaning "to have a crush on") and "gimik2an" are examples of modern slang, reflecting informal speech patterns among Gen Z (data 9), the term "PHP" (Pemberi Harapan Palsu, meaning "giver of false hope") is a popular slang term in Indonesian digital culture, used to describe someone who leads others on without genuine intentions and phrases like "mepet terus" (persistently getting close) and "nembak" (confess one's feelings) reflect informal and conversational expressions typical among Gen Z (data 10), the text uses informal language such as "kata gw" (meaning "I told you so") and "wkwk" (a

representation of laughter, similar to "LOL") (data 11), the phrase "shipper yg gak bisa move on" (a shipper who can't move on) reflects contemporary online fandom culture, where "shipper" refers to someone who supports a romantic pairing, and "move on" means to let go of a past attachment (data 12), the term "lebay" (meaning "overdramatic" or "exaggerated") is contemporary slang in Indonesian. "Mewek" (meaning "cry" or "weep") is another informal term (data 13), words like "Kereeen" and phrases such as "worth to fight for" are indicative of modern slang usage. "Kereeen" is an exaggerated form of "keren" (cool), amplified by the extended vowels, which is a common way to add emphasis in digital text. The phrase "worth to fight for" is borrowed from English and integrated into the comment seamlessly, reflecting how Gen Z blends languages to express concepts in a more impactful or trendy manner (data 14), and the term "bestieku" is a blend of English and Indonesian, where "bestie" is a slang term for best friend, and "ku" is an Indonesian possessive suffix meaning "my" (data 15)

#### *Use of non-standard spelling*

Non-standard spelling includes variations from conventional spelling to create a more casual, familiar, or expressive form of written communication. Data 1, the phrase "wa kamu" (your WhatsApp) is an example of non-standard spelling in digital communication. Instead of using the full term "WhatsApp," it's abbreviated to "wa," showing a preference for brevity and ease of use. This reflects Gen Z's tendency to simplify and modify spelling to align with the fast-paced nature of online interactions. Data 2, the abbreviation "B.day" for "birthday" and "Gbu" for "God bless you" are examples of non-standard spelling that are common in digital communication. Data 3, the term "BBY" exemplifies non-standard spelling by abbreviating "baby." This shorthand is not just a matter of reducing the number of characters but also a stylistic choice that aligns with the informal and playful nature of online communication. Data 4, "Bggt" deviates from the standard spelling "banget." This reflects a trend among Gen Z to simplify and abbreviate words, adapting them for quicker typing and digital communication. Data 5, the use of "gpp" and "sm" are examples of non-standard spelling. These forms are phonetically driven and cater to the need for speed and efficiency in digital communication. Data 6, "Pliss" is a non-standard spelling, emphasizing a

relaxed and informal approach to writing. The extended "s" adds emphasis and a conversational feel, common in digital communication. Data 7, the abbreviations "cwe" and "cwok" show non-standard spelling that simplifies and shortens words for quick digital communication. Data 8, "Gausah" is a simplified and phonetic spelling of "nggak usah," making the text quicker to type and read in digital communication. Data 9, "Kaya nya" (short for "sepertinya," meaning "it seems"), "karna" (short for "karena," meaning "because"), "gk" (short for "enggak," meaning "no") are non-standard spellings that simplify and shorten the words for quicker typing. Data 10, the abbreviations "tu" (short for "itu," meaning "that"), "Mgkn" (short for "mungkin," meaning "maybe"), "org" (short for "orang" meaning "people"), "dy" (short for "dia," meaning "he/she"), "aq" (short for "aku," meaning "I"), "bkn" (short for "bukan," meaning "not"), "tp" (shorter for "tapi," meaning "but"), "g" (short for "nggak" or "tidak," meaning "no" or "not"), "krn" (short for "karena," meaning "because"), "sm" (short for "sama," meaning "with"), "lgsg" (short for "langsung," meaning "directly"), "aj" (short for "saja" meaning "only") showcase creative adaptation and shorthand common in digital communication. Data 11, the text includes abbreviations like "RN" means Rizky Nazar and phonetic misspellings such as "pshychal" instead of "physical." These non-standard spellings reflect the informal nature of digital communication. Data 12, abbreviations like "moga" (short for "semoga," meaning "hopely"), "yg" (short for "yang," meaning "who/that"), "gak", "bgt" and seolah2 are used to simplify and expedite communication. Data 13, abbreviations and non-standard spellings like "mh" for "memang," "org" for "orang" (meaning "person"), "lngsung" for "langsung" (meaning "immediately") simplify the text for quicker, more casual communication. Data 14, The comment is filled with non-standard spelling and abbreviations, such as "emang" (instead of "memang"), "hrs" (harus), "jd" (jadi), "apalg" (apalagi), "cm" (cuma), "msh" (masih), "bnyak" (banyak), "diri masa dpn" (diri masa depan), and "gk" (nggak). These shortened forms make the message concise and casual, adhering to the quick, efficient communication style preferred by Gen Z. Data 15, the word "makasihhh" is a phonetic and informal spelling of the Indonesian word "terima kasih" (thank you). The extended "hhh" at the end adds a playful and friendly tone, common in digital communication among peers.

### *Emoji language and use of symbols*

Emojis and symbols are a significant aspect of Gen Z's communication, adding emotional context and non-verbal cues to their text-based messages. Data 2, the heart emojis (❤️) symbolize love or deep appreciation, while the fire emojis (🔥) suggest enthusiasm or intensity. These visual cues complement the text, adding layers of meaning that enrich the communication and making it more engaging and expressive. Data 3, the comment includes four heart-eyes emojis (😍😍😍😍), which express strong affection or admiration. These emojis amplify the emotional tone of the text, signaling endearment and excitement towards the person addressed. Data 4, the message includes several emojis (😍😍😍, 🤔🤔, ☐☐, ☐☐), which are used to convey emotions and add visual emphasis. This aligns with Gen Z's preference for visually enriched communication. Data 6, the use of the fire emoji (🔥) at the end of the message adds a visual and emotional layer to the text. Data 7, the laughing face emoji (😂) adds an emotional and humorous tone to the message, indicating a light-hearted or teasing attitude. Data 12, the use of the neutral face emoji (😐) at the end of the message adds an emotional layer, conveying dissatisfaction or disapproval without needing additional words. Data 13, the crying face emoji (😭) adds an emotional dimension to the message, effectively conveying sadness and enhancing the textual content. Data 14, the use of the emojis 🤔 and 🤔 in the comment enhances the emotional tone. The heart-eyes emoji 😍 conveys admiration or affection, while the laughing emoji 😂 suggests a light-hearted or humorous tone. Data 15, the heart emoji (❤️) is used to express affection and gratitude. In this context, it enhances the emotional tone of the message, making it warmer and more personal.

### *Contextualization in pop culture and social media trends*

Gen Z's language is deeply influenced by pop culture and social media trends, often incorporating terms and references from these realms. Data 1, the mention of "wa" directly references WhatsApp, a crucial communication tool in modern digital culture. The use of WhatsApp as a term reflects its embeddedness in Gen Z's daily communication practices. Data 3, the informal and affectionate tone, coupled with the use of slang ("BBY") and emojis, reflects the

social media culture that Gen Z inhabits. Data 8, the concept of "play victim" is prevalent in modern discourse, often used in social media to describe manipulative behavior. This reflects the influence of contemporary cultural narratives. Data 9, the notion of "gimik2an soal cinta" (making gimmicks about love) indicates an awareness of and engagement with contemporary social and media narratives about relationships and authenticity. Data 10, The references to social dynamics and terms like "PHP" indicate an engagement with contemporary social narratives and popular culture within Indonesian contexts. Data 12, the references to "shipper" and "move on" indicate familiarity with social media and fandom culture. These terms are widely used in online communities. Data 14, the expression "Msh bnyak ikan di laut" (there are plenty of fish in the sea) is a common idiom adapted to the context of romantic relationships, suggesting that one should not settle for less. This aligns with common themes in social media discussions about relationships and self-worth. Data 15, The use of "bestie" is a direct borrowing from contemporary social media culture, where the term is commonly used to refer to close friends. Its popularity has been amplified by platforms like Instagram and TikTok, where it is frequently used in captions, comments, and videos. This context-specific usage underscores how social media trends shape and propagate linguistic expressions among Gen Z.

The findings from the analysis of Gen Z's Instagram comments align closely with existing literature on their linguistic behavior in the digital age. As expected, Gen Z demonstrates a proclivity for code-switching, creative language use, and incorporating digital culture elements into their communication. McCrindle (2021) describes these characteristics as integral to Gen Z's communication style, where mixing language, new slang and expression, use of non-standard spelling, emoji language and use of symbols, and contextualization in pop culture and social media trends (Dharma et al., 2022; George et al., 2023; Kadry, 2021). This convergence underscores the adaptability and innovation Gen Z brings to language, making their communication dynamic and reflective of their digital environment.

The current study's results show notable linguistic changes impacted by the Information Communication Technology (ICT) revolution, consistent with earlier research on Gen Z's communication behaviors. According to Ajmain's (2020) observations, Gen Z's use of digital tools

in everyday communication emphasizes the significance of speaking their "tech language," defined by the inventive use of emojis, acronyms, and code-switching. Butakova (2021) provides more support for this, pointing out that Gen Z's Instagram interactions demonstrate their reliance on well-known cognitive patterns and frequent use of slang and graphic symbols. Furthermore, through both passive and active engagement with digital information, Chen & Ha's (2023) analysis of Gen Z's social media use highlights the influence of platforms such as Instagram on forming their social identities and worldviews. The study's usage of pop culture allusions and digital shorthand is consistent with the findings of McCrindle (2021) and Thurlow & Brown (2003), who highlight how Gen Z's digital discourse combines textual and visual communication forms. Together, these data show how Gen Z has uniquely adapted to the world of digital communication, highlighting their role as trailblazers in developing the internet's developing language. As technology advances, more social media platforms should be included in future studies, and the longitudinal changes in Gen Z's language practices should be investigated.

Although Gen Z's absorption in a digital and globalized world is the primary explanation for these linguistic tendencies, other variables may also impact language use (Hassoun et al., 2023; Seyfi et al., 2023; Xueyun et al., 2023). These include exposure to several languages, educational background, and peer group impact (Bushati et al., 2023; Jaekel et al., 2023; Kennedy Terry, 2023; Ramazan et al., 2023). Furthermore, the particular platform—in this example, Instagram—and its affordances—like character restrictions, visual emphasis, and community norms—may influence how language is utilized differently on this social media platform than others (Blattner et al., 2024; Dubey, 2024; Kennedy Terry, 2023; Trillò & Green, 2024).

Understanding Gen Z's linguistic shifts has essential implications for digital marketing, education, and mental health (Chang & Chang, 2023; Heo & Jang, 2023). In marketing, brands can engage more effectively with Gen Z by adopting their language style, making communication more relatable and authentic. Recognizing these shifts can help design curricula that resonate with students' everyday communication practices, thus enhancing engagement and learning (Allen et al., 2023; Estrela & Lima, 2024; Lam, 2023; Lubicz-



Nawrocka & Bovill, 2023; Thelma et al., 2024). For mental health professionals, familiarity with Gen Z's language can improve communication and rapport, particularly in online counseling settings where these clients are likely to express themselves in the vernacular they use on social media.

The results suggest that the complex character of Gen Z's language use should be considered in any study on communication. It is imperative to assess the impact of digital platforms, the communication setting, and the cultural allusions woven throughout their conversation. Knowing these trends can help teachers develop more effective teaching methods and include digital literacy in the classroom.

There are various limitations on this study. First, it is based only on comments posted on Instagram, which might not accurately reflect the variety of languages Generation Z uses on other platforms. Second, the small data sample may not fully represent the variety of linguistic expressions within Gen Z. Thirdly, because the study depends on the context, it might not consider socioeconomic or regional differences within this population. Lastly, despite efforts to use uniform criteria, subjectivity may be introduced by the qualitative character of the study.

The results of this study have significant implications for both theoretical frameworks and practical applications. The findings presented in this study provide valuable insights into the sociolinguistic changes occurring in the digital era, specifically highlighting the ways in which Generation Z's language practices mirror wider patterns in communication driven by technology. The widespread use of emojis and abbreviations demonstrates the interactive relationship between written and visual symbols, suggesting that multimedia forms and digital capabilities progressively shape language development.

This analysis may provide valuable insights for the development of digital marketing strategies, enabling firms to effectively interact with Generation Z by using their preferred linguistic style. Understanding these linguistic changes in the context of educational environments may assist educators in customising instructional approaches to better align with students' communication patterns, particularly in the realm of digital literacy curriculum.

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of Generation Z's language behaviors in diverse digital contexts, we need to expand our

investigation to include other social media platforms like TikTok or Twitter. Longitudinal studies would enable monitoring of the temporal evolution of language patterns in response to the emergence of new technologies. Additionally, the use of quantitative methodologies would aid in verifying and quantifying the qualitative tendencies identified in this research. We have used a number of measures to mitigate these constraints, such as collecting data from diverse accounts that represent various subcultures within Generation Z and monitoring trends over an extended period. Additionally, this research posits that the linguistic patterns used by Generation Z on Instagram are adequately indicative of their wider linguistic behaviours on other digital platforms and in face-to-face encounters. However, everyone agrees that Instagram's unique combination of visual and textual elements significantly influences their language choices.

Future research could expand this study by examining a wider variety of social media sites to provide a more complete picture of Gen Z's language behaviors. Comparative research between Gen Z socioeconomic groups or geographical areas may reveal more complex linguistic tendencies. Studies with a longitudinal design could investigate how these linguistic patterns change as Gen Z gets older and new digital platforms appear. Furthermore, quantitative methods could support qualitative discoveries by offering a more robust statistical validation of the tendencies that have been noticed.

## CONCLUSION

According to this study, Gen Z's language patterns on social networking sites like Instagram are characterized by an inventive blending of words and visual cues, such as frequent emojis and symbols, code-switching, new slang, and non-standard spelling. These changes directly result from the digital and ICT settings, demonstrating how flexible and creative Gen Z is in digital communication. Through an examination of their communication patterns, the research reveals how Gen Z uses highly customized and technologically advanced strategies to create their identities and navigate their social environments. The results highlight how pop culture and social media trends influenced their vocabulary, demonstrating how deeply they engaged with modern digital culture.

This study is significant because it sheds light on how digital technologies influence Gen Z's language patterns. This information is crucial for educators, marketers, and policymakers who want to interact productively with this group of people. Consistent with other investigations conducted by Ajmain (2020), Butakova (2021), and Chen & Ha (2023), this study expands upon our comprehension of how the evolution of digital communication practices impacts identity and social interaction. With Gen Z's distinct language and cultural preferences in mind, these insights are essential for creating marketing campaigns, instructional materials, and communication strategies that will stay current and successful in the quickly evolving digital ecosystem.

In order to further future studies, it is essential to investigate the impact of these language alterations on intergenerational communication dynamics and their role in defining wider societal norms. Furthermore, it is important to engage in deeper contemplation on the wider social ramifications of the language changes seen among Generation Z. This is particularly significant when considering their patterns of communication and the development of their identity within the ever-changing digital society. These findings have implications for the development of marketing campaigns, instructional resources, and communication methods that consistently demonstrate effectiveness and relevance in the dynamic digital landscape.

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