Comparison Of Slang In Millennials And Gen Z: A Semantic Analysis In The Context Of Linguistic Learning

by Ana Juli

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Ana Juli
Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji
Email: jjuliana0703@gmail.com

Marina Suci
Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji
Email: ucimarina42@gmail.com

Apriyani Esti
Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji
Email: eapriyani@studen.umrah.ac.id

Abstract. *This research aims to compare the semantic phenomena of slang used by the Millennial generation and Gen Z on social media. The main focus of this research is to identify the types of slang that are often used by both generations, as well as understanding the meaning and reasons for the use of slang by the Millennial generation. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative, with data obtained through journal reviews and analysis of documentation from social media such as Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), and Instagram. This research found that there are significant differences in the types of slang used by the Millennial and Gen Z generations, which are influenced by cultural and technological developments. In addition, this research reveals that the main reason the Millennial generation uses slang on social media is to strengthen social ties, show familiarity, and follow trends. The use of slang is also considered a way to create a unique and relevant digital identity in their social environment.*

Keywords: Comparison of Slang, Millennial Generation, Linguistic Learning

INTRODUCTION

In today's era of globalization and digitalization, slang has become one of the most dynamic and fastest-changing forms of communication, particularly among millennials and gen Z. Technological changes, such as social media and instant messaging apps, have facilitated the instant exchange of slang among individuals from different cultural and geographical backgrounds. This evolution not only reflects adaptation to new technologies, but also reflects shifts in culture, values and social identity.

While there are similarities in the use of slang among millennials and gen Z, the semantic differences in its use raise interesting questions about how the evolution of slang takes place from one generation to the next. Semantic analysis, which is a linguistic approach that pays attention to the meaning of words and phrase structures in cultural and social contexts, becomes a very useful tool in understanding this phenomenon in depth.

The importance of understanding semantic differences in slang between millennials and gen Z is not only relevant in a linguistic context, but also in other fields such as cultural anthropology, sociology and education. Slang is not only a means of communication, but also a reflection of the identity, values and social experiences of individuals and groups.

In the context of linguistic learning, understanding the semantic differences in slang between millennials and gen Z has important implications. As educators, we need to recognize the importance of slang in everyday life and take it into account in designing relevant and effective curriculum and teaching strategies. By understanding the trends and evolution in slang usage, teachers can better accommodate students' needs and interests in language learning.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the semantic differences in slang between millennials and gen Z, and to identify the implications of the findings in the context of linguistic learning. Through this research, it is hoped that we can gain a better understanding of the evolution of slang and its role in the communication of younger generations, as well as contribute valuable insights to education and research in linguistics and other related disciplines.

METHODS

This research combines two different research methods to understand the use of slang language on the social network X by Millennials and Generation Z. First, a qualitative approach is used by analyzing articles and tweets containing slang language. The data is processed through presentations with relevant images to illustrate the vocabulary learned. Next, a qualitative descriptive method is employed to delve deeper into the semantic phenomena of internet slang, supported by observations and documentation of slang usage on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (now X), and Instagram. This research references the journal "The Intelligibility of Internet Slangs Between Millennials and Gen Zers: A Comparative Study" by Talle Vacalares et al., published in the International Journal of Science and Research Archive in 2023. Additionally, the study also refers to the work discussing "Slang Language on Social Media 'X' in the Gen Z Era" by Alysia Cynthia Eunike Florentina Br Tarigan et al., from Universitas Pembangunan Nasional "Veteran" Jawa Timur.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. The data analysis presented in the study "*Internet Slang Containing Code-Mixing of English and Indonesian Used by Millennials on Twitter*" reveals the phenomenon of slang usage on social media, particularly Twitter, by the millennial generation in Indonesia. The study found that Twitter users, especially millennials, tend to use a mix of English and Indonesian in creating new slang words and phrases.

This code-mixing can be observed at two levels: the morpheme level and the phrase level. At the morpheme level, Twitter users create new words by combining morphemes from both languages, such as "unfaedah" (a mix of "un-" from English and "faedah" from Indonesian) and "tercloud" (a mix of "ter-" from Indonesian and "cloud" from English). Meanwhile, at the phrase level, they create new phrases by combining words from both languages, such as "kids zaman now" (a combination of "kids" from English and "zaman now" from Indonesian) and "no debat" (a combination of "no" from English and "debat" from Indonesian).

1. **Sefruit**: This word is formed by combining the prefix "se" in Indonesian and the word "fruit" in English. Although it is supposed to mean "one fruit," the use of "se" in this context is actually a mistake, as "sebuah" is the correct word in Indonesian. This is done for entertainment purposes and to create a relaxed atmosphere on Twitter.

2. **Akhlakless**: This word consists of the Indonesian word "akhlak," meaning morals, and the English suffix "-less." It is used to state that someone has bad behavior. The formation of this word is also done for entertainment purposes.

3. **Wkwkland**: Formed from the combination of the word "wkwk" (e-laughter in Indonesian) and the English word "land." This term is used to refer to Indonesia, assuming that "wkwk" represents Indonesian laughter. The formation of this word is also done for entertainment purposes and to represent the users' country.

4. **Penachievean**: This word is formed by combining the Indonesian word "pencapaian" and the English word "achieve." It is used as a synonym for "pencapaian" for entertainment purposes and to make conversations feel friendly.

5. **Berprice**: This word is formed by combining the prefix "ber" in Indonesian and the English word "price." Although it is supposed to mean "valuable," the use of "ber" in this context is a mistake, as "berharga" is the correct word in Indonesian. This is done for entertainment purposes.

6. **Jujurly**: This word is formed by combining the Indonesian word "jujur" and the English suffix "-ly." It is used as a variation of the word "jujur" for entertainment purposes and in relaxed situations.

7. **Tercloud**: This word is the result of new slang that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. It is formed by combining the prefix "ter" in Indonesian and the English word "cloud," as a form of criticism towards the then Minister of Health. This is also done for entertainment purposes and creative expression in an unpleasant situation.

8. 8.**ngakak online**: This combination of the Indonesian verb "ngakak" (laughing out loud) and the English word "online" signifies laughing virtually. It's used to express amusement or laughter in response to a tweet, especially when visual cues are limited due to online interactions.

9. **upacara online** : Combining the Indonesian noun "upacara" (ceremony) and the English word "online" reflects the transition of ceremonies or events to virtual platforms due to the pandemic. Users use this term to inform others about virtual ceremonies, like flag-raising ceremonies, still being conducted.

10. **laper online** : Mixing the Indonesian adjective "laper" (hungry) with the English word "online" depicts feeling hungry in a virtual context. It's another example of expressing unseen feelings or situations to fellow Twitter users.

11. **Join bareng**: This phrase, combining the English word "join" and the Indonesian word "bareng" (together), means "join together." It's often used by millennials on Twitter to indicate joining a conversation or replying to a tweet, emphasizing bilingual skills and situational factors.

12. **Mantap soul**: Combining the Indonesian word "mantap" (great) and the English word "soul," this phrase originally was "mantap jiwa" (great soul). The modification adds an interesting twist, implying something is exceptionally great, touching the soul. This creation serves the purpose of fun and reflects the situational factor of online interaction.

13. **Kids zaman now**: This phrase includes the English words "kids" and "now," with the insertion of the Indonesian word "zaman." This phrase literally means "kids of nowadays," referring to the Indonesian millennial generation. It is typically used to highlight the attitudes or behaviors of millennials. The formation of this phrase is done for entertainment purposes and to make conversations feel relaxed.

14. **Enggak habis thinking**: This phrase is formed by combining the Indonesian words "enggak habis" and the English word "thinking." It literally means "can't stop thinking," used to express something that is difficult to understand or extraordinary. The formation of this phrase is also done for entertainment purposes.

15. **Sering happening**: This phrase combines the Indonesian word "sering" with the English word "happening." It replaces the phrase "sering terjadi" in Indonesian, meaning "often happens." This phrase is used to state that a situation or condition occurs frequently. The formation of this phrase is also done for entertainment purposes and to create a friendly atmosphere.

16. **No debat**: This phrase is a combination of the English word "no" and the Indonesian word "debat." It is used when the user does not want to debate with others about their statement. The formation of this phrase involves inserting "no" into an Indonesian sentence written by Indonesian millennial Twitter users. The purpose of using this phrase is to add a bit of humor to situations that have the potential to spark a debate.

17. **Ilfeel (lang feeling)**: Combining the Indonesian word "ilang" (lose) with the English word "feeling," it indicates losing interest in someone. Created for casual settings among peers with bilingual skills, aiming for brevity.

18. **Kudet (kurang update)**: This abbreviation merges the Indonesian word "kurang" (lacking) and the English word "update." It signifies being outdated or lacking new updates. Made for brevity by users with bilingual skills.

19. **Lola (loading lama):** Combining the English word "loading" and the Indonesian word "lama" (slow), it refers to someone with a slow thinking process, akin to a slow-loading computer. Used for fun within informal settings by bilingual users.

20. **Jaim (Jaga image)**: This abbreviation comprises the Indonesian word "jaga" (keep) and the English word "image." It denotes maintaining a good impression. Created for brevity by users proficient in both languages, especially in informal settings.

b. According to Bloomfield (1933), there are four forms of slang, namely abbreviated forms, humorous mispronunciations, shortened forms, and also interjections. Examples of results obtained in research on slang language that is often used by Gen Z on social media are as follows:

1. Form of abbreviations

An abbreviation is an abbreviation of a word or phrase, which can be pronounced letters or not.

a. PAP

Example: "Firglawan after 4 days, tired and being fooled by fast responses, random paps, giving news, as if they wanted to be with us even though hahaha." PAP : included in the abbreviation form of the word "Post A Picture" which is interpreted as a request to upload or share photos of activities that are being carried out at that time with someone. The use of the word PAP is often used by Gen Z on social media as slang. This abbreviation is made from a combination of letters that are not pronounced letter by letter. The word PAP is also commonly used on the X social network when X account users share photos of their activities on the tweet page and provide the caption PAP.

b.FYI

Example: "sabo @plisitin -1 today liver is not Turkish ice cream (fyi aj)." FYI : included in the abbreviated form of the word. The word FYI itself is an abbreviation of "For Your Information" which means information. Gen Z more often uses this slang word on social media and in everyday life to convey the message of important information, with the aim of avoiding small talk and also getting to the point. The word FYI is a term that can be used in formal or informal situations.

2. Forms of Funny Mispronunciations

Funny mispronunciations are a form of changing the pitch of a strange statement that is used as humorous harsh language or to express disbelief in something.

a. Chill

Example: "It's crazy for a promoter to say 'chill, chill' because it's a matter of his own incompetence, he can't meet the technical needs of a big band. 'Chill, chill' is a matter of funds & people's energy, which has already been sacrificed, I just read that someone came from Yogya , Sumatra. How come it's so easy?" Chill : included in the form of funny mispronunciations. The word "chill" is slang that is often used by the younger generation, especially Gen Z, when communicating on social networks and is sometimes also used in everyday life. Chill means calm or relaxed. This word is often used to describe someone who doesn't mind the little things too much or doesn't get carried away easily.

b. Backburner

Example: "bb @shashus anjirlah being on the backburner in a friendship isn't really nice." Backburner including funny mispronounced forms of words. The word "backburner" in Indonesian means back burner. However, in slang, the word "backburner" is a word used to describe individuals who are not very important, but communication with that person is maintained. In other words, the backburner is someone who is not prioritized or is a backup person. The word "backburner" itself is often used by teenagers, especially Gen Z, on social media. The word "backburner" can be used when you are in a condition of being a backup person in a special relationship with someone or also in friendships and other social relationships.

3. Shortened

Form A shortened form is the cutting of a word or phrase to make it shorter but still easy to recognize.

a. Interjections

Interjections are words or phrases used to express emotions or spontaneous reactions.

b. Salty

Example: "Convomf convuf-2 days Automatically no salty, for people who type but the letter h is removed, it's like a house becomes a house, it's been used as a p, what's that for? Doesn't it look funny? So it actually picks me."

The word " salty " is an English term which means salt. But in slang, "salty" means furious. Salty is included in the form of an interjection, because salty is a word to show feelings of hatred, annoyance, and also irritation towards something or a conversation with someone. Apart from that, it can also be used as material for subtle sarcasm towards someone. Using "no salty" means you want your tweet to not receive negative responses.

c. Flop

Example: "Crazy, my tweet flopped again, even though it was already really funny."

The word "flop" is slang that is often used on X's social media. Flop is an interjection, because the word "flop" is used to indicate something that failed or did not get the expected response. This word is often used by teenagers, especially Gen Z, on social media.

COMPARISON RESULTS

Comparison Results of Millennial and Gen Z Slang

Gen Z Slang

1. Types and Uses Abbreviation:

- **PAP** (Post A Picture): Used to ask someone to upload a photo of their activity right away. Common on social networks.

- **FYI** (For Your Information): Used to convey important information briefly and directly. Can be used in formal or informal situations.

- *Funny Mispronunciations*:

- **Chill**: Means calm or relaxed, often used to show an attitude of not worrying about small things.

- **Backburner**: Indicates someone who is not a priority in a relationship or friendship.

2. Characteristics

- Formality: Can be used in formal and informal contexts.

- Usage on Social Media: Widespread across platforms, but more commonly found on Twitter and Facebook.

- Social Context: Often used in everyday conversations, not just limited to online interactions.

Millennial Generation Slang

1. Types and Uses Abbreviation:

   - JB (Join Together): Used to indicate intention to join a conversation or activity. Often used on social media.

   - Ntapsoul (Steady Soul): Describes something that is very good or touches the soul, an abbreviated version of "steady soul".

   - Interjection

   - Salty: Expresses feelings of annoyance or annoyance, often used as subtle sarcasm.

   - Flop: Refers to something that fails or does not succeed in getting the expected response.

2. Characteristics

   - Formality: Tends to be used in informal contexts.

   - Usage on Social Media: Dominant on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter.

   - Social Context: Appears more frequently in online conversations, indicating the dynamics of language that continues to develop among teenagers.

COMPARISON CONCLUSION

1. Types of Slang:

   - Gen Z uses more abbreviations and funny mispronunciations.

   - millennials more often use abbreviations and interjections to express emotions.

2. Context of Use:

   - Gen Z slang is more flexible to use in formal and informal situations.

   - Millennial slang focuses more on use in informal and online situations.

3. Social Media:

   - Millennials use slang on platforms like Facebook and Twitter.

   - Gen Z uses slang predominantly on Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter, indicating faster adaptation to new platforms.

4. Creativity and Innovation:

   - Gen Z tends to be more innovative in creating and using slang that reflects the dynamics and speed of change in digital culture.

- Millennials show a more conventional use of slang but is still relevant and widely understood.

Thus, a comparison between millennial and Gen Z slang shows differences in type, context of use, social media platforms used, as well as creativity in the creation and use of slang. Gen Z tends to be more dynamic and adaptive in their use of slang, reflecting rapid changes in digital communication technology and culture.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study, we conducted a semantic analysis of the differences in slang usage between Millennials and Gen Z within the context of linguistic learning. The results indicate significant differences in the types and meanings of slang used by the two generations. Millennials tend to use slang that is more related to the pop culture and technology of their formative years, while Gen Z is more influenced by social media and current digital trends. The implications of these findings suggest that understanding the use of slang can aid in language learning, particularly in comprehending the cultural and social contexts of native speakers. Therefore, integrating the study of slang into linguistic curricula can enhance students' understanding of language variation and its dynamic evolution. Thus, this research provides a significant contribution to the field of linguistics and language education, and it opens opportunities for further studies on the future evolution of language.

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