

The Influence Of Slang Use On Teenagers Communication Patterns On Social Media

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Abstrak

Kata Kunci:

Bahasa Gaul, Komunikasi, Remaja, Media Sosial, Interaksi Online.

Berkembangnya bahasa gaul di kalangan remaja dalam komunikasi online mereka, terutama di platform media sosial seperti TikTok, merupakan fenomena linguistik yang signifikan yang perlu diteliti lebih lanjut. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki dampak bahasa gaul terhadap pola komunikasi dan dinamika sosial pengguna media sosial remaja. Dengan menggunakan metode penelitian deskriptif, penelitian ini menganalisis sampel komentar dari platform TikTok untuk mengidentifikasi penggunaan bahasa gaul yang umum dan implikasinya. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa bahasa gaul memainkan peran multifaset dalam kehidupan pengguna media sosial remaja, membantu mereka mengekspresikan emosi, membangun koneksi sosial, dan menumbuhkan rasa kebersamaan. Namun, penggunaan bahasa gaul juga menimbulkan tantangan, seperti berkurangnya kejelasan komunikasi dan potensi kesalahpahaman, terutama bagi mereka yang berada di luar lingkungan media sosial remaja. Penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya menjaga keseimbangan antara penggunaan bahasa gaul dan bahasa formal untuk memastikan komunikasi yang efektif dan inklusif, baik di ranah digital maupun di kehidupan nyata. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga menyoroti peran penting platform media sosial dalam penyebaran dan evolusi tren bahasa baru yang cepat di kalangan generasi muda. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman dinamika bahasa, budaya anak muda, dan pola komunikasi di era digital, serta memberikan landasan untuk eksplorasi lebih lanjut mengenai interaksi yang kompleks antara teknologi, bahasa, dan identitas sosial.

Abstract

Key Word:

Slang, Communication, Teenagers, Social Media, Online Interaction.

The proliferation of slang among teenagers in their online communication, particularly on social media platforms like TikTok, is a significant linguistic phenomenon that warrants closer examination. This study aims to investigate the impact of slang on the communication patterns and social dynamics of teenage social media users. Using a descriptive research method, the study analyzes sample comments from the TikTok platform to identify common slang usage and its implications. The findings suggest that slang plays a multifaceted role in the lives of teenage social media users, helping them express emotions, build social connections, and foster a sense of community. However, the use of slang also poses challenges, such as reduced clarity of communication and potential misunderstandings, especially for those outside the teenage social media sphere. The study emphasizes the importance of maintaining a balance between the use of slang and formal language to ensure effective and inclusive communication, both in the digital realm and in real-life settings. Additionally, the research highlights the crucial role of social media platforms in the rapid spread and evolution of new linguistic trends among the younger generation. This study contributes to the understanding of language dynamics, youth culture, and communication patterns in the digital age, providing a foundation for further exploration of the complex interplay between technology, language, and social identity.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental tool for human communication, serving as a means to convey ideas, emotions, and desires (Sapir, 1921). As society evolves, language also undergoes constant transformation, particularly with the advent of new communication technologies and social media platforms. One notable linguistic phenomenon that has gained prominence among teenagers is the use of slang.

Slang, defined as a non-formal dialect used by specific communities for social interaction (KBBI, 2007), has become increasingly prevalent in the digital realm, especially on social media platforms. Teenage users, in particular, have embraced slang as a way to express themselves, build social connections, and navigate the fast-paced and often informal nature of online communication (Cheer & Agustina, 2020).

This study aims to examine the influence of slang on the communication patterns and social dynamics of teenagers on social media. By analyzing sample comments from the popular TikTok platform, the research investigates the ways in which slang affects teenagers' linguistic choices, their online interactions, and the broader implications of this linguistic trend.

The theoretical foundation of this study is rooted in the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, a pioneering linguist who introduced the concept of the linguistic sign. Saussure's theory posits that the linguistic sign consists of the signifier (the physical form of a word) and the signified (the concept or meaning represented by the signifier) (Saussure, 1916). Saussure also distinguished between *langue* (the language system) and *parole* (the individual use of language in everyday life), highlighting the social and individual dimensions of language.

Building upon Saussure's work, this study explores how slang, as a form of *parole*, influences the communication patterns and social dynamics of teenagers on social media. Slang is characterized by a more flexible and creative relationship between signifiers and signifieds, often deviating from the conventions of formal language (Sikula, 2017). This flexibility and creativity allow slang to serve as a tool for self-expression, identity formation, and the creation of shared social experiences among teenage social media users.

Adolescence, as defined by Santrock (2007), is a developmental stage marked by significant biological, cognitive, and socioemotional changes, typically ranging from 10 to 22 years of age. During this period, teenagers actively engage with social media, which can shape their communication styles, language use, and social interactions. The study of slang within the context of teenage social media use provides insights into the complex interplay between language, identity, and the digital landscape.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive research method, focusing on providing a clear and detailed description of the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2014). The research data was obtained through observations of the comment sections on TikTok videos, where instances of slang usage were identified and analyzed.



Picture 1. sample comments collected from the TikTok platform

The sample comments collected from the TikTok platform included expressions such as "widihh slayyy auntyy," "MOTHER IS MOTHERINNNNNNN," and "selalu slay tydack babarlyy." These examples illustrate the creative and often unconventional nature of slang used by teenage social media users.

The analysis of the data involved examining the relationship between the signifiers (the slang expressions) and the signifieds (their meanings and functions) within the context of teenage communication on social media. The study also considered the broader social and cultural implications of slang usage, particularly in terms of its influence on teenagers' self-expression, social interactions, and the formation of digital communities.

RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

The research findings reveal several key insights into the influence of slang on teenagers' communication patterns and social dynamics on social media:

1. Changes in Communication Patterns in the Digital Era

The use of slang on TikTok reflects the dynamic and adaptive communication patterns of the younger generation. Social media platforms encourage the creation and dissemination of new linguistic forms that are more expressive and engaging, fitting the fast-paced and informal nature of online interactions. Slang helps teenagers communicate more efficiently and create a sense of shared experience, aligning with the unique characteristics of social media communication.

The flexibility and creativity inherent in slang allow teenage users to tailor their language to specific contexts and personal preferences. This adaptability enables them to navigate the constantly evolving digital landscape and maintain a sense of authenticity in their online self-expression. As Gee and Hayes (2011) argue, the use of slang on social media can be seen as a form of "digital identity performance," where teenagers actively construct and showcase their unique linguistic and cultural affiliations.

Furthermore, the rapid spread of slang on social media platforms reflects the way in which language evolves in the digital age. Whereas traditional forms of communication were more static and geographically bound, the internet and social media have facilitated the accelerated diffusion of linguistic innovations, including slang (Thurlow, 2006). This dynamic process of language change challenges the notion of a fixed, standardized language system, highlighting the fluidity and adaptability of human communication.

2. The Importance of Slang in Building Social Connections

Slang plays a crucial role in strengthening social bonds and creating a sense of community among teenage social media users. The use of shared slang expressions helps establish a common linguistic ground, fostering a feeling of togetherness and reinforcing social identities within the digital space. Slang serves as a tool for teenagers to express their individuality and affiliations with specific social groups, while simultaneously reinforcing their membership within those communities (Bucholtz, 1999).

The use of slang on social media platforms like TikTok allows teenagers to bond over the shared understanding and appreciation of certain linguistic codes. This shared language creates a sense of in-group belonging and facilitates the formation of digital subcultures, where teenagers can express their unique perspectives, experiences, and cultural references (Blommaert, 2010). The sense of community and social cohesion enabled by slang can be particularly important during the developmental stage of adolescence, as teenagers navigate the complexities of identity formation and social relationships.

Moreover, the use of slang on social media can be seen as a way for teenagers to assert their autonomy and resist the constraints of formal language. By adopting and creating new linguistic forms, they can challenge traditional power structures and establish their own cultural norms within the digital sphere (Labov, 1972). This linguistic agency allows teenagers to negotiate their social status and assert their place within the broader social landscape.

3. Creativity in Language Use

Social media platforms, such as TikTok, provide a fertile ground for the emergence and proliferation of new slang terms and linguistic innovations. Teenagers often engage in creative language use, developing unique slang expressions that reflect their lived experiences, cultural references, and personal preferences. This linguistic creativity not only enriches the vocabulary but also contributes to the formation of a distinctive digital language culture.

The creative use of slang on social media can be seen as a form of linguistic play and experimentation, where teenagers explore the boundaries of language and push the limits of conventional communication (Crystal, 2001). This process of linguistic innovation and adaptation reflects the agency and autonomy of teenage social media users, as they actively shape the linguistic landscape to align with their own cultural and social realities.

Furthermore, the creative use of slang on social media can serve as a means of resistance against dominant language norms and the standardization of communication. By engaging in linguistic innovation, teenagers can assert their cultural identity and challenge the hegemonic structures that often govern language use (Bucholtz, 1999). This resistance can be seen as a form of linguistic empowerment, where teenagers reclaim their right to shape the language that reflects their lived experiences.

4. Negative Impacts: Potential Confusion and Misunderstanding

While the use of slang offers advantages in terms of emotional expression and community building, it also poses challenges. The highly contextual and rapidly evolving nature of slang can lead to confusion and

misunderstandings, particularly for individuals who are less active on social media or come from different generational or cultural backgrounds. This can potentially hinder effective communication and understanding, especially when interacting with those outside the teenage social media sphere.

The dominance of informal language, including slang, on social media platforms can also contribute to a perceived decline in the use of formal language and standard communication norms. This shift may raise concerns about the potential long-term implications for language proficiency, academic and professional communication, and the ability to navigate diverse social settings effectively (Thurlow, 2006).

Additionally, the overreliance on slang in online interactions can lead to a diminished capacity for empathy and effective communication across different social and cultural contexts. As teenagers become increasingly immersed in the linguistic landscape of social media, they may face challenges in adapting their communication styles to suit more formal or professional settings, potentially hindering their ability to engage in meaningful dialogue with individuals from diverse backgrounds (Cheer & Agustina, 2020).

5. The Role of Social Media in the Formation of New Language

Social media platforms, such as TikTok, play a pivotal role in the emergence and dissemination of new linguistic trends, including slang. These platforms provide a space for users to express themselves creatively, share content, and engage in interactive exchanges, which facilitates the rapid spread and evolution of slang among the younger generation. Social media becomes not only a medium for communication but also a catalyst for the formation of new language practices.

The affordances of social media, such as the ability to quickly share and re-share content, the prevalence of visual elements, and the emphasis on user-generated content, contribute to the accelerated pace of linguistic innovation and the widespread adoption of new slang terms (Zappavigna, 2012). This dynamic relationship between social media and language highlights the need to consider the role of technology in shaping communication patterns and the cultural evolution of language, particularly among the younger generation.

Furthermore, the participatory nature of social media platforms encourages users, especially teenagers, to actively engage in the co-creation and negotiation of linguistic norms. This collaborative process of language formation reflects the democratization of communication, where traditional top-down language structures are challenged by the bottom-up, grassroots linguistic innovations of social media users (Blommaert, 2010).

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight the significant influence of slang on the communication patterns and social dynamics of teenagers on social media. Slang serves as a tool for emotional expression, social identity formation, and the creation of a sense of community among teenage social media users. The linguistic creativity and innovation inherent in slang contribute to the enrichment of modern vocabulary and the development of a distinctive digital language culture.

However, the use of slang also presents challenges, such as reduced clarity of communication and potential misunderstandings, especially for those outside the immediate social media context. This underscores the importance of maintaining a balance between the use of slang and formal language to ensure effective and inclusive communication, both in the digital realm and in real-life settings.

Furthermore, this study emphasizes the pivotal role of social media platforms, like TikTok, in the rapid spread and evolution of new linguistic trends among the younger generation. These platforms not only facilitate the dissemination of slang but also serve as a breeding ground for linguistic creativity and innovation.

The insights gained from this research contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics between language, youth culture, and digital communication. It provides a foundation for further exploration of the interplay between social media, linguistic patterns, and the broader sociocultural implications of emerging communication trends. Ultimately, this study highlights the need for adaptive language education and a nuanced approach to addressing the evolving communication practices of the digital age.

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations and implications can be drawn:

1. **Balanced Language Use:** The younger generation should be encouraged to maintain a balance between the use of slang and formal language, depending on the context and the intended audience. This balanced approach would ensure effective and inclusive communication, both in the digital realm and in real-life settings. Educational institutions, parents, and social media platforms can play a role in promoting this balance by providing resources, guidance, and opportunities for teenagers to develop linguistic flexibility and adaptability.

2. Adaptive Language Education: Educational institutions and language programs should consider incorporating the study of slang, digital communication trends, and the sociocultural implications of language use in the digital age. This would equip students with the necessary skills to navigate the evolving linguistic landscape and foster effective communication in diverse contexts. By addressing the dynamic nature of language, educators can help bridge the communication gap between different generations and promote mutual understanding.
3. Intergenerational Understanding: Efforts should be made to promote mutual understanding and appreciation between different generations regarding language use, particularly the use of slang on social media. This could involve cross-generational dialogues, educational initiatives, and the development of resources to facilitate open and constructive conversations about the role of language in the digital age. By fostering intergenerational understanding, we can work towards more inclusive and effective communication practices.
4. Platform Responsibility: Social media platforms should consider implementing policies and features that encourage responsible language use and promote digital literacy among their users, especially younger generations. This could include providing resources, guidelines, and tools to help users navigate the complexities of online communication effectively. Additionally, platforms should consider ways to moderate and address the potential misuse of slang that can lead to harmful or discriminatory content.
5. Further Research: This study provides a foundation for further exploration of the relationship between language, youth culture, and the digital landscape. Future research could investigate the long-term implications of slang use, the role of social media in shaping linguistic norms, and the broader sociocultural impacts of evolving communication patterns. Additionally, comparative studies across different social media platforms, cultural contexts, and age groups could offer valuable insights into the diverse experiences and perspectives surrounding language use in the digital age.

By addressing these recommendations and implications, researchers, educators, policymakers, social media platforms, and the broader community can work together to foster more inclusive, effective, and culturally-informed communication practices in the digital age.

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